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Women's experience of emotional abuse in intimate relationships: A qualitative study

A thesis
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of the requirements for the Degree
of
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by

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Abstract

This study investigated emotional abuse that occurs without physical abuse in the context of heterosexual, committed couple relationships. It examined the ways in which men abused women and the impact this had on women's lives. This research was based on memory-work, a feminist technique that enables researchers to make explicit the ways in which human experiences and identities are socially constructed within specific socio-cultural settings. The seven participants wrote individual memories of experiences from their past relationships, triggered by cue words they had chosen, and they then theorized about the memories together. Similarities and differences were explored.

The women found that their partners saw themselves as superior to them and set the standards at home, thereby forcing, expecting, or manipulating women to take a subordinate position in the relationship. The misuse of gendered power in the relationships led to all seven women becoming depressed and resulted in lowered self-esteem for six out of seven women and diminished identity for two out of seven women. The only woman whose self-esteem was not negatively affected was aware of her partner's unequal gendered practices, which seemed to have protected her somewhat from the severity of impact of the emotionally abusive behaviour. The degree to which a woman's self-esteem was diminished by her partner's behaviour seemed to be related to how covert and ambiguous his controlling behaviour was.

Three forms of control emerged from the data. While all forms involved similar impacts, such as loneliness and lowered self-esteem, they also affected the women in different ways. Dominant men intimidated women into conforming through fear, while passive controllers expected women to conform to gendered norms, silently rejecting them for non-conformance by becoming cold and distant. Manipulative controllers undermined women in subtle, indirect ways, which made women compliant because increased uncertainty had made them dependent on their partners for their feelings of self worth.

The first two forms of control were directly related to prescribed gendered roles, which men rigidly adhered to and demanded or explicitly expected of partners. The long-term effects were that women felt increasingly depressed, because gendered roles made women responsible for men's needs while their own needs were not met in the relationship. Their self-esteem decreased because they felt unloved. The third form of control, the subtlest and most covert form of abuse, was not overtly related to traditional gendered roles, but these men still wanted to be the centre of attention and subtly undermined women's confidence by destabilizing and confusing them, in order to have better control.

This research may have extended the knowledge of emotional abuse by showing that social practices that are accepted as the norm can obscure the emotional abusiveness of gendered practices. The method of memory-work was useful in exposing socialized belief systems and gendered behaviour, but left a gap in knowledge that direct questioning may have answered.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This document is my story as much as it is the story of the other participants, as I was a participant in the group. All of us had felt unhappy in our relationships, and few of us had really come to understand why that was so. This chapter will outline my history, my socialisation as a woman, and my growing awareness of the inequality of genders. Furthermore, I will explain how I became interested in my research topic and I will finish with a personal statement that acknowledges my biases.

The beginnings

This project had its roots in both my personal and my professional life. It represents a coming together of my personal experiences as an outsider in the traditional farming family into which I had married, and my growing professional and academic interest in the area of emotional abuse subsequent to leaving my marriage. My academic studies after separation opened my eyes to many different areas of inequality in society that I had previously been blind to. I will talk briefly about each of these in turn, as they relate to the initiation of my doctoral project.

My differing cultural experiences

I was born into a middle class family with six children, and spent my early childhood years in the Dutch East Indies, which is now Indonesia. My family survived four years of Japanese concentration camps in Indonesia, and, although I was born after the war, my family's experiences had a major impact on how I experienced the world. My mother suffered from a camp syndrome for the rest of her life and my father died at a young age when I was eleven. This made me independent from a tender age, as I had taken it upon my shoulders, as the eldest child still at home, to emotionally support my mother after my father's death. I felt competent and in charge of myself.

My school years were spent in the Netherlands and my school and home environment instilled in me several values that had a major impact on my married life. My background had taught me to value gender equality (although not racial or socio-economic equality) and my father had encouraged all his daughters to excel at school and to achieve.

When I turned eighteen I emigrated by myself from the Netherlands to Canada where I lived for 5 years and trained as a nurse. I learned what it was like to be part of a minority culture, something I had not experienced as a child in Indonesia because the European race that I belong to was the dominant culture that had colonised the indigenous people in Indonesia. I learned to assimilate and worked hard at becoming proficient in English in order to fit in with the Canadian culture. This learning to assimilate was useful in terms of my future marriage environment where, again, I assimilated in order to be accepted.

I emigrated from Canada to New Zealand in the late sixties and married into a New Zealand farming family that had traditional values. My mother never approved of this marriage, as a working class family with limited education was not the sort of family she had envisioned as my future environment. I saw my mother as a snob who rejected the working class on the grounds that they were less educated and had less money than people in our own class. What I did not realise was that the values in my new environment were also very different and would cause difficulties in my marriage. This caused a rift between my mother and me and caused me to embrace the new farming culture that I had married into, because I did not want to discriminate on the grounds of money or education. The values of the traditional farming community I now lived in often contradicted the values I had grown up with. I learned that women served men and men made decisions. I learned that if needs in our family were clashing the needs of my husband and children would need to have priority over mine. I learned that my opinions and feelings were not important and not respected. I separated after 22 years, after years of emotional pain and years of trying to make my husband understand that I was so unhappy.

Education as a tool of new awareness

When I separated I became a full time university student. I came to understand the many ways that people may be devalued, purely on the grounds of gender or race. This turned my framework of reference upside-down and I went through a time of turmoil trying to integrate my new learning. I became particularly interested in gender inequality and why that was so.

While studying psychology, I became a group facilitator in a psycho-educational group for men who had been convicted of physical abuse by the courts. During the five years that I facilitated these groups, I heard many stories of men who had believed that, as men, they had certain privileges that women did not have. They believed that, as men, they had authority over women and could, therefore, tell them how to behave. They had the right to make the rules in the family and they had the right to impose discipline. As a trainee facilitator I was sometimes unable to understand the abusiveness of male privilege, because I had been so steeped in New Zealand's patriarchal culture for 22 years that it felt natural to me. I had mostly deferred to my husband, especially in the more important decisions, even though I was assertive, because I had come to believe that as a man he had the final say in important matters that affected both of us. It was therefore a steep learning curve for me to hear my male co-facilitator challenge men in their belief about male privilege.

Readings that helped me to understand physically abusive relationships at that time were *Educating groups for men who batter: The Duluth model* (Pence & Paymar, 1993), *Invitations to responsibility: The therapeutic engagement of men who are violent and abusive* (Jenkins, 1990), and, in New Zealand, *Feeling angry, playing fair* (McMaster, 1992). I came to understand why women in abusive relationships became lonely and isolated, feelings I had also struggled with in my relationship. The books, *When love goes wrong* (Jones & Schechter, 1992) and *Invisible wounds* (Douglas, 1994) helped me to locate loneliness and isolation in the context of abusive relationships. This led me to investigate this area for my Masters thesis project when I interviewed a small number of women who had

been in a physically abusive relationship and asked them about their experiences of supportive friendships (Lammers, 1995, 1996, 1997).

An understanding of gender inequality gave me some sort of understanding as to why I had felt so depressed during my years of marriage and that gave me the desire to work in the area of abuse. Reading *Femininity and domination* (Bartky, 1990) gave me an understanding of how women came to be oppressed in patriarchal societies. For two years I worked as a counsellor in student services at a tertiary institution where I had declared my interest in abuse issues. As a result of that declaration, my client load consisted mainly of people with issues of abuse. I came to understand how childhood sexual abuse affected people's later adult relationships. I became more conscious of reasons why women became depressed in marriage. Several of my clients thought they had a wonderful partner because their partners seemed so caring and never dominated them, but they always seemed to feel worse after an interaction with their partner. This really sparked my interest because I could identify with those feelings but did not understand at the time how those feelings came about. I decided to investigate that area for my doctoral thesis.

However, I also heard some stories of men who had felt abused in their relationships with women, and I thought that if I wanted to investigate emotional abuse in relationships, I had to listen to stories of men, as well as of women. Men had been hurt by their partners' behaviour and they stated that, while men may be physically stronger than women, women seemed to be more articulate, which rendered them powerless in an argument. If some women were able to verbally gain the upper hand over men, was it possible that those women would dominate in a relationship? The area of men's experiences of emotional abuse did not seem to have been researched at all in the Western world, and in the New Zealand abuse literature I could only find *Invisible wounds* (Douglas, 1994) as an example of research on emotional abuse that did not accompany physical abuse. Recently, a New Zealand review of research into psychological abuse in physically and purely emotionally abusive relationships was published (Semple, 2001). The review focussed on emotional abuse in the context of physical abuse because they are the

only studies available in New Zealand on this topic, with the exception of the just mentioned work of Douglas.

Memory-Work as a research tool

I wanted to approach this study qualitatively, as my area of interest was largely unexplored. I did not have clear guidelines yet as to what the issues were and I had questions rather than hypotheses that I wanted to investigate. Reading *Subjectivity and method in psychology: Gender, meaning and science* (Hollway, 1989) showed me that I could look at conditions that produced abuse, rather than apportioning blame. This seemed more useful to me because I had found that the subtle emotional abuse that I was interested in was generally not recognised by either party, and counsellors often failed to pick it up as well if the couple presented with relationship difficulties. One of the female participants in my doctoral research had been a counselling client of mine in previous years. Both of us had failed at that time to recognise her partner's abuse, as on the surface he had presented himself as caring and supportive of her.

Emotional abuse seemed to be so invisible to the people involved that direct questioning did not seem to me to be the best way to approach this study. Through a colleague of mine in the department where I work, I heard of memory-work as a research tool, as she had used this research tool in her investigations of the way in which girls had been socialised (Hamerton, 2000). She alerted me to the fact that memory-work was eminently suitable for the study of emotions, as several Australian women had used and developed this tool for research in this area (Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Gault, & Benton, 1990, 1992). I read these studies, and later I read the seminal work about memory-work, *Female sexualization: A collective work of memory* (Haug, 1987).

Reading these studies led me to think that memory-work could be a useful tool in trying to understand emotional abuse in relationships. The method seemed to be a tool that could uncover socialised practices of which people may not have been aware, and that seemed to me to be a good way of investigating this unexplored and hazy subject. I was excited at the prospect of conducting research that

included the researcher as a participant. I was also drawn to memory-work because it seemed to fit with a social constructionist approach to carrying out research that exposes socialised practices rather than blaming people.

Memory work has been designed as an egalitarian research tool by which all participants are co-researchers as well. This posed the question whether only one person could ultimately write up cooperative research, or whether that would compromise the co-operative style of the method. This question, whether it was possible to use memory-work as a research method in a project that would ultimately be written up by only one person, had already been addressed by two colleagues at Waikato university who had used or were using memory-work as a research tool for a doctoral thesis at the time that I started in 1997 (Friend, 1996; Hamerton, 2000). Supervisors and other researchers had assured my colleagues that it was possible for a single researcher to carry out memory-work research in an egalitarian fashion, and to write up the group's theorising in a way that reflected the group discussion (Hamerton, 2000).

I investigated men's as well as women's experiences of emotional abuse with this method, but abandoned the research of men's experiences of emotional abuse after analysis showed that at least three, and possibly four of the six men had been abused as children and were married to women who had been abused as children. The way in which these couples related to each other was not intended to have control over a partner, but a reaction against their feelings of insecurities through the use of defence mechanisms that were emotionally abusive. This, in itself, is worthy of study, but the scope of this research did not permit me to do justice to this issue. I, therefore, abandoned the men's research for the purpose of this thesis.

To summarise, this project represents a coming together of my interest in studying what constitutes emotional abuse for women, and in exploring feminist research methods, in particular the method of memory-work. The opportunity to design a project that attempted to break new ground in terms of understanding the subtlety of emotional abuse, as well as exploring the method of memory-work, has proved

exciting and rewarding. I hope that it will contribute new knowledge in the area of abuse, as well as in the use of the method.

My attitude and strategies in this study are best represented by what Naomi Wolf called the power feminist approach (Wolf, 1993). What Wolf calls 'victim feminism' casts women as sexually pure and mystically nurturing, and stresses the evil done to these 'good' women, as a way to petition for their rights. Power feminism, on the other hand, sees women as human beings, as sexual and as individual, no better or worse than their male counterparts. Power feminism lays claim to equality, simply because women are entitled to it. Power feminism, therefore, rejects the hierarchy of the genders that patriarchal cultures have been promoting. I believe that emotional abuse has as its core the abuse of power. I extrapolate the Wolfian power feminist approach across all frames of reference by focussing on the 'power' potential, rather than the 'victim' aspect of the person.

Personal statement

I acknowledge that no matter how I approach this study, my values and life experiences will shape this research. Reality is socially constructed and I have provided my personal information to help readers understand how my history and my socialisation as a woman have contributed to my construction of meaning. Had a man investigated this topic, he may have come to different conclusions from mine. The only thing I can do is to submit some personal information in an endeavour for readers to identify where my biases may lie.

I started my academic career after I separated and my personal voyage has taken me to a place where I have come to believe in the equality of men and women. I do not believe that men are inherently abusive but that men and women are both products of the way in which they have been socialised. I believe that the power differential between the genders is something that needs to be exposed as a first step towards a change from unequal practices between the genders that lead to emotional abuse.

In this chapter I have outlined my history, socialisation, and my process in developing my thesis topic and method. I have also included a personal statement in an endeavour to identify for readers where my biases may be positioned. This information serves as a background to the rest of the thesis. In the next chapter I will review psychological literature on the nature and practices of emotional abuse.

Chapter 2

The study of emotional abuse

Research into emotional abuse that is not connected to physical abuse, and which I will call 'pure' emotional abuse, is still in its infancy. Being still in its early stages of development, research into emotional abuse is hard to identify; there is still a labelling dilemma as to what to call non-physical abuse and there is a lack of agreement in definition. These issues will be discussed and in the light of these issues I will come to my definition of emotional abuse that is not connected to physical abuse. Next I will look at prevalence rates of emotional abuse, and I will then discuss the philosophical paradigms that inform this study. The connection between gender, power, and emotional abuse will also be discussed. Theoretical perspectives of emotional abuse will be examined in the light of New Zealand's social issues that contribute to unequal gender roles. Then I will discuss studies that have been conducted on emotional abuse and compare their findings. I will finish by looking at the main impacts of men's emotional abuse on women in relationships. The first section will start by discussing how emotional abuse came to be researched.

Research on emotional abuse

The body of research on physical and sexual abuse is very large. However, little attention was paid to the emotional aspect of abuse until approximately 1990 (Marshall, 1994). The study of emotional abuse is, therefore, still in the early stages of development (Geffner & Rossman, 1998; Marshall, 1996; Tolman, 1989). One of the reasons for the relative neglect of emotional abuse has been an implicit assumption that physical abuse results in a greater psychological toll than emotional or psychological abuse (O'Leary, 1999).

Whenever emotional abuse has been discussed, it has almost exclusively been in connection with physical or sexual abuse. Authors such as Dutton (1994; Dutton & Haring, 1999; Dutton, Saunders, A., & Bartholomew, 1994; Dutton, van

Ginkel, & Landolt, 1996), Murphy (Murphy & Hoover, 1999; Murphy & O'Leary, 1989), O'Leary (O'Leary, 1999; O'Leary & Jouriles, 1994; O'Leary, Malone, & Tyree, 1994), Tolman (1989, 1992, 1999), and in New Zealand Towns and Adams (1999a, 1999b; Towns, Adams, & Curren, 1997; Towns, Adams, & Gavey, 2000) have published in this area.

The view used to be, and for many still is, that emotional abuse almost always precedes (Hyden, 1995; Kasian & Painter, 1992; Murphy & O'Leary, 1989; O'Leary et al., 1994) or occurs as part of both physical and sexual abuse (Anderson, Boulette, & Schwartz, 1991; Bass & Davis, 1988; Herman, 1994; Kirkwood, 1993; NiCarthy, 1986; Pence & Paymar, 1993). However, it may be that this connection was found because of the samples used. More recently, the view has been that, although physical abuse is almost always accompanied by emotional abuse, it does not necessarily follow that emotional abuse is always connected with physical abuse, and that emotional abuse may stand on its own (Chang, 1995; Chang, 1996; Loring, 1994; Marshall, 1996; Marshall, 1999; Marshall & Guarnaccia, 1998).

Emotional abuse is rarely recognised by its victims (Keashly, 1998; Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994). The reason may be because emotionally abusive behaviour appears to be socially acceptable and one may, therefore, start looking within for the problem when it starts to negatively affect one's self. When women do not recognise men's controlling behaviour as emotional abuse they may consider their emotional pain as an emotional problem and may present to health professionals as feeling depressed, or women may not see a professional at all when the symptoms of emotional abuse are not accompanied by physical abuse (Keashly, 1998; Loring, 1994). This shows the insidiousness of emotional abuse and, what is more, the psychological effects are similar to those of physical, sexual, and racial violence (Keashly, 1998; Loring, 1994; Tolman, 1992). Therefore, although one may find emotional abuse wherever physical or sexual abuse is present, it may not necessarily mean that where emotional abuse is present we will inevitably find the other two forms of abuse.

Difficulties in the study of emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is a difficult topic to study because there is lack of agreement on how to identify it, what name to give it, and how to define it.

Difficulty of identification

Emotional abuse is not as easy to identify, categorise and quantify as physical abuse (Follingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause, & Polek, 1990; Kasian & Painter, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993). It is less likely to be seen as abusive because people recognise that everyone occasionally uses emotionally abusive behaviour to some extent (Marshall, 1994; NiCarthy, 1986).

Emotional abuse is also hard to identify because it can be very subtle. Some people talk about an uneasy feeling that arises in their relationship, which they find hard to make sense of. They need to work very hard to try to keep their partner happy (Douglas, 1994; Jones & Schechter, 1992). They find fault with themselves and may seek counselling or pick up self-help books, which may remind them that they cannot change another person and they, therefore, should try and change themselves. Because of their socialisation, women may feel responsible for the emotional well being of everyone around them, and they tend to put their own needs last. Feeling responsible for others' well being makes women particularly vulnerable to emotional abuse (Douglas, 1994; Jones & Schechter, 1992; Marshall, 1994), because women may then readily submit to men's pressure to prioritise their wishes over those of women.

The injuries resulting from emotional abuse are similarly difficult to discuss in terms of degree, or permanency (Kirkwood, 1993). The critical point at which a relationship becomes emotionally abusive may be reached via a cumulative and repetitive impact of negative messages from a partner (Adams, 1999; Hoffman, 1984; Kirkwood, 1993; Marshall, 1994), a certain imbalance of positive and negative messages (Gottman, 1997; Marshall, 1994), a particular pattern of negative messages, or in some other way that undermines someone's personal or social competence (Marshall, 1994, 1996). It needs to be delineated from the ordinary irritability and occasional name-calling (NiCarthy, 1986), or anger and

conflict (O'Hearn & Davis, 1997) that most couples engage in occasionally. When the messages undermine a person's personal or social competence, they are emotionally abusive. It becomes clear that, by removing issues of dominance through overt abuse from a conceptualisation of emotional abuse, a relationship may still be high in emotional abuse, because covert abuse is considered as harmful as overt dominant abuse (Marshall, 1994, 1996). The empirical question is how severe and how frequent this emotionally abusive behaviour needs to be to become harmful, undermining the target's emotional, and/or behavioural competence.

Lack of agreement in terminology

Another problem encountered is the difference between the terms “psychological abuse” and “emotional abuse”, or even whether there is a difference. Some authors use terms such as emotional blackmail (Follingstad et al., 1990; Forward & Frazier, 1997), psychological maltreatment (Tolman, 1989), psychological aggression (Murphy & O'Leary, 1989; O'Leary et al., 1994; Stets, 1991), or coercion (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994).

McDowell, a New Zealand researcher who developed a definition of emotional child abuse, differentiated between emotional maltreatment and emotional abuse (McDowell, 1995). She saw emotional abuse as an active and wilful form of behaviour designed to harm. If it was not both active and wilful, she defined it as maltreatment and not abuse. The terms were defined by the behaviour of the actor and not by the impact on the receiver.

Sometimes the different terms of abuse are used interchangeably (Hoffman, 1984; Garbarino et al., 1986, in Lapsley, 1993), and psychological abuse is sometimes used as an umbrella term for different types of non-physical abuse (Marshall, 1996). Tedeschi and Felsen preferred to talk about coercive actions, instead of aggression or violence, because the language of coercive actions links with other literatures, particularly literature on forms of social influence such as conflict, social justice, and social control (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). This term also focuses attention on the social goals of people who use coercion to gain their

interpersonal objectives, and it is, therefore, an appropriate term to use for the behaviour of people who attempt to control others. However, emotional abuse may have a wider range of impacts than impacts of coercive actions (Marshall, 1996) and my thesis also concentrates on impact, rather than enactment of non-physical abuse. I, therefore, prefer to use the term “emotional abuse” in an attempt to encompass the relational and societal components of a process that negatively affects emotional well-being. It is in the way men and women relate to one another in committed relationships, as well as in the way society positions men and women in committed relationships, that emotional abuse can occur (Loring, 1994).

Lack of agreement in definition

Another problem in the study of emotional abuse is that, as yet, there is no standard definition or consistency as to what constitutes emotional abuse. Until about the mid-eighties, research on family violence was also sparse and ill defined (Lapsley, 1993; Marshall, 1994). Now that research in the family violence area has become more established, there is richer understanding as to what constitutes violence, although not necessarily a consensus as to the definition of the term (Neville Robertson, personal communication, April, 2000). The study of emotional abuse may follow a similar path to that of the research in family violence, where, as more work is published, a clearer picture will emerge as to what may constitute emotional abuse. In this study I will use the word ‘violence’ to represent the exercise of physical force, in contrast to emotional abuse that violates the rights of human beings to be treated with equality and respect.

One issue that has not been fully addressed is whether the intention to control needs to be there in order for it to be regarded as abusive. Marshall noticed that there seemed to be a lack of clarity about whose perception of intent is important, and research on motives for engaging in non-physical abuse has been sparse and unclear (Marshall, 1994). Furthermore, a problem exists with the definition of intent. It has generally not been adequately defined, which leaves room for vagueness as to whether to interpret reactive aggression as intentional or as involuntary (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). In the literature on emotional abuse in

the workforce (Keashly, 1998) and in the child abuse literature (McDowell, 1995), intent is considered by some to be a critical feature of the definition of emotional abuse.

Anti-sexism and anti-racism approaches, on the other hand, take the perspective that it is not intent or perceived intent but impact that is important (Keashly, 1998). In some emotional abuse literature, impact is also emphasised with regard to non-physical abuse, because potentially harmful acts may occur without a conscious intent to harm the partner (Lachkar, 2000; Marshall, 1994, 1996, 1999). Marshall stated that intent might not be important or even relevant, because an act is abusive if it has the potential or effect of undermining or otherwise harming a woman (Marshall, 1996). She further stated that a man may or may not intend to hurt his partner, and may even believe he is helping her, and yet his behaviour may still harm her. In essence, emotional abuse from this perspective can occur without the awareness of the target and without the intent of the actor, and emotional abuse is seen in the effect of an act (Marshall, 1999).

My view is that, although a man may not always intend to consciously hurt a partner, his intent may be to be seen as superior or to have his way. The abusive aspect is the intent to be seen as superior or more important than his partner because he is a man, because he has been socially conditioned in this way of thinking. This belief in the superiority of men over women is called male privilege in describing patriarchal systems (Pence & Paymar, 1993; Robertson, 1999). Patriarchy was originally defined as the supremacy of the father over his family members, but generally it has come to mean that patriarchy allows men to rule and dominate women and children in every aspect of life and culture (Dutton, 1994; Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1996; O'Neil & Egan, 1993; Robertson, 1999). When men see women as subordinate to themselves, they can start thinking in terms of owning women in marriage. From there it is only a small step to acting either in overt or subtle ways to keep women in a subordinate position. If men see gendered roles as natural, and if they see men as naturally authoritative and in control, they may think that they have a right to behave in such ways. Masculine traits and behaviour can, therefore, be seen as a form of control (Sattel, 1998). In such an instance, even though a man may not intend to

hurt a partner, he is hurting her by being patronising or by pressuring or manipulating her so that he will get his way. The desire to subordinate a woman is, therefore, intended, although this may only happen at a subconscious level.

It may be, though, that the strength of the harm depends on whether a person perceives abusive behaviour as being intentional, because intentional abuse is a direct assault on whom we are (Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994). This controversy in abuse literature as to whether one needs to look at intent, perceived intent, or whether the key issue is impact will be explored in this study, because perceived intention is not the same as impact. The impact of an act can still make a person feel devalued, even though a woman did not perceive it as intentional as, for example, happens through ignorance of cultural values, or through men's rigid adherence to gender roles (Goldner, Penn, Sheinberg, & Walker, 1997; O'Neil & Egan, 1993). However, intent might alter whether one blames the other for the committed abuse. If, for example, the abusiveness of men's adherence to gendered roles is pointed out, in the belief that the intention to abuse was not present, women may feel hurt but not attach blame. On the other hand, if the abusive behaviour continues because a man wants to hold on to gendered privileges, a woman may then see it as intentional, with attribution of blame and possibly a greater negative impact.

Perceived intent to harm is likely to increase the impact. Keashly cited research on destructive criticism where a direct apology, or information attributing behaviour to causes other than the actor's harmful intention, reduced negative effects on the target (Keashly, 1998). Keashly herself conducted a vignette study of the relationship of intent to perceived abusiveness, where the findings suggested the more the target perceived the actor to have intended the behaviour, the more likely they were to perceive the behaviour as abusive. Therefore, I think perceived intent needs to be taken into consideration when analysing the impact of emotional abuse.

Covert or subtle emotional abuse is often enacted through every day interactions that are not recognised by either the actor or the recipient as being harmful, but that, nevertheless diminish the recipient's self esteem over time (Marshall, 1994;

Marshall, 1996). The intention to emotionally abuse is, therefore, difficult to establish with covert abuse. A wide definition of emotional abuse that concentrates on the impact of behaviour would be most useful in exposing emotionally abusive behaviour and its impact. Geffner and Rossman, who defined emotional abuse as “the non-physical degradation of the self which lowers worth and interferes with human development and productivity” (Geffner & Rossman, 1998, p. 2) and Marshall, who defined psychological abuse as a degradation enacted through messages that are harmful and undermine the partner’s personal and/or interpersonal competence (Marshall, 1994), defined emotional abuse from the impact stance. The primary effects of emotional abuse in these definitions are damage to the self, and the self’s view of others and the world. The behaviour is then looked at as a violation of human rights, and that is abusive, whether it was intentional or not.

Definition of emotional abuse

Tedeschi and Felsen identified three qualitatively different forms of harm (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). They identified these as firstly, physical punishments to impose bodily discomfort or biological harm. The second form is deprivation, sometimes called coercive power (Brewer & Wann, 1998), as both refer to the attempt to restrict opportunities or take away values possessed or expected by the target. Thirdly, social harm is a form of harm that involves damage to the social identity of target persons and a lowering of their power or status. These last two forms of harm fall within the realm of non-physical or emotional abuse, and social harm often occurs in the form of non-verbal messages (Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994; Loring, 1994). Geffner and Rossman, who are editors of *the Journal of Emotional Abuse*, stated, “emotional abuse involves attacks on the self or spirit that create distress and may interfere with an individual’s ability to develop and mature in healthy ways” (Geffner & Rossman, 1998, p. 2). This definition of emotional abuse was not specifically designed for abuse in couple relationships, but in any arena where emotional abuse can affect individuals or groups.

One of the most simple attempts at a definition of emotional abuse in the context of committed heterosexual couple relationships, such as this study, comes from

NiCarthy's book, *Getting Free*, a book that was written for women getting out of battering relationships (NiCarthy, 1986),

When *Getting Free* was written I was still struggling, as were many women subjected to emotional abuse, to identify it in specific terms. We were searching for ways to delineate it from ordinary irritability and occasional name-calling that most couples engage in from time to time. In fact, much of that behaviour is abusive, but it may not be permanently damaging until it reaches the level of a campaign to reduce the partner's sense of self-worth and to maintain control (NiCarthy, 1986, p. 285).

She saw emotional abuse as intentional, as she described it as a campaign to control, and her definition is from the perspective of enactment as well as impact of emotional abuse.

In coming to a definition of emotional abuse in heterosexual relationships, I took several issues into consideration. Emotional abuse needs to be defined in terms of its impact and not be measured by intent, because a definition based on intent to harm would exclude all behaviour that men use in an attempt to enforce gendered stereotypes. This type of behaviour is often subconscious and therefore without conscious intent, even though research has shown that when men hold onto traditional gender stereotypical behaviour it is damaging to women's identity (Chang, 1995; Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994; Jones & Schechter, 1992; Loring, 1994). A wider definition of emotional abuse captures a broader view of power and communication within the relationship and includes a fuller understanding of the nature or effects of abuse. This is in contrast with the more narrow definitions of emotional abuse in the context of physically abusive relationships or pure emotionally abusive relationships where men were dominant and intentional in their control. I have come to a working definition of emotional abuse in heterosexual relationships through knowledge gained from the research I have reviewed.

Emotional abuse in heterosexual couple relationships is the patterned non-physical degradation of the person by the partner through the conscious or unconscious gaining, regaining or maintaining of power over the other, which is mostly done through repetitive overt or subtle acts and messages that control or attempt to control, and results in negatively affecting the partner's emotions or self-value in the long term.

Emotional abuse from this perspective has as its core the misuse of power in order to attempt to prevent a person from attaining valued goals or other values a person has or expects. This results in damage to a person's social identity through the lowering of their power or status.

The prevalence of emotional abuse

In this section I will discuss the prevalence of emotional abuse and the problems encountered in evaluating prevalence in view of the differing definitions of the phenomenon. Only a qualified answer can be given to how prevalent emotional abuse is, as it depends on the definition used. Emotional abuse differs from physical abuse in that emotionally abusive behaviour often appears to be socially acceptable, as most people occasionally engage in this (Gottman, 1997; Loring, 1994; NiCarthy, 1986). Furthermore, because women mostly do not recognise at first that their emotional problems are due to their partner's emotionally abusive behaviour (Douglas, 1994; Loring, 1994; Marshall, 1996), women may visit health professionals for stress in their lives but may not be able to tell a doctor what induced the stress. However, emotional abuse seems to be widespread.

One of the problems in assessing prevalence is what is included in the definition of emotional abuse. Quantitative studies have measured one or more types of emotional abuse, but do not exhaust the myriad ways in which women may be emotionally abused, as is possible when one uses qualitative means of gathering data. The prevalence of one type of emotionally abusive behaviour in the United States was shown in a study with a large (nearly 5,000) representative national sample, where between 81-88% of men and women inflicted, as well as received, some form of verbal aggression (White & Koss, 1991). The question needs to be asked, however, whether all instances of verbal aggression constitute emotional abuse, and whether emotional abuse only comes in the form of verbal aggression. Loring found that abusive, as well as non-abusive, couples at times used overt abuse, such as verbal aggression (Loring, 1994). Measuring verbal aggression may not, therefore, be a good indicator of emotional abuse, although it is usually included in a range of emotionally abusive behaviours.

Numerous studies have measured non-physical abusive behaviour.

Examples of the measures used are: the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) (Straus, 1979); the Index of Spouse Abuse (ISA) (Hudson & McIntosh, 1981)); the Wife Abuse Inventory (WAI)(Lewis, 1985); the Emotional Maltreatment of Women Inventory (PMWI) (Tolman, 1989); the Abusive Behavior Inventory (ABI)

(Shepard & Campbell, 1992), the Measures of Wife Abuse (MWA) (Rodenburg & Fantuzzo, 1993), and the Emotional Abuse Questionnaire (EAQ) (Corbett, 1997)), which was developed in New Zealand as a measure of emotional abuse in dating relationships. These measures vary a great deal, with some measuring mostly aggression (e.g. CTS), while others mostly measure dominance (e.g. ABI). Most of these measures have been constructed for use with clinical samples and are scales to identify emotional abuse in connection with physical abuse. Marshall stated that research on violence with non-identified, non-clinical samples does not support some of the results found with sheltered women in refuges, even when the women have sustained similar levels of violence (Marshall, 1994). These measures may, therefore, not be very useful with non-identified and non-clinical samples, especially when measuring subtle covert abuse. Measures based only on the dominance model may miss many pervasive forms of abuse. When I started my research in 1997 little had been investigated in terms of subtle emotional abuse, and I, therefore, chose to do an exploratory study using a qualitative methodology. Since then, the Men's Psychological-Harm and Abuse in Relationships Measure-Subtle scale (MP-HARM-S) was developed to measure the subtle psychological abuse of women by men (Marshall, 1999). This would have been a useful measure to use for measuring emotional abuse of women if it had been available at the time. However, it might have identified the various items of abuse, but it would not have identified how they related to traditional gender roles.

Quantitative studies do not investigate the context in which the behaviour occurred. The lack of context makes it difficult to make sense of the meaning of the behaviour: whether it occurred to gain, regain or keep control, and whether this was over self or over a partner. Moreover, it is difficult to compare the results of different studies because they measure different types of emotionally abusive behaviour, from overt and direct abusive behaviour to covert and subtle abusive behaviour.

In a review of studies on emotionally abusive behaviour in non-clinical samples, it was found that the percentage of men who were using emotionally abusive behaviours ranged from 33-87% (Holtzworth-Munroe, Bates, Smutzler, & Sandin,

1997). However, these authors did not indicate whether the same measurements of emotionally abusive behaviour had been used in the different studies, and different measures may explain the great range differential between the findings. Marshall's findings of a study with 640 women who were in a bad or stressful relationship fell in the same range, with more than 85% of the women having reported receiving the more subtle types of emotionally abusive behaviour, such as guilt production and emotional isolation, rejection, shifting responsibility and partner's withdrawal (Marshall, 1994). However, she also found that her measurement was not able to identify style of abuse and the meaning that women made of this, something that she attempted to rectify in more recent research by modifying her instrument (Marshall, 1999). This modification seemed to have been successful in identifying subtle forms of abuse; these will be discussed later under studies of emotional abuse. However, studies on subtle emotional abuse before the start of this study in 1997 tended to be of an explorative nature (Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994; Jones & Schechter, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994; NiCarthy, 1986), and were, therefore, conducted in a qualitative way rather than measuring frequency of behaviour.

In New Zealand, in a non-clinical sample of 500 women, 44% of women with partners and 94% of women who had just separated from their partners had experienced at least one form of emotionally abusive behaviour, which suggests that emotionally abusive behaviour is very highly correlated with relationship breakdown (Morris, 1997). Morris's questions were all on overt and direct abusive behaviour. Overt/direct abusive behaviour correlates more highly with physical abuse than covert/indirect abusive behaviour (Marshall, 1994; Murphy & Hoover, 1999; Tedeschi & Felson, 1994), and the subtle, covert, emotionally abusive behaviour that this study is looking at was not measured. Morris's figures may, therefore, underestimate the level of emotional abuse because the women in her study only responded to a checklist of behaviours. Emotional abuse outside of the checklist was not measured. Nor did the study differentiate between discrete emotional abuse and the co-occurrence of physical abuse with emotional abuse. For this reason I do not know what proportion of this sample would have represented purely non-physical, emotionally abusive behaviour. Covert and indirect emotional abuse appears to occur during ordinary, everyday interactions

and is therefore also likely to be more prevalent than violence (Marshall, 1994; NiCarthy, 1986). Therefore, one would estimate the prevalence of emotional abuse to be higher had covert/ indirect abusive behaviours been explored.

The varying notions as to what behaviour constitutes emotional abuse create problems in making any direct comparisons. All that these high percentages suggest is that emotionally abusive behaviour occurs more frequently than physical abuse because it is considered to be more socially acceptable than physical abuse (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997; Keashly, 1998; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980). Moreover, the New Zealand survey found that Maori (indigenous) women were significantly more likely to report these behaviours than non-Maori women (Morris, 1997), which may suggest a possible cultural difference in emotionally abusive behaviours, although there could also be a cultural difference in the reporting of these. Although emotional abuse is now established as a phenomenon that can stand alone, without being seen as an aspect of physical abuse, the reason why people emotionally abuse each other is not clear. I will now turn to philosophical paradigms that inform this study.

Philosophical paradigms that inform this study

Feminist epistemologies most directly inform this study. These will be discussed from a social constructionist perspective. Feminist theory has as its central core the premise that patriarchal gender hierarchies oppress women (Bartky, 1990). The issue of unequal power between the genders and the potential for emotional abuse to be present in this situation, which will be discussed in the next section, influence my research orientation. This section presents the key theories that underpin my qualitative approach and information analysis. I argue that men may use power that has been granted by their superior status over women in patriarchal cultures, and that men's use of social power for personal gain is a misuse of power that constitutes emotional abuse. These men may not see this use of status power as abuse, if they believe that they have a right to this. Society gives rise to and then supports its justification of unequal, gendered power relations. My social constructionist orientation phenomenologically embeds individual experience in the context of social and cultural times. This enables me to understand why things

are the way they are, and why men may not recognise their behaviour as abusive. Social constructionism explains men's position in relation to women in a straightforward and forthright manner, and feminist analysis explains how this positioning privileges men by creating a gender hierarchy. Both theories fit well with my worldview.

Social constructionism

Social constructionism is the movement in the social sciences that puts emphasis on the role played by language in the production of meaning (Monk, Winslade, Crocket, & Epston, 1997). It can be thought of as a theoretical orientation which, to a greater or lesser degree, underpins newer approaches to the study of human beings as social animals, such as 'critical psychology', 'discourse analysis', 'deconstruction' and 'poststructuralism' (Burr, 1995).

Social constructionism rejects the idea of social structures as natural or given, and power, from this perspective, is understood as diffused throughout society because of the way one is positioned through language, as language places people in relation to each other, usually in power relations of some kind (Monk et al., 1997). The focus of social constructionism is on the structural positions and associated resources of the two partners (Edley & Wetherell, 1996; Fuller, 1996; Howard & Hollander, 1997). This perspective is interested in how social class, race, and gender affect one's sense of self. Social constructionism also provides a deconstructive critique of assumed truths. Social constructionists draw on cognition and symbolic interaction to make meaning of gender.

From a social constructionist standpoint, gender is more than the biological categories of male and female, or more than a role assumed by or assigned to women and men. It sees the psychological differences of being male or female, and the nature of the interactions between them, as mainly informing gendered behaviour, without discounting that there are some innate differences between men and women (Bohan, 1997), such as physical differences.

This standpoint, therefore, sees gender and gender relations as structured by social positions, and negotiated in interaction against a backdrop of cultural expectations. Gender includes psychological, and social, as well as cultural features, and it is seen as a relational construct that two people create through interaction with each other (Bohan, 1997; Canary & Emmers-Sommer, 1997; Daley & Montgomerie, 1999; Hallstein, 1999; O'Neil & Egan, 1993). Gender is, therefore, learned, constructed, or structured, rather than innate (Edley & Wetherell, 1996; Weatherall, 1992). Gendered behaviour is learnt through modelling, rewards and punishments, and in this way it is also maintained. The construction of gender includes actual arrangements and activities, meanings and experiences, diversity and change, and interaction and relation (Thompson & Walker, 1989). A transaction between two individuals is therefore not seen as a personality trait, but is the product of social agreements about the appropriateness of certain behaviour (Bohan, 1997), such as whether one can show anger, or love and caring. The structure of gender happens through gendered roles, and in families this includes structural constraints and opportunities, beliefs and ideology (Thompson & Walker, 1989), in terms of who is supposed to fulfil which role in the family.

Social constructionism sees traditional gender roles originating from cultural beliefs, institutions, and practices (Sidanius, Cling, & Pratto, 1991). Gender differences are, therefore, largely based on social relationships that are maintained by cultural practices (Hallstein, 1999; O'Neil & Egan, 1993; Woods, 1999). Masculinities and femininities are seen as relational constructs, both as an analytical category and a social process, in that the definition of either depends on the definition of the other (Daley & Montgomery, 1999; Flax, 1997; Kimmel, 1997) and this is how the binaries between the genders are created. These binaries provide members of a particular cultural community with a shared understanding of what it means to be a man or a woman (Edley & Wetherell, 1996). Binaries are opposing constructs, where one is an inversion of the other. When masculinities and femininities are constructed as opposites it means that if men, for example, are seen as rational and independent, women cannot be rational and independent. Binaries, therefore, restrict the ways in which men and women can be seen to behave. The meaning of difference between the genders in

patriarchal societies has come to mean that power and prestige has been attached to the male gender, and when this power is used for personal gain in relationships it becomes emotionally abusive.

Gender roles are, therefore, not seen as inherent in biology but constructed, in that it is possible to take them apart and reorder them (Brookes, 1999). Taking roles apart by looking at how they originated is called deconstructing, while reordering them means that we may try to understand others' behaviour by putting ourselves in their position, rather than seeing the other's behaviour in terms of one's own interest (Butt, 1998). In that way, truth claims of dominant groups can be interrogated (Willott, 1999). Social constructionism is, therefore, deconstructive, in that it seeks to distance us from, and makes us sceptical about, beliefs concerning truth, knowledge, power, the self, and language (Flax, 1997; Monk et al., 1997). These beliefs are often taken for granted within, and serve as legitimation for, contemporary Western cultures.

The meaning of gender is, therefore, not static, as culture and community are fluid constructs and the grounds on which people root their sense of themselves as men and women continually shift (Frank, 1999; Kimmel, 1997). Neither are the prevailing ideologies absolute, in that, although they are highly influential, some individuals may resist them and instigate change (Wood, 1995). How easily a person can adopt and conform to a particular gender ideology will depend on how well it fits one's "self" and one's "identity" that have developed through the processes of childhood socialisation (Duncombe & Marsden, 1998).

No one feature can be said to identify a social constructionist position. However, any approach that has at its foundation a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge, has historical and cultural specificity, acknowledges that knowledge is sustained by social processes, and sees knowledge and social action as going together, would fall under a social constructionist approach (Burr, 1995).

Feminist analysis

Feminist analysis has as its central core the premise that abuse is an expression and a mechanism of the institutional oppression of women (Kirkwood, 1993). While social constructionism looks at actual arrangements and activities, meanings and experiences, diversity and change, and interaction and relation, feminist analysis addresses how these arrangements are experienced as oppressive to women and how they benefit men in intimate relationships. Feminist scholarship is based on a belief that women continue to be devalued and oppressed; and it challenges the status quo (Flax, 1997; Leslie & Sollie, 1994; Morawski, 1997). Women and men's experiences tend to be different because of the differences of power between the genders (Daley & Montgomerie, 1999). Challenging the status quo by exposing the inequalities between the genders and advocating for change is what feminism is all about.

I have already discussed how the politics of patriarchy have produced a hierarchy of gender and have put men in a dominant position over women, as well as having devalued women's work (Ferree, 1990; Glenn, 1987; O'Neil & Egan, 1993). Moreover, even knowledge is related to this hierarchy of gender, as knowledge is related to the knower's position in a social order, the relations within a community of knowers, and the connections between knowers and the world to be known (Morawski, 1997). Feminist analysis exposes that gender inequality has been supported by social and political structures in the form of patriarchy, and that this inequality is often invisible because gender roles and characteristics are seen as natural.

Traditional gender roles are, however, not natural because they have their origin in cultural beliefs, institutions, and practices (Sidanius et al., 1991), as will be discussed in the next section on gender and power. Feminist theories explain how in patriarchal societies men have greater power than women, and how gender roles reflect this differential in power, as will be discussed. Personality characteristics, concerns and behaviours that are socialised in the Western world to go along with being biologically male or female are, therefore, learned behaviours as a result of this differential in power between the genders.

Moreover, social expectations are of great influence and are hard to resist (Gavey, 1992; Hare-Mustin, 1994b), and that is why they are powerful. Woman abuse, from this perspective, is seen as a problem that has developed out of social ideology and structures in patriarchal cultures that enforce the traditional gender structured family (Kirkwood, 1993).

Feminist critique of traditional gender-structured marriage has pointed out the overwhelming cost to women in financial, emotional, and physical dimensions. Moreover, “it is in the institution of the family that patriarchal legacy persists through continuation of the hierarchical relationship between men and women” (Dobash & Dobash, 1978, p.432). These authors stated that violence against women was a product of a system that was reflected in historical laws about male ownership and marriage, as well as current social gender roles and structures that secured the dominance of men over women. Although these statements were made nearly 25 years ago and although social gender roles are changing, it seems that many men still believe in the historical laws about male ownership of women. Cultural systems of oppression promote women’s social and economic dependency on men and the interaction of social status in husband and wife relations predisposes couples to stress and abuse.

In the 1970s, some feminists even likened marriage to a total institution, such as a prison or psychiatric institution. They claimed that the institution of marriage served to reinforce the isolation of married women, their dependency and loss of self-esteem (Brookes, 1999), which often results in depression (Stoppard, 1998). Women may turn the societal “gaze” on themselves, because they have internalised the gendered role as the way they “ought” to be. Gendered messages, such as ‘a woman’s place is in the house’, and ‘women are responsible for the physical and emotional welfare of the family’, and ‘good women sacrifice themselves for the family’ become prescriptions that women feel they have to adhere to in order to be seen as “good” women. Feminists, therefore, see unequal gender-structured marriages as preventing women from accepting or gratifying their basic need to grow and fulfil their potentialities as human beings (Brookes, 1999).

Feminist articles in the New Zealand 1970s periodical *Woman* stated that, unlike prisoners and asylum inmates, women could be seen as complicit in the constraints that were set for them, because the role of a wife is largely bound by custom rather than by authority (Brookes, 1999). Social constraints are then seen as within a woman's power to change. However, when authority is understood in a broader context, societal rules or custom may be seen as an authority from which it is very hard to free one's self. There may be consequences to not behaving as a good woman should; a partner or other people close to a woman may show displeasure and evoke guilt feelings for not measuring up to expectations. The consequences of not conforming may, therefore, leave a person rejected and isolated by society. Unless a woman becomes aware of the unfairness of the inequalities of gendered roles, she cannot change the situation, but the situation changes her, in terms of loss of self-esteem and depression.

An important epistemological tool for understanding and opposing these forms of domination is a feminist standpoint, because the most influential evaluations of experientially-based knowledge, as produced by qualitative research, come from scholars who advocate feminist standpoint epistemologies (Thompson, 1992). The concept of a standpoint structures epistemology in a particular way, as it proposes that there is a duality of levels of reality, of which the deeper level or essence both includes and explains the surface or appearance, rather than just simple dualism (Hartsock, 1997). A standpoint is for this reason not simply an interested position, by declaring a bias, but is interested in the sense of being engaged (Hartsock, 1997). This means that a standpoint not only uncovers what is deliberately concealed, but also carries with it the argument that there are some perspectives on society from which the real relations of humans with each other and with the natural world are not visible, however well intentioned one may be. If masculinity and femininity are structured in fundamentally opposing ways, one can expect that the vision of each will represent an inversion of the other, and this may be invisible to many. In systems of domination, the vision available to the dominant group will be both partial and unreasonable, because it structures the way the parties relate, but in which the dominant as well as the subordinate group are forced to participate (Harding, 1997; Hartsock, 1997).

To achieve a feminist standpoint, one must engage in the intellectual and political struggle necessary to see nature and social life from the point of view of women's social experiences, because women's voices have been suppressed in mainstream psychology (Harding, 1997; Thompson, 1992). Knowledge is then constructed in a different way. Constructed knowers weave together what they know from personal experience with what they learn from others, and move beyond academic disciplines and their methods as the sole source of authority, thereby reclaiming themselves as sources of knowledge (Thompson, 1992). This standpoint has a high tolerance for complexity, ambiguity, and contradiction, and it mingles reason and emotion, intuition and analytic thought, requiring reflexivity (Morawski, 1997; Thompson, 1992). Reflexivity is "the activity of reflecting on a power relation in order to understand it better and to break from its taken-for-granted influences" (Monk et al., 1997, p. 305).

Adopting a feminist standpoint also means having an explicit political agenda in what one chooses to research, in the relationships one develops with participants, and in the critique of what one may find (Thompson, 1992; Willott, 1999). My agenda for this research was to expose the unequal power in heterosexual couple relationships, and how that negatively affected women. From the perspective of social relations, women and men are both prisoners of gender, although in highly differentiated but interrelated ways (Flax, 1997). That men appear to be, and often are, controlling the social whole should not blind us to the extent to which they are also governed by the rules of gender (Flax, 1997). Feminism is a practical social movement, and a vital principle of feminist standpoint research is the demand for theories that are interwoven with emancipatory politics (Haug, 1987; Willott, 1999).

The feminist critique of patriarchy and the social constructionist critique of representation intersect most effectively where the issue goes beyond a mere critique of representation. It will then challenge all certified knowledge and open up the question of whether what has been taken to be true can stand the test of alternative ways of validating truth (Wright, 1997). The interface between feminist critique of patriarchy and the social constructionist critique of representation, therefore, provides feminism with a framework that enables it to

articulate the diversity and contradictions that spring up, not only between but also within various positions (Wright, 1997). Although some feminists may reject the argument that there are no a priori sources of truth, one does not have to accept that there are no truths. Focusing on marginalised and voiceless groups, such as women, while also acknowledging men's voices, is claimed to accomplish equal salience of men and women's truths (Willott, 1999).

My primarily feminist stance reiterates that women and men's characteristic social experiences do not provide equal ground for knowledge claims, because those who hold positions of greater power in any social context can decide what forms of knowledge are credible or acceptable, who will benefit, and who remains unheard or invisible. Because these unequal social experiences more advantageously shape men's knowledge horizons and support their interests, men are often ignorant of the misery they generate by dominating women. I, therefore, also approach this study from a social constructionist perspective that is critical about taken-for-granted knowledge, that acknowledges that social processes sustain knowledge, and that takes historical time and culture into consideration. I will now expose the connection between gender, power, and emotional abuse.

Connection between gender, power, and emotional abuse

The connection between gender, power, and emotional abuse has only just begun to be recognised at the end of the 21st century. Emotional abuse can happen in any relationship where there is a differential in power between two people or groups of people. To understand emotional abuse in heterosexual couple relationships, one needs to understand the connection between gender and power. Power has many definitions and is a multifaceted concept (O'Neil & Egan, 1993); it resides in the resources an individual can wield to influence another person (Canary & Emmers-Sommer, 1997). Sources of power include position or status, expertise, information, and personal characteristics (O'Neil & Egan, 1993).

The type of power that has major relevance to this thesis is power that is given to groups of people on the basis of their position in society. Societal power positions people in relation to others in terms of gender, race, and class; one's

status in this hierarchy of power influences one's access to power (O'Neil & Egan, 1993; Pence & Paymar, 1993; Rospenda, Richman, & Nawyn, 1998). In a sexist or patriarchal society, women's power is usually defined as less than men's, in terms of position power or status (O'Neil & Egan, 1993). Social structures in patriarchal societies, such as the institution of marriage, are hierarchical and grant men status with attendant power in the marriage relationship, while women have less power than men in terms of status (O'Neil & Egan, 1993; Robertson, 1999). New Zealand is a patriarchal society where men still have more social power than women. While power denotes the resources one has access to, control is the use of available power for one's own gain at the expense of another.

Although women may use sources of power such as expertise, information, and personal characteristics, and may even use them for personal gain, all women in patriarchal societies experience some type of disadvantage, mistreatment, fear of attack or lack of power, purely because they are women. If one looks at forms of power in couple relationships without acknowledging the unequal power between the genders, one obscures the fact that society has granted more power to men in a relationship than it has to women. In patriarchal societies, men are seen as the head of the household, who make the decisions and subordinate women to the position of helpers and carers. In this way, emotional abuse, like all other heterosexual couple abuse, has been linked to a loss of or denial of women's autonomy (Douglas, 1994), which some authors term agency (Buss, 1990, Heise, 1999, Helgeson, 1994). Women's individual rights as human beings are denied when men believe that, as men, they are entitled to special treatment and entitled to get their way.

O'Neil and Egan discussed French's (1985) explanation of societal power, which can be divided into 'power over' and 'power to' (O'Neil & Egan, 1993). 'Power over' refers to the domination of others and is usually used in discussion of men's relation to women within a patriarchal culture (Kirkwood, 1993; O'Neil & Egan, 1993). 'Power to' or empowerment, on the other hand, is used in discussion of women's effort to overcome the restriction of freedom created by patriarchal culture. Women empower themselves by resisting these restrictions, and by exposing these unequal power arrangements.

From a feminist perspective, gender hierarchies guarantee unjust power relationships and male oppression of women (Ferree, 1990; Glenn, 1987; O'Neil & Egan, 1993). Women can experience gender role restrictions, devaluations, and violations of equal rights as abuses of power. In this way, gender role socialisation, power conflicts, and abuse between men and women are directly related (Chang, 1996; O'Neil & Egan, 1993; Pence & Paymar, 1993).

Men may use their power by insistence, claims of greater knowledge, and assertions of authority (Canary & Emmers-Sommer, 1997). Men may also express their sense of superiority over women by making demands, by claiming entitlements as a male, by being selfish and by using women to serve their needs (Chang, 1996). Male behaviour may also consist of undermining, discounting, or isolating women (Marshall, 1999) in order to stay in control, because they believe they have a right to be in control. Women may be deprived, objectified, overburdened, and degraded (Kirkwood, 1993) when men believe that women are duty bound to support men and have no individual rights. Women may also be negated, accused of something by projection, or they may be negatively labelled; men may deny the abuse altogether (Loring, 1994) for similar reasons. Some of those behaviours involve covert control that is often unrecognised, and it is through the cumulative effects of various covert-controlling behaviours that such behaviour starts to constitute emotional abuse (Kirkwood, 1993; O'Neil & Egan, 1993). What these expressions of emotional abuse have in common is that men use the societal power that is bestowed on them by virtue of their being male when they think they are superior to women and have a right to be in control. An understanding of patriarchy and an analysis of gender, therefore, help to explain why men emotionally abuse women and why women may appear to accept emotional abuse.

Men who believe they have a right to control and who dominate in the relationship are likely to control in an overt way. However, men may not always feel that they have higher status in the relationship than their partners because partners may possess other forms of power, such as personal wealth, education or abilities that some men may not have. These men may then control in a covert

way because they feel that they ought to be in control of the relationship, even though they do not feel that they are. Weisbuch, Beal, and O'Neil (1999) found a strong relationship between gender role masculinity as measured by the Bem sex role inventory (BSRI-S), and overt aggression; men who used overt aggression measured high in traditional masculine behaviour. A more interesting finding was, however, that men who thought they ought to be more masculine than they were, and who, therefore, experienced gender role conflict (O'Neil, Good, & Holmes, 1995), expressed their aggression in a more covert form in order to maintain control (Weisbuch et al., 1999). This resulted in males adopting a pattern of aggression likely to be used when an individual is fearful of retaliation, such as passive aggressiveness, which is more common in females in Western society (Weisbuch et al., 1999). Passive aggression, through being resistant and withholding favours or kindness, is a covert form of abuse that may not be recognised as abusive, but it is a form of hidden power that is used to control the other and has the potential to be emotionally harmful. When used regularly, it may constitute emotional abuse, as emotional abuse is patterned behaviour.

Another form of invisible power comes in the form of social prescriptions of gendered behaviour that men may use to their own advantage. Men who expect women to behave according to gendered norms and who are not overtly dominant may quote those norms to subtly coerce a woman into conforming to the norms. In this way they are using invisible power to constrain women. The invisibility of this sort of power lies in the presumption of essential gender characteristics and complementary sex roles, because they mask the relations of power. Certain qualities are then explained as a gender difference rather than a quality elicited by their position in the relationship and society (Hare-Mustin, 1994b). If one sees masculinity and femininity as dichotomous, one may overlook the asymmetrical dominance and prestige given to males in Western societies (Sattel, 1998). It is not simply that we have been socialised to be different, but there is a male advantage in being different, as will be discussed later under social constructionism.

Power is also related to whether or not one needs the partner's compliance in order to achieve one's goals (Canary & Emmers-Sommer, 1997). This sort of

power is also connected to social roles. In relationships where there is no equality of genders, women often need a partner's compliance, such as men's assistance with childcare, so that women have time to pursue a personal goal. If a woman needs the compliance of her partner in order to achieve her goal but the partner fails to comply, she may use confrontation in order to achieve her goal. When she confronts, she may be seen as out of line and not conforming to the ideal of how women should behave. The control is inherent in a partner's ability to withhold something that constrains or negatively affects the other. On the other hand, if one does not need the other's help in order to achieve one's goals, as is the case when male privileges are in place and men want to keep them, avoidance of the partner may be used to maintain those benefits (Canary & Emmers-Sommer, 1997). This is behaviour that abusive men often use as a covert form of abuse.

A study on 'hidden power' in relationships showed that failure to change was a way for the powerful to get their way (Komter, 1989). If women want more change than men do in the way they relate to each other, and men fail to notice or respond, as, for example, when women want an equal relationship, then the absence of the desired change is a form of hidden power (Komter, 1989; Maccoby, 1998). Withholding, by failing to respond to a request for change, means that such men maintain the status quo that suits them. Men's unwillingness to change may also provoke emotional aggression from a partner because a man's use of hidden power, through passive resistance, may result in a woman using overt controlling behaviour in retaliation (Burck & Daniel, 1995; Loring, 1994; O'Hearn & Davis, 1997; O'Neil & Egan, 1993; Stets, 1991). A woman is then using power in an attempt to empower herself so that she will become more equal to her partner, as her request for a more equal relationship was denied through her partner's use of hidden power. Emotional abuse may, therefore, beget emotional abuse in relationships where women want to be equal with men and men will not allow this. Whether women retaliate against abuse may depend on whether they recognise the behaviour as abusive, and whether they feel safe to retaliate. Examining processes of power relations needs, therefore, to be done from intertwining levels of analyses, as one level of analysis does not provide the complete answer. If one has the power to withhold

something that a partner needs, and one uses that power for personal gain, it is a form of power that one uses in order to control the other.

Beginning to think in these terms opens up the possibility that it is the meaning behind the message and sometimes the style used during interactions that constitutes emotional abuse. For example, one partner may use information such as intimate knowledge to seriously hurt the other (Sebastian, 1983). Marshall gave examples where one's weaknesses, vulnerabilities, or even strengths can be used to produce harm in a loving context by caringly pointing them out and then devaluing them (Marshall, 1996). Moreover, such undermining of a partner's sense of self does not need to be on a conscious level as it could be accomplished out of a sense of love and caring (Marshall, 1994). However, the very idea that one partner knows better how the other needs to behave in order to be acceptable denotes positioning one's self as superior and in that way it is abusive. In fact, in Hoffman's study of 25 emotionally abused women, over 75% of the women were criticised on a point of strength, something they were very good at (Hoffman, 1984). Examples she gave from her research were things such as if a woman had demonstrated intelligence in school or work situations she was told that she was stupid, or if she was a good cook she was told that she prepared garbage, and women who took great care in child rearing were accused of being inadequate mothers. Men who abuse in such a way may think that women are not entitled to be intelligent and capable, because women are supposed to be inferior to men, and so they may denigrate women on those points of strength. If even women's strengths are attacked, women get a very strong message that there is nothing left about them that is worthwhile.

When women react against being undermined, or against other forms of hidden power, by becoming angry or aggressive, men may call such behaviour abusive. However, from a feminist viewpoint, which upholds the equality of the genders and rejects the hierarchy of the genders that patriarchal cultures have been promoting, equivalent behaviour does not convey similar meanings when cultural contexts are understood and appropriately considered (Reid, 1993). Emotionally abusive behaviour may be bi-directional (Burck & Daniel, 1995; Loring, 1994; O'Hearn & Davis, 1997; O'Neil & Egan, 1993; Stets, 1991), but feminist literature

asserts that males are mostly the aggressors with women reacting to the abuse (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997; Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994; Pence & Paymar, 1993). It may be, therefore, that when women are emotionally abusive, they are so as a reaction to abuse. It is also possible that partners resort to different types of emotionally abusive behaviour, depending on their gender, status, or personal style. Moreover, emotionally abusive behaviour is not the same as emotional abuse, as it is patterned emotionally abusive behaviour resulting in long term negative consequences for a partner that differentiates the effects of emotional abuse from transitory feelings of emotional pain (Chang, 1996; Loring, 1994; Marshall, 1996).

Interestingly, it does not seem to be men's perceived lack of dominance in a relationship that predicts relationship abuse by men of women, but satisfaction with the amount of power they have in the relationship (Ronfeldt, Kimerling, & Arias, 1998), although Ronfeldt and colleagues did not discuss how a man's subscription to patriarchal ideology will affect the degree of power a man may be satisfied with. When men are dissatisfied with the level of power they have, there is an increased likelihood of psychological abuse, and for some this escalates to physical abuse. This ties in well with the view that men who ascribe to traditional dominant masculinity, and who, therefore, need to see themselves in control in order to feel like a real man (Edley & Wetherell, 1996; Kimmel, 1997; Messner, 1997; Seidler, 1998), may resort to controlling behaviour if they feel dissatisfied with the power they possess in their relationship. Controlling behaviour is sometimes called coercive power (Brewer & Wann, 1998) or deprivation (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994), because it equates with having power over somebody and having the capability to take away something valued.

On the other hand, men who are not bound by dominant masculine prescriptions may feel satisfied with low relationship power and may not resort to abuse, even if their power in the relationship is very low. Whether men use societal power in relationships seems to depend on whether they believe that men need to dominate in order to be seen as a man, or whether they believe that they have a right to dominate women. When men dominate in the relationship, they make use of societal power by prescribing or imposing particular forms of behaviour on

women that are prescribed by societal norms, and this type of power is often invisible.

Invisible power, in the way it is discussed here, is power that is exercised through prescriptions of gendered practices that are seen as natural. In discussing Foucault's work, Gavey stated that disciplinary power, exercised invisibly, regulates life by imposing particular forms of behaviour, such as gendered norms of behaving, and by working through "subtle coercion" (Gavey, 1992). Men who emotionally abuse often violate women's rights without conscious intent, in that the messages of gendered roles and women's subordination are considered natural, through accepted normal practices in society (Gavey, 1992; Hare-Mustin, 1994b). Men often do not realise that their behaviour is based on male privilege because that way of behaving is ingrained in the way Western men are socialised (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1996; O'Neil & Egan, 1993). Viewing gender as a major cue for people's social interaction in this manner stresses the way that an individual's gender affects other people's expectations, thereby shaping the behaviours that are directed toward him or her (Hare-Mustin, 1994b; Marshall, 1994; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Men may believe that they have a right to male privilege, and, therefore, a right to control partners, and believe that women do not have the same rights; such men may have no idea that those rights could be contestable. A violation of human rights is abuse. However, from a man's perspective, if a woman does not have a right to equality, that right cannot be abused. Belief systems are, therefore, all-important in terms of what rights one believes one has, and what behaviour may be considered abusive.

Feminist models of emotional abuse advocate women's rights on the ground of the equality of the genders, they expose the unequal power in relationships, and link these to abuse. They are the preferred perspective for this study as they acknowledge men's abuse of their superior position and social power. I will, therefore, concentrate on those perspectives in this study. I will give an account of New Zealand's socio-political history that contributed to how men and women were positioned in society, so that the reader may take this into consideration when abusive practices are discussed.

New Zealand's socio-historical culture

Cultural theorists have understood culture as the whole way of life of a society or community, a kind of framework passed down from generation to generation (Edley & Wetherell, 1996). A culture, therefore, consists of structures and practices that uphold a social organisation by ongoing and normalising specific values, expectations, and meanings, as well as patterns of thought, feeling and actions (Wood, 1995). These factors help to determine which traits and behaviours are regarded as socially acceptable or deviant (Hare-Mustin, 1994b; Marshall, 1994; Unger & Sanchez-Hucles, 1993). Therefore, from a cultural perspective, every culture in the world must contain its own particular set of themes or ideas that relate to gender. These ideas vary across time, place, class, race, and religion, making it is possible for several constructions of masculinity (or femininity) to co-exist in one time and place (Fuller, 1996).

I will concentrate on the social history of the Pakeha (New Zealand-born, of European descent), as all of the participants in this study were Pakeha. However, I acknowledge that Maori (indigenous) New Zealanders may have had different experiences in New Zealand society.

New Zealand is very much gender-divided and this may have been accentuated by the imbalance in the sex ratios of colonial life in the latter end of the 19th century, because far more men than women initially migrated to New Zealand (Phillips, 1980). By the turn of the twentieth century, the balance in numbers between men and women became more equal, but males continued to control social, political, and economic power in the first half of the twentieth century, and their attitudes necessarily affected the place of women in society (Montgomery, 2001; Phillips, 1980).

During the early post- Second World War years, masculine identities were constructed around employment, occupational status and financial responsibility for the family, while the primary identity of women was as wives and mothers who stayed home to care for the family (Frank, 1999; May, 1992). Some have argued that post World War II New Zealand men and women had separate but

equal spheres, in that the roles were seen as equal but clearly demarcated (Ireland, 1988; Keith, 1988; King, 1988a; May, 1992; Montgomerie, 1999). Women depended on men economically and men depended on women for raising their children and servicing their needs (May, 1992) and this was seen as functional to society (Frank, 1999). Although the complimentary roles, in theory, may have been seen as equal, the reality seemed to be that the external sphere in society occupied by men gave them status and economic power, while women were mostly positioned in a supportive role that was generally less valued in society, not paid, and which left them economically dependent on men (Craig, 1992; Munford, 1992). Women were left with the most time-consuming, monotonous, and repetitive tasks, with the least choice over when these tasks could be done (Cook, 1986; Habgood, 1992). Women also had fewer choices available to them because of their economic dependence on men, and this perpetuated gender inequality.

Feminists would argue that, rather than seeing demarcated gender roles in a patriarchal system as functional to society because they help maintain the structure of the nuclear family, gender roles serve the purpose of keeping women economically dependent on men and, therefore, in a lower position of economic power (Kirkwood, 1993). This view sees the nuclear family as maintained and enforced by a system of patriarchy, which serves to grant men greater power over, and in relation to, women.

Moreover, the rigid polarisation of gender roles produced male authoritarianism and female conformity to men's wishes (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1978). Men often viewed wives who worked for money a result of the husband's personal failure to provide financially for the family (May, 1992). This could then induce feelings of shame in the men concerned (Montgomery, 2001). Some writers saw the family household as the principal site of women's oppression (Habgood, 1992; Workers Communist League, 1987), with women carrying greater responsibility but less authority at home. Women's work was trivialised by many men as 'non-work', because they saw home making and shopping as leisure activities, and they tended to see childrearing as minding, while any paid work tended to be seen as 'pin money' (May, 1992; McKinlay, 1992). The dominant pattern in society was that

men gave women messages that, as breadwinners, men were the real workers (Craig, 1992; McKinlay, 1992; Munford, 1992). When women's work was trivialised by men, it was less likely that women felt validated by this work, while, on the other hand, gendered roles also discouraged women from seeking paid employment that could validate them. Many women may have gained satisfaction from performing their roles as mother and wife, but the traditional complementary roles of women and men left women with more responsibility and less authority for the work they did, and they were less likely to be appreciated for what they did. Women's domestic role created a female selflessness (James & Saville-Smith, 1989), and other dimensions of women's experiences, such as time for themselves, were accommodated to men's needs in order to minimise conflict (May, 1992).

Women may have comprised an increasing proportion of the New Zealand labour force since the 1950s, but most women in the second half of the twentieth century still continued to give first priority to the female role of being a mother, because of Bowlby's 'maternal deprivation' belief that the child's welfare depended on the mother's presence (Barrington, 1981; Ritchie, 1999). Women were generally only accepted as workers when their childcare duties had been completed (Brosnahan, 1987; McDonald, 1994), albeit generally in positions within the service areas. Although a structural shift towards higher female participation in the workforce ensued in subsequent years, this shift was often due to shifting economies, rather than due to a change in men's way of thinking (May, 1992; Montgomerie, 1999).

Since 1960, New Zealand has seen major advances toward greater equality of opportunity for women in the workforce (Mc Bride, 1979) and has provided more equal educational opportunities for women (May, 1992; Ritchie & Ritchie, 1997). Feminists in New Zealand, as well as elsewhere in the world, started to question the received wisdom about male and female roles, and feminist women in the 1960s sought to bring about a change in consciousness (Brookes, 1999). Some women, therefore, started to acknowledge their right to economic independence from men and wanted to ensure their own security in the workplace, instead of relying on the security provided by men within the home.

Since the 1970s there has been a dramatic deepening in knowledge about gender relations in heterosexual nuclear family households. The complexity of domestic life, which was uncovered by feminist research and theorising, has challenged many of the assumptions held about housework, childcare, and the power relations between men and women in such households (Habgood, 1992). For example, one of the most significant advances made in understanding gender relations in households, through feminist work in the 1970s and 1980s, has been the recognition that housework is indeed 'work' (Habgood, 1992; May, 1992; see also overseas literature such as Jamieson, 1997; Thompson, 1991; Thompson & Walker, 1989)], and that childcare does not necessarily have to be done by a mother but could be performed by any caring adult (Ritchie, 1993; Ritchie, 1999; Ritchie & Ritchie, 1997). This recognition did not necessarily bring a change in gender relations, as not all men accepted challenges to their traditional authority and rights. The 1970s brought gains for women in terms of progressive social policies, such as the Domestic Purposes Benefit, the Equal Pay Act, and the Matrimonial Property Act (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1997), while the 1980s saw the Human Rights Commission Act, the Domestic Protection Act, the Maternity leave and Employment Protection Act, as well as changes to the legislation on rape (Statistics, 1990; Wilson, 1993).

The position of New Zealand women may have advanced in the second half of the 20th century. Yet, even in the 1980s, the time that most of the participants of this research were in relationships, 60% of New Zealand women were outside the full-time labour force, as compared to only 22 % of men (Statistics, 1987), which left women generally still economically dependent. Men still tended to be the major breadwinners in the households they shared with women, despite the major advances towards greater equality, and women were still not being treated as equal (Capper, 1988). Even in the 1990s, equal pay and opportunity were still not a reality for most women in New Zealand (Hyman, 1993).

It is interesting that, in the light of the social changes that have occurred in the second half of the twentieth century in New Zealand, research showed that a group of 123 university students in the 1990s, with an age range of 18-51, 72 % of

whom were women, were still traditional in their gender role practices, in that women were still struggling with family responsibilities and concerned with maintaining relationships, and men with providing financial security (Oliver, 1993). However, this study also showed that many women, particularly those over 30, recognised how relationships with men generally had blocked the development of their own identity, confidence and self-esteem (Oliver, 1993). Many women recognised that just being themselves was made difficult, because of their female socialisation to always put others first, and to be nice, to please others and to seek approval. The majority of women in Oliver's study regarded it as their responsibility to manage the huge pressures and stresses resulting from pursuing activities for their own personal development, and blamed themselves when they felt unable to cope.

On the other hand, both women's and men's expectations in Oliver's study seemed to have shifted in terms of personal growth, in that women wanted to become more independent and confident, while men wanted to understand themselves and their reactions better and wanted to learn to communicate better. Personal growth, in an ironic way, seemed to mean becoming more like the 'other' gender. Oliver found that the contradictions between women's traditional practices and their striving for non-traditional gender traits did not seem to be recognised by the majority of the women; they just knew that they felt extremely pressured and stressed. This research was conducted at the same university that I am connected with, and Oliver's student population came from the same town as my participant population, several of whom were also students at that university at the time of the interviews. It may, therefore, give some indication of the struggles and contradictions my participants may have had to deal with.

Although advances have been made in addressing gender inequality in this country, there is still a gap between attitudes and behaviour. Incongruity between ideology and practice of equal relationships may occur because changing ingrained behaviour may take a great deal of effort in terms of past behaviour, despite changed attitudes (Blaisure & Allen, 1995). There also tends to be an age gap in terms of what is seen as acceptable and what is practised. One study, in the 1980s, found that older women accepted that younger women have a right to some

life of their own, and yet they themselves placed family needs before their own needs (May, 1992). This seemed to be because the older women may have been less aware of alternatives at the time, or may have thought that, in reality, alternatives were impossible for them to achieve. Younger women, particularly the middle class, are generally better educated, more often in paid employment and more economically independent, and seem to be less bound by societal constraints than the older generation of women; this is shown in more divorces and more single parent families (May, 1992; Ritchie, 1999). Societal constraints have lessened over the second half of the 20th century, with divorce and single parent families now more acceptable than in earlier years. Moreover, the Domestic Purposes Benefit, introduced in 1973, has made it possible for more women to choose those options.

Some have asserted that the older generation may not have been happier than the younger generation, but that the reason why they stayed married was that they were constrained from choosing alternatives to staying in a spirit destroying relationship (May, 1992). It may be extreme and global to say that all women in traditional relationships have felt abused, and that all women who are in abusive relationships have their spirit destroyed, as there are multiple ways of coming to terms with injustices in one's life. However, I take O'Neil and Egan's position and argue that when traditional gendered roles are prescribed rather than voluntarily followed, together with negative consequences for not conforming to these prescriptions, it starts to become abusive (O'Neil & Egan, 1993). I will now turn to theories of emotional abuse.

Theories of emotional abuse

The discussion of feminist theory has alluded to the way prescriptions of how one ought to behave, depending on one's gender, discourage one from behaving in any way outside of the set parameters. This constricts one's range of behaving, and for women this generally means that they are restricted in behaving in ways that are seen as masculine such as being assertive and in control. A man who frowns upon a woman when she asserts herself or wants to maintain personal control is verging on behaving in an emotionally abusive way, as people need to have some

measure of independence in order to maintain their emotional health (Helgeson, 1994).

Feminist literatures have exposed the unequal power in relationships and have linked these to abuse. They see emotional abuse as a stage where men are the actors of abuse in reaction to a wide variety of wife behaviours, whereas when women emotionally abuse they mostly do so in self-defence (Chang, 1996; James, 1996; Jones & Schechter, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994; Marshall, 1994; O'Hearn & Davis, 1997; O'Neil & Egan, 1993). Women's emotional abuse of men is then seen as a response to frustration and stress (James, 1996). According to this approach, men systematically and structurally control women within a culture that is designed to meet the needs of and benefits men. For this reason, abuse cannot be addressed through the perspectives of individual victimisation or relationship dynamics, but needs to be seen in the context of a societal structure that privileges men over women.

This feminist stance informs my theoretical perspective in part, but other perspectives have informed the issue of emotional abuse. I will start with discussing the power and control model, which is a feminist model, and will then explain how a social constructionist perspective explains emotional abuse. An ecological model that acknowledges the effects of the broader culture, as well as the effects of family, and individually learned behaviour on how emotional abuse is explained will also be discussed. I will finish by discussing attachment theory, but only in the context of people's vulnerability to being emotionally abused as it does not adequately explain why people emotionally abuse.

Power and control model

The power and control model is a feminist model that attempts to explain abuse by suggesting that physical violence, which it sees as mainly husband to wife aggression, is a result of the subordinate position that women occupy relative to men in patriarchal societies (Adams, 1988; Pence & Paymar, 1993; Robertson, 1999). From this perspective, abusive behaviour is understood to be controlling

behaviour that is intended to maintain an imbalance of power within the relationship. Emotionally abusive tactics are used to control a woman, and when emotional abuse on its own is not enough to control a person, the abuse can escalate to physical abuse.

Conceptualisations of emotional abuse have, therefore, focused on overtly dominating and controlling behaviours, partly because violence can readily be conceived of as resulting from a desire to dominate a partner. When concepts of emotional abuse derive from battered women and the association between violence and abuse, the logical approach is to consider emotional abuse another form of overt dominance. Emotional abuse in this context is usually seen as a precursor to violence. The controlling behaviour is seen as a means to maintain power and control over another (Jones & Schechter, 1992; Pence & Paymar, 1993) and a belief in entitlement to control (Jones & Schechter, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993; NiCarthy, 1986; Pence & Paymar, 1993), together with societal sanctions of abuse against those with lesser power (Briere, 1987; Chang, 1996; Falchikov, 1996; Straus et al., 1980).

The power and control model takes structural explanations of behaviour into consideration, such as societal expectations and gendered roles. Studies of men who use violence in heterosexual couple relationship show that they generally have traditional ideas about gendered roles where the men are dominant, strong, and controlling, and where women have a subordinate role as carers and helpers (Loring & Beaudoin, 2000; Marshall, 1994). The same traditional roles exist in emotionally abusive relationships. When traditional gender roles are observed, women are subordinate in the relationship and take all the traditional household responsibilities, as well as accepting the husband's definition of the relationship and his preferences of financial management (Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994; Loring, 1994).

Men who misuse their societal power often believe that their own needs, wants, and interests are more important than their partners' needs are, and they see their own behaviour as morally right and justified. Because these men believe that their behaviour is justified, they consistently behave in that manner, unlike men

who physically abuse whose behaviour tends to be episodic and cyclical (Chang, 1996; Douglas, 2000). Men who have been socialised in the traditional mould are unreflective about their own needs and feelings, and they have particular difficulty with feelings that are not considered masculine, such as loneliness, sadness, fear, affection, silliness, dependency, joy and tenderness (Chang, 1996). Many needs are also considered unacceptable, including dependency, affection, and non-sexual touch.

The common view in this model is that men's angry reactions lead them to assert or reassert control. From a structural, contextual perspective, gender differences occur within a broader context of societal prescriptions, organised on the basis of sex. When this perspective is taken to its extreme, it does not take into consideration how individuals respond to their social context on the basis of their unique makeup and experiences. Many types of emotional abuse have been neglected as a result of the focus on overt acts, the context of conflict and anger, and the association with violence (Marshall, 1994). Control may be exerted from a place of dependence, rather than a dominance position, in that some men may be emotionally dependent on women and may appeal to women's nurturing qualities (Chang, 1996; Marshall, 1996; Marshall, 1999) in order to get their way. The control is inherent in men acting in terms of societal prescriptions that portray women as not "good" if they do not conform to these prescriptions (Hare-Mustin, 1994b; Stoppard, 1998). When men use societal control to their advantage, it also constitutes emotional abuse (O'Neil & Egan, 1993), as their operating belief is that they should have privileges and should be in control as men, even if they do not overtly behave in dominant ways. Men who are not overtly dominant may, nevertheless, use subtle and covert abuse, such as by making women feel guilty or by withholding emotional warmth, in an attempt to make women conform, thereby retaining their own privileged position.

Social constructionist model

While social constructionism has been discussed in terms of a relational construct that two people create through interaction with each other, and in terms of the role

that language plays in the production of meaning, in this section I will discuss how social constructionism explains emotional abuse.

Feminist theory, from a social constructionist perspective, sees emotional abuse as resulting from the way men and women are positioned in relation to each other by society and how those positions are maintained by structural and material cultural practices (Bohan, 1997; Hallstein, 1999; O'Neil & Egan, 1993; Woods, 1999).

This model explains how, in patriarchal societies, men tend to position women as subordinate and without agency, because men are seen as super ordinate and as having agency, in contrast to women. This positioning is often done with language and the use of binaries, in that gender characteristics are each seen as an inversion of the other. If men are seen as strong, women must be weak, if men are seen as rational, women must be irrational, if men are seen as knowledgeable, women cannot be seen as knowledgeable. The language that is used, therefore, places men and women in relation to each other, and this is usually in power relations of some kind (Monk et al., 1997).

If women are always positioned as being the inverse of men in every way, as already discussed in the section on power, women cannot be seen as strong, rational, and knowledgeable beings. Men will then challenge women and criticise them when they behave in such a way. Men who do not see themselves as having characteristics that are on the male side of the binary may even fear that they are not seen as masculine. This fear may then drive them to behave in abusive ways in order to represent the male side of the binary and regain their more valued male position. Emotional abuse from a feminist social constructionist perspective is viewed as being constructed through socialised practices that position women as not equal, and, therefore, subordinate, to men. Feminists who believe in the equality between the genders experience this subordinate positioning as oppressive.

Because I see emotional abuse in terms of a power differential, I want to make space for the possibility that not only gender, but also class, education, competencies, race and age can situate people in multiple different positions regarding power.

We do not carry around a fixed amount of power, dependent solely on our socio-economic class or gender. Rather, power relationships are context specific. They are determined by the discourses constructed by those conversing, which are, of course, intertwined with systems of oppression such as class and gender (Willott, 1999, p.188).

As Willott suggests, women may also have power in certain areas or situations, and are, therefore, capable of using that power. I had to acknowledge that women also had power, because this realisation made it possible to explain why some men did not overtly use their power and chose to control through being resistant rather than dominant.

Willott warned against simply analysing power in terms of a unitary patriarchy, as that would merely be using the flip side of the same coin and would pathologise men (Willott, 1999). This would risk failing to see the big picture by not acknowledging other systems of oppression. However, although women may have power in certain areas, such as social class, education, competencies, and age, these types of power are generally not used in a patterned and sustained way such as positioning through gender does, as gender relations colour our everyday interactions. The occasional use of emotionally abusive behaviour may not necessarily constitute emotional abuse, as emotional abuse constitutes patterned and consistent abuses of power, which in patriarchal societies is more likely to be carried out by men.

I favour a social constructionist approach in explaining emotional abuse because it explains how men and women are positioned in society through the conditioning of gendered roles. It refrains from blaming the individual, and it blames social expectations and cultural practices instead. It asserts that the patriarchal structure of power and privilege in society positions men to experience humiliation when gender divisions blur and positions women for punishment if they claim what are considered male prerogatives (Goldner et al., 1997).

Abuse seen this way is a man's attempt to reassert gender difference and gender dominance, when fighting a woman's attempts at independence (O'Neil & Egan, 1993). All emotionally abusive behaviour is in order to gain, regain, or retain power, in order to balance the power relationship in a way that seems just and fair

and safe from one's own perspective, and this may not always be done consciously. What is just and fair depends on one's beliefs and values. If men believe in patriarchy or accept it unconsciously that women are subordinate to men, they may believe that it is fair for men to be in charge.

Men who think that they are entitled to get things their way, purely because they are men, are likely to control women to get what they want, although they may use different strategies in order to achieve this. Abuse may also follow when men experience feelings they deem unmanly, such as dependency, fear, and sadness, and which seem unacceptable because they do not fit socialised gender premises about masculinity (Goldner et al., 1997). Controlling his partner may be a man's way of dealing with the fear that his partner may be a person in her own right who may disagree or compete with him, or may even leave him.

I do not believe that it is useful to blame men for socialised behaviour that they have not yet recognised as being abusive. Social change activism without honouring everyone's humanity does not lead anywhere (Adair, 1992). Role prescriptions are abusive, and not necessarily the individuals who feel bound by these prescriptions and who do not realise the potential abusiveness of these. The future of non-abusive relationships lies in educating men and women about the abusiveness of role prescriptions that devalue women.

Men need to be educated that New Zealand laws no longer give them the right to subordinate women, as times have changed and women are equal to men in law. Men also need to be educated that they will generally not be shamed any more when they do not conform to traditional gendered prescriptions, although some individual men may still do so. Most, although not all, women in the Western world admire men who step outside the traditional masculine stereotypes and who treat women as equals. It may only be men wanting to hold on to gendered power who will ridicule other men who deviate from gendered norms. The challenge may be for men to educate those traditional men to move their goalposts beyond the traditional narrow view of masculinity. Only when men and women understand how prescribed gender roles devalue women, and only if men are willing to give up their superior position in the relationship, will it be possible to

have relationships where both have dignity and respect for their partner, as well as themselves.

Ecological model

A feminist ecological model is a model that explains emotional abuse from multiple perspectives. Ecological theories propose that interactive effects of the broader culture, the subculture, the family, and individually learned characteristics are all examined when investigating abuse, and, therefore, endorse adopting a “both-and” position rather than only look at the macro system factor of patriarchy (Goldner et al., 1997; Stets, 1991). From this perspective, one level of description does not exclude another and all can exist and influence simultaneously. This view also proposes that more within-category individual variations exist than the categorical view acknowledges. Not all abusive men may overtly practice their patriarchal beliefs through domineering behaviour. Focusing only on patriarchy and the macro system factors, such as is done in the power and control model, is then seen as obscuring the learned behaviour factors that might differentiate one male from another. Some men may embrace patriarchal beliefs but are too timid to overtly control women in order to hold on to privileges. They may try to hold on to male privilege by being resistant. From this perspective, when only one system is examined one only captures one piece of an intricate puzzle of abusive behaviour.

The ecological perspective looks at the wider picture of societal prescriptions. It acknowledges individual differences in socialisation and individual personality differences. No one theory adequately explains emotional abuse completely in all its complexity, and this model takes a “both-and” position, arguing that one level of description or explanation does not exclude another. For example, just as kindness and cruelty can coexist in one person, so can compassion and dispassion (Masson & McCarthy, 1996). This view proposes that patriarchy provides values and attitudes that some men exploit to justify their abuse of women. It enquires about ideas, beliefs, and internal representations of self and other that constitute the organising and unworkable premises underlying couples’ fierce attachments (Goldner et al., 1997). Although the ecological perspective sees people as

individuals, it also acknowledges that all of us operate within the constraints and prescriptions that society decrees. By incorporating men and women's positions in society and marriage, this perspective also makes room for social constructionist ways of interpreting emotional abuse.

Although I believe that all these multiple perspectives contribute to an understanding of why men emotionally abuse, I believe that the macro system factor may have more power to influence than other factors. This is because the constraints of patriarchal beliefs on women are often invisible, as men and women may both see this prescribed gendered behaviour as natural. Socialised constraints on women may, therefore, not be recognised by either party in the relationship. The effects of the broader culture may be less visible in some forms of men's purely emotionally abusive behaviour than in men's battering behaviour, because these men do not hit women. I believe that all the other perspectives discussed under ecological theory only contribute to explaining why people abuse each other, but may not explain how men succeed in abusing women. Power, and especially invisible power, may be the only explanation of why men succeed in abusing women, and acknowledging power in heterosexual relationships only partially explains this theory.

Attachment theories

Attachment theories may have no place in a feminist analysis that exposes power differentials between the sexes, such as this thesis. However, I believe that attachment theory, which takes into consideration how our childhood experiences have shaped us to relate in particular ways in adult relationships, has something to contribute to an explanation of the effects of emotional abuse (See Babcock, Jacobson, Gottman, & Yerington, 2000; Barnett, Martinez, & Bluestein, 1995; Bartholomew, Henderson, & Dutton, 2001; Brennan & Bosson, 1998; Davila, Karney, & Bradbury, 1999; Dutton et al., 1994; Feeney, 1999; Fuendeling, 1998; Goldner et al., 1997; Kemp & Neimeyer, 1999; Kesner & McKenry, 1998). Traumatic experiences that have betrayed our trust in others may make us reactive in our relations towards others, or cause us to use defence systems that were learned in childhood, in an attempt to protect us at the time of the trauma.

Attachment theory may, therefore, explain why people who have been abused in the past are more likely to behave in submissive ways that leave them vulnerable to abuse.

Attachment theory is not useful as a way of explaining why men abuse. It may explain why people get angry as a way of protecting their own vulnerable feelings. However, it does not differentiate between the feeling and the expression of emotions, and it is in the expression of emotions that abusive behaviour is differentiated from acceptable behaviour. This is the reason why attachment theories are not compatible with feminist theories, which look at how and whether emotions are expressed in terms of people's relative position of power in the relationship. Furthermore, feelings of arousal or stress do not directly lead to violence; rather, it is the various factors, such as cognitions, that support or justify the use of violence (O'Neil & Egan, 1993; Pence & Paymar, 1993) or, that exacerbate or buffer the relationship between stress and marital violence (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997). Cognitions are an important variable in explaining gendered abusive behaviour because, if one believes that men are super-ordinate and women sub-ordinate in the hierarchy of genders, the belief in this power differential between the genders makes abuse acceptable (O'Neil & Egan, 1993).

Attachment theory, therefore, explains only the reason why certain feelings surface in close interpersonal dynamics, but it does not explain how certain feelings, such as anger, are expressed; it is in the expression of feelings that emotional abuse may occur. Attachment theory may only be useful to this study in terms of explaining why some women who have experienced childhood trauma may be more vulnerable to abusive behaviour in an adult relationship than other women, if their damaged self-esteem has not been subsequently strengthened. They may, therefore, be more likely to become submissive than other women.

In summary, attachment theory only takes family and individually learned characteristics into consideration when explaining why certain feelings of powerlessness surface in men who abuse, but not how those feelings are expressed, while ecological theories also take into consideration how the sub

culture and broader culture influence people to behave in certain ways. The power and control model and the social constructionist model have both in common that they concentrate on the broader culture and see emotional abuse as occurring because of men's position in relation to women. Feminist models further explain that the relative positioning of men in relation to women, which happens in patriarchal hierarchical structures, positions men as superior to women, and, therefore, gives men the right to control women. These theories have given an overview as to the varying reasons why men may emotionally abuse women. My theoretical perspective is informed by social constructionism, as well as by feminism. Social constructionism is useful in explaining the actual social arrangements and activities that position women in relation to men, while feminist analysis informs me how these arrangements are experienced as oppressive to women and how they benefit men in intimate relationships.

Studies of emotional abuse in committed relationships

I will now examine how different researchers have defined emotional abuse and look at their findings in the light of their particular definition of emotional abuse. Some researchers used the term “psychological abuse” for “non-physical abuse”, and I will use whatever term they used to denote the non-physical abuse that I term emotional abuse. I have chosen to concentrate on the work of the following researchers for two reasons. First and foremost, I chose researchers who have studied emotional abuse that is discrete from physical abuse, as I am doing. Very few have studied emotional abuse discrete from physical abuse and only one New Zealand researcher did so; the others were from the United States. The authors who had studied pure emotional abuse had all used qualitative methods for data collecting. I also chose to discuss a researcher who had investigated emotional abuse in a quantitative way and not discrete from physical abuse, but who made a contribution to this thesis by exposing very subtle forms of abuse that had previously not been investigated. I have chosen to discuss authors and their studies individually, rather than integrate their findings, to show how each individual author's findings uncovered different aspects of emotional abuse, depending on how they defined emotional abuse. Furthermore, I will indicate

how these studies informed my thinking about emotional abuse. I will call emotional abuse that is discrete from physical abuse “pure” emotional abuse.

Psychodynamic approach

Lachkar is one of the most recent researchers to study emotional abuse. An American psychotherapist in private practice, she took a psychodynamic approach and concentrated on the personality of the abuser; in this study she concentrated on the narcissistic abuser (Lachkar, 2000). She explained abuse as happening in relationships because certain personality types behave in certain ways. She described the narcissistic abuser as the “entitlement lover” who is in love with self, who cannot imagine the needs of the other, and is in constant search of those who offer validation, praise, reassurance, mirroring, or any semblance of personal gratification.

Behaviour of narcissistic abusers has a great deal in common with traditional dominant masculine behaviour in relation to women, as traditionally New Zealand men believe that women are there to support men’s way of life (Phillips, 1980) and that as men they are entitled to special privileges that women do not have. Men are, therefore, conditioned to behave in selfish ways. Lachkar’s study was, therefore, useful for my work in terms of identifying certain abusive behaviour. However, the psychodynamic approach does not see personality as unstable and context-specific, and does not connect this type of behaviour to male belief systems and male socialisation. Neither does this approach acknowledge that the impact of emotional abuse is context specific and derived from unequal power in relationships. Furthermore, she looked at emotional abuse of high functioning professional women in terms of suggestions for treatment. Her study, therefore, focused largely on treatment, which made it less useful for this study. For these reasons I made little use of this study.

Interpersonal communication and social influence approach

Marshall is an American author who took an interpersonal communication and social influence approach to psychological abuse. She argued that it is in the

content of the message conveyed during interactions that abuse occurs. From her perspective some psychological abuse occurs in all close relationships, but an effective abuser would be a person who effectively undermined a partner's psychological, emotional, and /or behavioural competence. She acknowledged that the sex-role training women receive might make them particularly vulnerable to abuse because of their expressive and interpersonal orientation. Therefore, she acknowledged a gender difference in power because of the way the genders are socialised. She also acknowledged a physical difference in strength that advantages men, but she did not acknowledge the hierarchical structure of patriarchy that grants men superiority over women, so that men feel entitled to treat women as subordinate to them.

Marshall conducted quantitative research on physical and psychological abuse to assess psychological abuse from the violence perspective, using the Severity of Violence Against Women Scale (SVAW) that she developed (Marshall, 1992 a) on a large sample of women. She divided her female participants in three groups, from psychological abuse only to moderate and severe physical violence, based on how the women assessed themselves on their own and their partner's behaviour in a list of abusive acts. She found that more than 85% of the women reported that men used guilt, emotional isolation, rejection, shifting responsibility onto them, and withdrawing from them, which shows that emotionally abusive acts were used by physically violent as well as abusive but non-violent men (Marshall, 1994). She found that the frequency with which men showed love and caring was positively related to the severity of impact of abuse, in that the more often men displayed loving and caring behaviour towards their partner the more severe the negative impact was when these often caring men behaved in emotionally abusive ways. She also found that the impact of abuse when overt acts of violence were not present was related to hospitalisation for emotional distress, while when overt acts of violence occurred, these correlations were not significant. She actually found a negative correlation between overt threats of violence and women being hospitalised for their emotional state (Marshall, 1994). The reason for this finding may be that women are more likely to internalise their emotional distress if they cannot find an external reason for this, such as overt abuse. This study was useful in showing the high prevalence of specific impacts of emotional abuse, such as

feelings of guilt, emotional isolation, rejection, and neglect, as well as feeling overly responsible. This study also showed that emotional abuse without any form of physical violence could cause serious emotional harm.

In another quantitative study, which was designed to identify patterns of psychological abuse in violent relationships, Marshall (1996) assessed 51 items of subtle and overt abuse. In her cluster analysis she identified six groups that differed on the frequency and types of psychological abuse they sustained (Marshall, 1996). She assessed power in the relationship, as well as the man's effort and importance he placed on the relationship and commitment to the relationship. Power was measured by asking the question, "How much power does your partner have in the relationship?" (None to all) and later in the interview women answered the same question with reference to themselves. Self-ratings were then subtracted from the ratings women gave for their partner, and the larger this difference, the greater the man's relative power. Power was not defined, and power ratings; therefore, depended on how a woman defined power and how much awareness she had of her partner's use of subtle, social and invisible power. I, therefore, did not find these power ratings useful in terms of my study.

Furthermore, as only 13% of her respondents had never sustained an act of physical violence from their partner; this study may not explain impacts of emotional abuse in non-physically violent relationships, such as my study. Moreover, Marshall was unable to determine the style of abuse men had used or the meaning women gave to an abusive act. This prevented her from explaining why, in her cluster analysis of behaviours and impact, the same abusive acts had different impacts over different clusters. Marshall noted that combining different types of aggressive acts in the same variable, such as threats and acts of violence or acts of violence and sexual aggression, only limited her understandings of abuse. As the emphasis of my study is impact of emotional abuse her findings are of value in describing the many forms of subtle abuse, but not in explaining the impact. These two studies of Marshall on psychological abuse were the only ones that she had published when I started my research on emotional abuse in 1997.

Subsequently Marshall published another study that contained useful information, which helped in my analysis of data. Marshall's study of the effects of men's subtle and overt psychological abuse on low-income women made distinctions between obvious acts such as verbal aggression, dominating acts and discrediting, and covert or subtle abuse such as undermining, discounting, and isolating behaviour (Marshall, 1999). She modified the SVAWS scale she had developed, by modifying questions to allow for a broader range of styles of abuse and message content than her previous studies of 1994 and 1996, and used the initial version of the Men's Psychological-Harm and Abuse in Relationships Measure-Overt scales and -Subtle scales (MP-HARM-O and MP-HARM-S) to measure the effect of psychological abuse on women. Examples of questions on overt psychological abuse were "try to get you to say you were wrong even if you think you are right" (dominate), "act like you don't matter" and "ignore you" (indifference), "act like he doesn't believe you" (monitoring), "tell others you have emotional problems or are crazy" (discrediting). Examples of subtle psychological abuse were "make you feel ashamed of yourself" (undermine), do things that make you feel small, less than you were" (discount), "keep you from having time for yourself" (isolate).

Her findings showed that having one's sense of self weakened, through undermining acts, resulted in the broadest effects for both women's emotional state and women ruminating about their relationship, and its quality and duration. Having been discounted or subtly isolated, the other two of the three forms of subtle abuse she measured, also had broader effects than overt psychological abuse or direct aggression for both women's state and relationship. Furthermore, types of overt psychological abuse also emerged more frequently than threats of violence and sexual aggression in terms of effects on women's state and relationship, showing that the subtler the abuse, the broader the effects on women's state and relationship were (Marshall, 1999). In general, subtle psychological abuse had stronger and more consistent associations with women's state and relationship perceptions than did their partners' overt psychological abuse, violence, or sexual aggression. The only exception was women's fear for their physical well-being. Marshall was most surprised about her finding that the dominating factor of overt psychological abuse had relatively little impact on

women's emotional state and relationship. She attributed this to the fact that women recognise this sort of behaviour as abusive and, therefore, attributed men's behaviour to the men, and not to their own personality or behaviour. This study was useful in terms of my research, as it showed the importance of extending research beyond obvious acts of psychological abuse to examine the powerful effects of subtle abuse on women.

It seems that Marshall implicitly acknowledged the effects of the subculture and individually learned characteristics in that she acknowledged that gender socialisation and physical strength give men an advantage over women. She did not acknowledge that social power and status give men a power advantage over women. Although she looked at how men may abuse women, she did not explain why men abuse women or what they gained from behaving in abusive ways; issues that my thesis is investigating. My study is particularly focused on unequal gendered power in relationships, which leads to some men abusing that power.

Feminist approach

The studies that follow all took a feminist perspective in explaining abuse in terms of unequal gendered power in relationships, which leads to some men thinking that they have a right to be in control in the relationship. Most of the researchers overtly acknowledged the fact that patriarchal systems serve to grant men greater power over and in relation to women; others implied this in the way they explained abuse. Kirkwood (1993) and Jones and Schechter (1992) looked at emotional abuse occurring in physically abusive relationships, while Loring (1994) compared emotional abuse that occurs in physically abusive relationships, with emotional abuse in relationships where there is no presence of physical abuse; Chang (1996) and Douglas (1994) looked exclusively at pure emotional abuse.

Loring studied emotional abuse from a feminist perspective and acknowledged that the power differentials between the genders that operate in patriarchal systems contribute to abuse. She stated that abusers' rules might resemble the kind of unfair rules enforced in families, institutions, and cultures based on

inequality. Her definition of emotional abuse is that it is an ongoing process in which one individual systematically diminishes and destroys the inner self of another (Loring, 1994). Her definition is, therefore, based on the impact of the abuse.

The subjects in her study were married women who were referred to a mental health centre by professionals from various disciplines. For comparison purposes, she also included a group of women who had experienced neither physical nor emotional abuse in their current relationship. Her study was based on clinical interviews with women, as well as unstructured interviews with the women and their husbands. Her study differentiated women who were emotionally but not physically abused from women who were emotionally and physically abused. She also had a control group of non-abused women. Although it was not explicitly mentioned it seemed that Loring categorised the women into different groups in the light of her clinical assessment as a therapist.

Loring found that women who were emotionally but not physically abused expressed profound loneliness and sadness far more often than the physically abused or non-abused women. These women spoke of their anxiety that their husbands would physically or emotionally leave them with greater intensity and frequency than women in the other two groups. She also found that, while more than half the women in the physically abused group responded that they considered themselves emotionally abused, less than one-third of the emotionally abused women viewed themselves in that way. Another finding was that, although during the interviews all women categorised as emotionally abused and 72% of the women who were physically abused, reported experiencing covert emotional abuse, no such pattern of covert abuse was uncovered for the non-abused women, although occasional overt abusive behaviour was noted.

Isolated incidents of overt verbally abusive behaviour may be present when people are stressed or irritable at times in relationships deemed to be non-abusive. If the behaviour is only sporadic, and not patterned, it does not constitute abuse. The most salient feature of overt emotional abuse in her study was the openly demeaning way in which men treated women, while covert emotional abuse was

noteworthy because of its insidious nature (Loring, 1994). Loring's study seemed to indicate that covert abuse, such as emotional withdrawal, subtle discounting and negation of a woman's statements and feelings, negative labelling, and projection of blame and his own negative feelings onto his partner, might happen only in emotionally abusive relationships where there was no physical abuse. All of the emotionally abused women, but none of the physically abused, reported a virtually continuous pattern of overt and covert verbal abuse. The average length of the marriages, which was over 11 years, suggested to Loring that emotional abuse is not necessarily a transient stage leading to physical abuse, which she contrasted with Murphy and O'Leary's findings that psychological aggression tends to escalate into physical aggression within the first thirty months of marriage (Murphy & O'Leary, 1989). It may be that overt psychological abuse, such as psychological aggression, tends to escalate into physical abuse, but that covert abuse does not necessarily follow the same path to physical violence.

In Loring's study all of the emotionally abused women, and 65% of the physically abused women, but none of the non-abused women, reported a history of emotional abuse in their families of origin, showing that a childhood that is free from emotional abuse may increase the likelihood that a woman will not marry, or stay with, an emotionally abusive partner. Having one's sense of self weakened as a result of childhood abuse may make a person more vulnerable to undermining behaviour in adult relationships because a woman may not believe in herself or trust her own perceptions. Attachment theory would explain the reasons for this. Loring's study was of great value for my understanding of emotional abuse, as her finding that profound loneliness and sadness was experienced far more often by women who were emotionally but not physically abused may indicate that these impacts could be the result from pure emotional abuse. Her study also highlighted for me that occasional overtly abusive behaviour, due to irritation or stress, might not result in emotional abuse, while covert abuse seems to be exclusively connected to abuse and wanting to control.

Chang's theoretical perspective was also feminist; she acknowledged that the patriarchal structure of Western societies had created unequal power between the genders. She conducted qualitative research, using an interpretive interactionist

method of data gathering in which the narratives of women were used for analysis (Chang, 1996). This method was closest to my memory-work approach, in that the theoretical perspectives were similar and both studied the processes used to make sense of, and give meaning to, reality.

Chang's approach differed from mine in the way she defined psychological abuse. She defined a psychologically abusive relationship as a relationship involving verbal battering, unrealistic expectations, domination, and/or name calling, economic deprivation involving withholding, regulating and controlling money in coercive ways, social humiliation in order to force accommodation to demands, social isolation, and sexual domination (Chang, 1995). Her definition defined non-physical abuse only by men's behaviour and not by impact, and any behaviour that had not been included in her definition was not exposed in her analysis. My definition, on the other hand, took an enactment as well as impact approach, by seeing emotional abuse as the patterned non-physical degradation of the person that results in negatively affecting the partner's emotions or self-value in the long term. Chan's approach to defining abuse may have missed out the impact of some covert or subtle abuse.

Chang identified five interaction patterns that characterised psychologically abusive relationships:

- 1 'complementary schismogenesis' or a constant adjustment by one partner in response to the other
- 2 'double bind' where paradox and contradiction are used to create instability and confusion
- 3 'direct verbal attacks' to keep a woman in her place or to punish her for doing something of which he does not approve
- 4 'silence and withdrawal' as well as unexpressiveness that were all used to control
- 5 'lack of emotional connection' where a partner refuses to respond or responds with anger when a woman reaches out for empathy or support (Chang, 1995).

Chang found that, in each pattern, the husband maintained a dominating position and functioned from the stance of Critical Parent, a term that is derived from

Transactional Analysis and indicates a superior position to the partner. Through this type of behaviour, a wife became an object. A woman's increasingly submissive and adaptive position to accommodate her partner resulted in a gradual loss of the woman's self as separate and unique.

Although the last two patterns are covert patterns of behaviour that are not often recognised as abuse, the fact that the men in her study always had a dominating position in the relationship made it more likely that the abuse was experienced as overt control. This was noticeable in how this type of abuse impacted on her participants. She found depressive symptoms such as shame, guilt and hopelessness, anxiety and fear, together with a destroyed self-esteem and physical illness. She did not find loneliness; an impact that Loring had found was more typical of emotionally abused women than of physically abused women (Loring, 1994). This may be because Chang's notion of psychological abuse was in terms of dominant behaviour, while Loring's definition of emotional abuse around impact may have exposed a wider range of partners' subtle abusive behaviours. Furthermore, Chang had not found undermining behaviour in her study, and this may have been because undermining behaviour is part of subtle emotional abuse that was excluded from her definition. Marshall, on the other hand, found subtle abuse to have the broadest effects on women's emotional state (Marshall, 1999). Clearly, whatever definition one uses to define abuse affects what one may find.

The value of Chang's work for my study was that she identified particular forms of abusive behaviour in men who had traditional beliefs of men's superiority over women. This was relevant to my interest in how gendered behaviour impacts on women. Women's feelings of shame, guilt, hopelessness, anxiety and fear, together with diminished self-esteem, may be typical results of men's communication of their belief in their superiority over women.

Kirkwood (1993), who overtly acknowledged the part that patriarchal beliefs play in men's abuse of women, undertook a qualitative study of the emotional impact of physical and emotional abuse. She identified two aspects of emotional abuse: the effect of physical abuse on women's emotional state, and abuse that is enacted at a purely emotional level, such as verbal insults and emotional deprivation.

Physical abuse will almost automatically affect a woman emotionally and is almost always accompanied by emotional abuse (Robertson, 1999). Abuse that is purely performed at an emotional level is the type of abuse that is researched in this study. She acknowledged overt abuse, such as insults, as well as covert abuse, such as emotional deprivation through withholding behaviour in withholding help, affection, or communication.

Kirkwood drew on the work of NiCarthy (NiCarthy, 1986), but altered NiCarthy's components to reflect women's experiences of abuse, rather than men's acts of abuse. Examples of acts of abuse that NiCarthy's described were isolation, monopolisation of perception, threats, enforcing trivial demands. Kirkwood's components of emotional abuse were:

- 1 'degradation' of the self
- 2 'fear' for their physical and emotional safety
- 3 'objectification,' where a woman is viewed as an object with no inner energy, needs or desires
- 4 'deprivation' of a woman's basic needs
- 5 'overburdening of responsibility' or being expected to expend tremendous energy in the day-to-day emotional and practical maintenance of their relationships and family without return of effort or energy from their partners
- 6 'distortion of subjective reality' or the constant shedding of doubt on women's perceptions (Kirkwood, 1993)

One of Kirkwood's contributions was that she identified that discrete elements of emotional abuse are actually interwoven in such a way as to comprise a whole that is greater than merely the sum of those individual components. Individual behaviours may, therefore, not be seen as abusive: it is the cumulative effect of various types of behaviours that result in emotional abuse. She used the image of a web to convey the concept that emotional abuse is a network of interrelated behaviours and emotions (Kirkwood, 1993). Loss of confidence, a sense of weakened self-esteem, loss of identity, decreased control over their physical state and debilitating depression related to a loss of hope, as well as anger, were all aspects of impact that were central to the dynamics of abuse in Kirkwood's study.

Jones and Schechter have a background in working with, and writing about, battered women. They take a feminist approach to control issues in relationships and believe that Western male dominated societies give all men power over women. They defined abuse as “a pattern of coercive control that one person exercises over another in order to dominate and get his way” which “physically harms, arouses fear, prevents a person from doing what she wants or compels her to behave in ways she does not freely choose” (Jones & Schechter, 1992, pp.13-14). Their use of pronouns in the definition indicates that they believed that men control and women are controlled. This comprehensive definition covers the enactment as well as impact of all types of abuse, from physical to the subtlest type of emotional abuse.

Jones and Schechter interviewed more than fifty women from various backgrounds, classes, races, and stages in relationships, to study how they coped with, responded to, and got away from violent men. They did not specify how they found the women who were participants in their long interviews that were conducted over five years, but their work with battered women leads me to believe that their participants may have come from that background. They gathered information to write a self-help book for women in such relationships (Jones & Schechter, 1992). They identified feelings of fear, shame, guilt, going crazy, and anger, as impacts of abuse. The value of this study for me was in how these researchers exposed that men’s belief in their superiority over women makes them think it is acceptable for them to expect women to give up personal needs and desires in favour of men, and that the end result of this could be lowered self-esteem and loss of identity for women.

Douglas is a New Zealand author. Like other feminist researchers, she was explicit about power being the central function of abuse, saying that abusive relationships are characterised by inequality. Although she did not mention that patriarchal systems serve to grant men greater power over and in relation to women, it was implicit in the way she wrote that she believed that many men misused their power. This belief was reinforced when I read that she also works with Women’s Refuge and facilitates psycho-educational groups for the Men

Living Without Violence Collective, organisations that take the pro-feminist stance that patriarchy grants men power over women.

Douglas's definition of abuse was based on men's enactment of abuse, rather than on the impact of abuse. She stated that abuse occurs when one partner consistently controls, dominates or intimidates the other by means of manipulative, punishing or forceful behaviour (Douglas, 1994). Douglas is covering overt as well as covert abuse in that domination and intimidation are overt, manipulation is covert and punishing behaviour can be overt or covert, depending on how it is delivered. Her definition is based on the enactment of abuse and not on its impact. However, because her definition of abusive behaviours has a wide range, from overt to covert abuse, and because much behaviour could fall under the categories she mentioned, the impacts she found were wide ranging as well. Douglas gathered in-depth accounts of emotional abuse from 50 women. She noted impacts on identity such as loss of self, of creativity, of self-esteem, and of freedom and rights. Emotional impacts noted were fear, shame, guilt, anger, sadness, and confusion. Impacts on behaviour that were noted were compliance, anticipating his needs, appeasing, seduction, silence, and deceit, while impacts on physical and mental health were stress-related illnesses, loss of confidence, sense of split lives, spiritual disconnection, exhaustion, acute emotional pain, frequent crying, helpless rage, depression, feeling 'on edge', abuse of food, alcohol or drugs, desperation to escape, bizarre behaviour, acute fear and panic, break down, desire to commit suicide, and desire to kill.

Douglas stated that the information she gathered was never intended to be a piece of formal research but was intended for use in writing a self-help book for women in abusive relationships, as was the case with Jones and Schechter. That may have been the reason why both these studies did not reveal how their sample was sourced, as is expected in scholarly work. Although these two studies may not have been formal research, they were research in the broader sense, since it was research in order to write a self-help book rather than a scholarly publication. Douglas did note that several common factors recurred: a man's abusive behaviour increased over time, women tended to try to cope with their partners'

moods and demands by compliance, and as a result of the increasing stress, the women experienced deterioration in mental and physical health. She also found that many of the women described their partners as charming and intelligent men who could, at times, be delightful companions, and this tended to confuse the women.

Most women did not clearly label their partners' behaviour as abusive while they were in relationship, but they could identify it in retrospect. The controlling man tended to justify his abusive behaviour by citing the woman's failure to meet his needs, keep the house, manage the finances or perform to his standards in a multitude of ways. Most women believed their partner's claim that they were to blame for his bad behaviour. At some stage most of the women had doubted their sanity, most experienced depression, many were on tranquillisers, several were seeing psychiatrists, some had panic attacks, breakdowns, suicidal thoughts or had attempted suicide, three were diagnosed with a mental illness and one was referred for shock treatment. Once out of the relationship, all regained their mental health with amazing speed. Douglas also found that many of the women were now aware of the way in which their female conditioning led them to take far too much responsibility for the relationship, had kept them striving to please and had blinded them to the reality of their partner's abuse. Social conditioning may, therefore, make women vulnerable to exploitation that may lead to emotional abuse.

This study was of great value for my research on several counts. The most important one was that Douglas's research was done with New Zealand participants who had been socialised in a similar way to my participants. Her study was also of pure emotional abuse, like my study, so that impact could not be confused with the impact of physically abusive behaviour that co-occurred with emotionally abusive behaviour. Her approach was qualitative, as a way of exploration, rather than confirmation, as is my research. She found a wide range of emotionally abusive behaviour, from overt to very subtle abuse, which had a wide range of impact on women. In this way, her findings were also similar to mine. For all these reasons, this study was of most value to my study, in that it closely resembled demographic fit, research approach, and type of abuse.

Summary of my findings from studies of emotional abuse

These studies have in common that, in all of them, men were controllers and women were controlled. Some authors described non-physical abuse as psychological abuse but most named it emotional abuse. Some looked at the emotional impact of physically as well as purely emotionally abusive behaviour, while others looked only at relationships where physical abuse was not present. Definitions of emotional abuse differed, with some being very specific about men's enactment of abusive behaviours, while others were more general in their descriptions of abusive behaviour. Others took the impact approach to emotional abuse and some used both enactment and impact in their definitions. Reviewing these studies made me realise how important it is to have definitions that are in agreement as to what constitutes emotional abuse if one wants to compare findings, as the varying definitions of emotional abuse used produced differing outcomes.

These studies have shown that emotional abuse, like physical abuse, is generally not restricted to the use of one particular kind of act but comprises a multitude of different abusive behaviours. Kirkwood's metaphor of emotional abuse as a web of behaviours explained emotional abuse in the same way as the wheel does in the power and control model for battering relationships (Kirkwood, 1993; Pence & Paymar, 1993). In the power and control model, modes of controlling behaviour are seen as the spokes of a wheel, and the rim is seen as the physical violence that ensues if the spokes of controlling behaviour are no longer effective in controlling a partner's behaviour. Kirkwood saw emotional abuse as a web of abuse, in that there are supporting strands that reinforce and interweave with each other, and the different types of abuse are, therefore, not seen as distinct. People, however, do not only resort to different types of abuse; recipients may also react differently to similar behaviours, and that is why impact is important in defining abuse.

Whether a person feels abused or not may depend on whether the content and pattern of positive and negative messages, which occur in all relationships, start to affect their feelings and their view of self negatively.

Impact of emotional abuse

The most salient feature of overt emotional abuse is the openly demeaning way in which men treat women, while covert emotional abuse is striking because of its insidious nature (Loring, 1994). Furthermore, emotional abuse can be so painful that most people cope by first denying the impact (Chang, 1995; Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994). However, self-deception also prevents one from recognising how betrayed, burdened and unloved one may feel. Because of the gradual and insidious way this behaviour develops in couples, women are often unable to take preventative measures before the abuse has become chronically established in the relationship. By that time their sense of self may be weakened to such an extent that they do not have enough personal resources left to take action.

The impact of emotional abuse may differ depending on what type of abuse is used, and whether it was perceived as intentional, as well as on an individual's personality, and it may impact on women's emotions, behaviour and physical and mental health. Each of these will be addressed in turn.

Emotions

Emotions transmit our situational definitions of self and others, as well as arise from actions (Heise, 1999). There may be a difference between the experience of an underlying emotion and how it is expressed, and gender stereotypes often centre on emotional display rather than the subjective experience of emotion (Jaggar, 1996; Kelly & Hutson-Comeaux, 1999). Men and women may, therefore, feel the same emotion but may express it differently because of the way in which they have been socialised.

Russell and Barret developed a model of emotions with a fuzzy and sometimes overlapping hierarchy, which they showed in circular form and which captured differences in breadth of each category. The dimensions were shown with two axes through the circle- an activated/deactivated emotions axis and a pleasant/unpleasant emotions axis- and these divided the circle of emotions into four quadrants in which particular emotions could be found. For example, sadness and depression were in the unpleasant deactivated quadrant of the model,

while anger and fear were in the unpleasant activated quadrant (Russell & Barrett, 1999). This model made me understand how people were sapped of energy when they were sad and depressed, and how they became energised when feeling angry.

Displays of emotions are consistent with cultural gender roles in what is encouraged and what is constrained rather than an essential gender differences in emotions (Fischer, 1993; Jaggar, 1996). Some say that within the context of Western culture women are encouraged to express emotion while men are discouraged from doing so (Jaggar, 1996); others would qualify that statement by saying that men may be discouraged from expressing vulnerable emotions (Capper, 1988; Ireland, 1988; James & Saville-Smith, 1989; Jensen, 1988; Logan, 1988) but they have no trouble expressing emotions that reflect their power, such as anger (McMaster, 1992; Timmers, Fischer, & Manstead, 1998) or that express achievements, such as on the sportsfield (Kelly & Hutson-Comeaux, 1999). When men control their emotional expression, they may go to the extreme of repressing their emotions in order to hold on to status and power (Timmers et al., 1998), failing to develop emotionally, or they may even lose the capacity to experience many emotions (Jaggar, 1996). Jaggar stated that when men lack awareness of their own emotional responses it frequently results in them being more influenced by emotion, rather than less, and their relatively rudimentary emotional development may lead to moral rigidity or insensitivity which, in itself, may be experienced by women as emotionally abusive.

At times we may need to think about our “gut-level” feelings to bring to consciousness that irritability, revulsion, anger, or fear may be telling us that we could be in a situation of coercion, cruelty, injustice or danger (Jaggar, 1996). Abusive actions involving valued others produce unpleasant emotions in the recipient, such as anger, shame, fear, or sadness (Douglas, 1994; Heise, 1999), as well as guilt and confusion (Douglas, 1994). I will address each of these emotions individually.

Anger

Anybody can become angry-that is easy; but to be angry with the right person,

and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way-that is not easy (Aristotle, in Lerner, Goldberg, & Tetlock, 1998, p. 563)

Aristotle's statement shows that anger has been acknowledged for centuries as a complicated emotion. It can be a tumultuous emotional experience (Robins & Novaco, 1999), which, in Russell and Barrett's model, falls into the unpleasant and highly arousable quadrant (Russell & Barrett, 1999).

Anger is the principle emotion associated with justice judgments from others, especially from an intimate partner (Lerner et al., 1998; Ornstein, 1999; Retzinger, 1991; Ross & Van Willigen, 1996; Schwartz, 1994). When an injustice has been perceived and blame is attributed, a person may experience anger (Goleman, 1996; Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). However, expressing anger may be a gendered response because findings have shown that women may suppress their anger in order to preserve the relationship, and are more likely to express their anger to a third person, while men directly express their anger to a person as a display of power (Timmers, Fischer & Manstead., 1998). Timmers and colleagues found a greater prevalence of men's power-based motives, versus women's relationship-oriented motives, for regulating anger.

Feminism has helped women to see their anger as an indication that social norms are problematic rather than as a sign of individual maladjustment. It is, therefore, seen as a healthy response and can be a stimulus for achieving constructive change, when one is being humiliated, rejected, put down, or violated in any way in one's relationship (Douglas, 1994; Healy, 1998; Lehr, 1995). Women's anger may remain suppressed or unacknowledged until it reaches a level at which it can no longer be ignored and is experienced as a blast of powerful rage to express the injustice of being made to feel so bad. This seems to come out of the blue and may often be destructive (Crawford et al., 1990; Kirkwood, 1993; Ornstein, 1999; Retzinger, 1991).

Anger may, then, be used as a deep reclaiming of self on an emotional level and may give women a glimmer of their own personal power. It is therefore seen as an

essential tool in breaking free from abuse (Eichenbaum & Orbach, 1988; Kirkwood, 1993).

Anger arising out of a sense of powerlessness takes on the character of an ongoing passion, involving frustration of a more long-lasting kind. Anger takes on an out-of-control, passionate, ineffective character. It is a response to strong judgements about unfairness, injustice, which remains unresolved. The anger of a person without power has a strong component of victimisation. It is this kind of anger, directed at trying to overcome some basic injustice or unfairness – not necessarily of a personal nature - that is frequently accompanied by “throwing a tantrum” or “bursting into tears.” It is more often directed against those with more power, or possibly peers. When one is unable to act, or when it is clear that anger will be ineffective and unproductive, anger builds up and is not dissipated (Crawford et al., 1990, p. 348).

This description of anger, derived from doing memory-work with women on the subject of anger, was useful in terms of understanding women’s anger in this study, especially the out-of-control anger derived from a position of frustrated helplessness. It was also helpful in terms of understanding how women’s unproductive or ineffective anger, such as when a partner dismisses, ignores or laughs at a woman’s anger, actually builds up women’s anger and does not make it go away.

Lynch and Kilmartin stated that many men tend to interpret a woman’s anger in a relationship as a sign of masculine failure or as a threat, rather than seeing it as an effort to improve the relationship by disclosing private feelings (Lynch & Kilmartin, 1999). However, it is equally possible that men may not like women to threaten their superiority by becoming angry with them. It is particularly problematic to women when men respond to women’s challenges to their men’s privilege, no matter how justified the challenges may be, by becoming defensive or guilt-ridden (Lehr, 1995). This is because defensive behaviour shows lack of accountability for one’s behaviour, which in itself can be experienced as emotionally abusive to a partner (Kirkwood, 1993). These sorts of responses also raise the likelihood of abuse because men tend to respond to real or imagined threats by regaining power (Crawford et al., 1990; O’Neil & Egan, 1993).

From a feminist point of view, a power difference exists between the genders in relation to anger (Crawford et al., 1990; Healy, 1998; O’Neil & Egan, 1993). Anger may be similar for men and women in that injustice seems to play a pivotal role in our experience of anger. However, what is seen as just may differ between

the genders because of differences in social expectations. The expression of anger may also depend on what is socially acceptable for a certain group of people (Crawford et al., 1990; O'Neil & Egan, 1993). In Western cultures it is often seen as unacceptable if women express their anger (Crawford et al., 1990; Douglas, 1994; Jaggar, 1996). It may also depend on a difference of power in the relationship, rather than a difference of gender, and one may suppress anger if one does not feel safe to express one's anger. If you have power, anger could be regarded as a way of holding on to it, an empowering thing (Crawford et al., 1990; O'Neil & Egan, 1993). In Western society, power most often resides in men, and the connection between anger and aggression that characterises much anger by men is far more likely to be found in anger directed towards either social or physical inferiors (Crawford et al., 1990).

Shame

While anger is an emotion that can be felt by the actor as well as the recipient of abuse, recipients feel shame more frequently. "Shame is the feeling that makes you want to disappear through the floor. It comes over you when your partner tells you you're stupid and ugly, or when he tears you apart in front of others" (Jones & Schechter, 1992, p.41). The shame is twofold in that one is humiliated by the incident and ashamed of the inability to make such incidents stop. The basic message of abuse is that there is something wrong with us. The recipient is portrayed as inadequate, unworthy, or in some way defective (Douglas, 1994). Shame involves fairly global negative evaluations of the self and refers to the individual's total state of being (Masson & McCarthy, 1996; Tangney, Niedenthal, Covert, & Barlow, 1998) that follows when one has failed to live up to expectations, either one's own or those of significant others (Keltner & Buswell, 1997). It is sometimes called the master emotion because one can experience shame simply by remembering it, unlike happiness or anger (Masson & McCarthy, 1996). The patriarchal and socialised requirement for women to be obedient, compliant, and submissive causes women to feel shame about fighting back or leaving emotionally abusive relationships, and anger may therefore be repressed (O'Neil & Egan, 1993).

In this context shame can be seen as connected to the expectations of gendered roles, when one does not or cannot live up to them. Women's feelings of shame are therefore closely linked to men's anger and disgust. Shame involves a message that is perceived by the shamed person as emotional isolation, separation, or the threat of separation, as well as injury to self (Keltner & Buswell, 1997; Retzinger, 1991). Shame generally happens in an encounter with a significant person, occurs during personal connections and implicates the private self where rules of a moral nature are involved (Keltner & Buswell, 1997). This injury to self is experienced through insult, rejection, rebuff, disapproval, unrequited love, betrayal, unresponsiveness, disrespect etc. In a study that examined the relationship between shame, trauma symptoms, and emotional abuse in the context of dating, marriage, and romantic partnerships, it was found that there was a strong relationship between the evocation of shame and subtle forms of abuse (Mullally, 2000).

Guilt

While shame involves fairly global negative evaluations of the self, guilt involves negative evaluations of more specific behaviours or a particular event (Masson & McCarthy, 1996; Tangney et al., 1998). Guilt is a tool of conscience, because in its undistorted form, it registers discomfort and self-reproach when we have done something to violate our personal or social code of ethics; therefore it is an essential part of being a feeling, responsible person (Douglas, 1994; Forward & Frazier, 1997). For this reason women may feel guilty when they have violated the social code that stipulates that women need to put their own needs last, because they feel "selfish" when they look after their own feelings. Men may use that knowledge for personal gain by making women feel guilty when they do not put themselves last, which is subtly controlling and emotionally abusive (Marshall, 1994). Feeling guilty for not always putting yourself last, or for leaving a partner who has consistently failed to take joint responsibility for the relationship and who has consistently not respected one's needs and wishes is, from a feminist perspective, inappropriate guilt (Forward & Frazier, 1997). Many women have to defend themselves from verbal attacks about their parenting, their

appearance, their sexual performance, their cooking, their housekeeping, or their lack of devotion to their husbands (Jones & Schechter, 1992).

When a woman falls short of these presumed standards, guilt may be the result of either being blamed by others or blaming one's self (Douglas & McGregor, 2000). Some women may even feel guilty for staying with a controlling partner, and some may feel guilty for wanting to leave a partner who is so messed up, so put down, so poor, or so pathetic (Jones & Schechter, 1992). After all, societal messages tell women they ought to be the nurturers and carers above all else (Ahlander & Bahr, 1995; Hare-Mustin, 1994b; Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1996; Lynch & Kilmartin, 1999).

Loneliness and sadness

While guilt is a specific feeling, loneliness and sadness are often blended emotions connected with feelings of low self-esteem (Canary & Emmers-Sommer, 1997). Sadness can be experienced as a profound sense of loneliness because a partner constantly and subtly discounts one's feelings (Loring, 1994).

The feminine gender role is associated with feelings of sadness as a result of inequity in their personal relationships (Canary & Emmers-Sommer, 1997), particularly for married women (Manstead, 1998). This is because the social role that women play in relationships with men gives rise to greater frustration, more constraints, less reward and, ultimately, to higher rates of psychological illness than does the role played by men in relationships with women (Manstead, 1998). Sadness is often the result of the loss of one's dream (Douglas, 1994). This feeling may be present as a person grieves for the dying relationship, long before the actual separation. One may feel sad because one feels lonely.

Loring found that, compared to emotionally abused women, physically abused women who had also experienced instances of covert communication abuse focused principally on fears of physical harm or death, while emotionally abused women had mostly expressed profound loneliness and sadness (Loring, 1994).

They had described their feelings as desperate and unconnected, and were fearful of being physically or emotionally abandoned by their husbands.

Loneliness and sadness are emotions that seem to overlap and interact with each other and can be internalised when the cause of these feelings cannot be externally established. They are then part of a set of symptoms associated with depression.

Confusion

Because victims of emotional abuse often do not recognise the abusiveness of their partners' behaviour, they commonly react by feeling confused (Chang, 1996; Jones & Schechter, 1992; Loring, 1994). These authors stated that people become confused when their own reality and an imposed reality do not match up, or when a partner's behaviour and one's personal feelings are not congruent (Douglas, 1994).

When a partner denies one's reality, twists events or changes the rules, a woman tends to become confused. Furthermore, when a partner also displays kind and caring behaviour as well as abusive behaviour, a woman becomes confused because she cannot understand why she feels so awful in the presence of a kind man. Women may fear that they are losing their minds when they get confused in this way (Jones & Schechter, 1992). This is expressed in mood swings, nightmares and panic attacks and may lead to fantasies of suicide (Douglas, 1994). This is an understandable reaction to an unbearably stressful situation but does not mean that someone is crazy. This confusion often turns into despair (Chang, 1995; Loring, 1994) because there seems no way of getting out of that state if you do not know how you got into it.

Fear

Fear may come in many guises. Fear may be quite palpable in relationships in which women are assaulted or threatened with assault, but may still be evident when there is emotional abuse in relationships but no physical violence. There may be a fear of being physically or emotionally abandoned by one's partner

(Loring, 1994; Marshall, 1994), a fear of an uncertain future, of other people's disapproval of one's situation, or one may feel intimidated or even terrified by one's partner's behaviour (Douglas, 1994; Marshall, 1994). In general, women in emotionally abusive relationships may, over time, fear irreparable physical or emotional damage to the self (Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994; Jones & Schechter, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993). However, fear can also be a catalyst for change, in that fear may cause women to begin to recognise that changes need to be made for self-preservation (Douglas, 1994; Kirkwood, 1993).

Behaviour

Women may change their behaviour in an attempt to combat a partner's increasing control and may wear themselves to a frazzle in trying to keep the peace, but in that struggle may sacrifice their integrity and self-respect (Douglas, 1994). Douglas identified six strategies that many women adopt: compliance, anticipating a partner's needs, appeasing, seduction, silence and deceit (Douglas, 1994). All of these are adaptive responses that women may use when they submit to control in order to keep the peace and to maintain the relationship, but in doing so they sacrifice their selves.

Many male prescriptions as to how women should behave can be encapsulated as 'do not make me mad' or 'do not disappoint me'. As a consequence, women may go to extraordinary lengths to keep the house exactly the way her partner has ordered her to, behaviour which may be interpreted as obsessive compulsive (Chang, 1995). A woman may even experience traumatic bonding, a type of attachment to a partner that intensifies the loss of selfhood, when her sense of self has been eroded in the relationship (Loring, 1994).

Women may respond to abuse by 'shallow acting' when they experience rage at the injustice of the way in which they are treated, but are not ready to leave the relationship at this point (Duncombe & Marsden, 1995; Hochschild, 1983). Ideologies of holding the family together at all cost, of co-parenting, and the general family myth or domesticity may keep them in the marriage. Duncombe and Marsden discussed Vaughan's (1987) work on 'uncoupling', which describes

the change and decay at various stages of what might be described as “the couple game” (Duncombe & Marsden, 1995). At some point, when doubt may have been replaced by depression, men and women in a relationship are forced to recognise their “real” feelings. However, because women are under material and ideological influences that prevent them from acting on these feelings, they may continue the task of shallow emotion work, or “shallow acting” (Hochschild, 1983). This is done to sustain “the picture” for outsiders or their children, and to avoid conflict with their partner, although their resentment may still become manifest in certain forms (Duncombe & Marsden, 1995). These authors explained that when individuals ‘shallow act’ they work on their emotions but still sense what they really feel, in contrast to ‘deep acting’ that may displace authentic feelings at the possible cost of a loss of authenticity.

Health

The impact of pure emotional abuse on physical and mental health has only been acknowledged since approximately 1990. Until recently, it was rarely seen as undermining one’s health, unlike physical or sexual abuse. However, the detrimental consequences for the abused person are severe and slow to heal, and may even be longer lasting than the effects of physical abuse (Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994; Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994). Emotional abuse affects a person’s capacity to work, to interact in the family or in society, and to enjoy good physical or mental health (Hoffman, 1984; O’Neil & Egan, 1993). When individuals believe that the demands in their life are greater than their ability to cope, a negative emotional state of psychological stress is created, which may be expressed through mental or physical illness (Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994).

Physical health

Women’s physical health may deteriorate in response to abuse. This deterioration may come in the form of changes in weight (up or down) and sleeping patterns, and this may render a woman less able to leave her partner, because her power is reduced when her health deteriorates, which gives greater control to the abuser (Douglas, 1994; Kirkwood, 1993). The increased stress due to abuse may

manifest itself in abuse of alcohol or drugs (Prior, 1999), or in exhaustion to the point where the body is shaking and one does not have the strength to stand up any longer (Douglas, 1994). Chronic illnesses and a higher susceptibility to infections is another impact of highly stressful conditions due to abuse (Chang, 1995; Douglas, 1994; Kirkwood, 1993).

Mental health

Emotional abuse mainly affects women's mental health, and gender roles are often implicated in the consequent deterioration of women's mental health. The institution of marriage serves to reinforce the isolation, dependency and loss of self-esteem of married women (Brookes, 1999), which can result in depression for women when men rigidly enforce women's subordinate position in marriage (Douglas & McGregor, 2000; Ritter, 1993; Stoppard, 1998).

Traditionally, being powerful is seen as unfeminine. Acting in a powerful way may therefore leave a woman isolated from men and more traditional women (Chang, 1996). Challenging abuse is particularly difficult for women who have been taught that they must defer to men and not use their psychological strength (Chang, 1996). It sometimes seems safer not to challenge psychological abuse, rather than risk marital separation. However, having to conform to gendered prescriptions can lead to a loss of confidence in one's self to the point where it lowers one's self-esteem (Douglas, 1994).

Self-esteem is the degree to which an individual sees her or him self as important and valuable. It can be defined as a fundamental belief in ourselves as worthy of respect, love and fair treatment from others (Kirkwood, 1993). The way that esteem relates to emotional abuse is that feelings of worthlessness arise from relationships with abusive partners (Kirkwood, 1993). Feeling worthless reinforces women's sense that they should accept the abuse. In emotionally abusive relationships important parts of the self are invalidated, such as needs, desires, opinions, values and feelings (Douglas, 1994; Jones & Schechter, 1992). There is a giving up of certain activities or interests which, in the long term, often

results in a loss of esteem and in changing one's self to accommodate an abusive partner, while there is often also a loss of freedom and rights because women are expected to put their partners' wishes first (Chang, 1995; Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994; Follingstad et al., 1990; Geffner & Rossman, 1998; Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994; Marshall, 1996; NiCarthy, 1986; Tolman, 1992). In this way emotional abuse attacks people's self-esteem.

Because of the gradual and insidious way subtle abuse develops, women may not recognise it and, instead, see the problem as existing within them, thereby diminishing their self-esteem (Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994). This is in contrast to more overt abuse, which can more easily be viewed as existing within the actor. In emotionally abusive relationships where physical abuse is also present, low self-esteem seems only to occur if the targets of emotional abuse believe that the person who abuses is justified in ridiculing, threatening to leave, or restricting their behaviour (Follingstad et al., 1990). Marshall found that subtle abuse was related to hospitalisation for emotional distress, in contrast to overt acts of violence (Marshall, 1994). Again, it seems to point to the devastating emotional effects of abuse that is not recognised, and which, therefore, becomes internalised, leading to lowered self-esteem.

Emotional abuse may also diminish one's identity (Chang, 1995; Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994; Follingstad et al., 1990; Geffner & Rossman, 1998; Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994; Marshall, 1996; NiCarthy, 1986; Tolman, 1992). While esteem in Western societies relates to the degree to which we value ourselves, identity is the knowledge we hold about our personal characteristics, perspectives and values (Kirkwood, 1993). Identity may, in some ways, be even more fundamental than esteem, because even if we consider our esteem to be low we can still know our identity. However, when one's sense of identity weakens it is very difficult to assess its value. One's identity is eroded when someone else's needs, desires, opinions, and rights take precedence over our own because one's self-expression gets stifled and this undermines one's sense of one's personal power (Douglas, 1994; Jones & Schechter, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993). Being systematically attacked for one's personality, style of communication, accomplishments, values, and dreams are other ways in which one's identity

becomes diminished (Loring, 1994). When a woman continually accommodates a man's wishes, without any of this being reciprocated, she may also start to feel low without knowing why.

Having to perform all the emotion work in a relationship without it being reciprocated, what Hochschild called "deep acting", may be the start of a type of depression with no identified cause often seen in relationships, just a feeling of profound sadness and despair: the problem with no name (Hochschild, 1983; also Duncombe & Marsden, 1995). A sense of helplessness, through lack of options or choices, may also result in depression. Trapped in an emotionally abusive relationship, with little or no hope for improvement, a woman often becomes depressed because she cannot change the circumstances in her life that are damaging her (Chang, 1995; Kirkwood, 1993).

Feeling trapped and on edge, women may experience frequent crying and helpless rage that may result in a breakdown through stress overload or depression (Douglas, 1994). Women may also turn their anger into suicidal thoughts when challenging behaviour endangers their lives or if they feel so trapped in the relationship that they are convinced that expressing anger would be useless (Douglas, 1994; Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994). Emotionally abusive bonding makes women feel so trapped that they may develop suicidal ideations as the only means of exiting the relationship (Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994) and attempting suicide is the ultimate form of self-blame and internalised self-annihilation (Loring, 1994).

Furthermore, anxiety may occur when unacceptable thoughts, impulses, feelings, or conflicts begin to emerge, and can also be triggered by the tension between needing and loving a person at the same time as one feels hostile toward him (Chang, 1996; Douglas & McGregor, 2000). There could be a sense of split lives in that one could feel together at work but descend into depression upon coming home. Women who have been emotionally abused may also experience acute emotional pain, fear and panic (Douglas, 1994). As one can see, the adverse

consequences of emotional abuse on mental health are diverse. However, emotional abuse will not have the same impact on everyone.

Not everyone reacts in the same way to abusive behaviour. To some extent, the resulting harm depends on the threshold of the target, which may differ depending on the characteristic targeted in the message(s), a person's sense of self, the relational context, and other factors at the time the abuse occurs.

Summary of literature on emotional abuse

Emotional abuse in heterosexual couple relationships where no physical abuse is present can be described as a violation of human rights in the form of personal deprivation or undermining or otherwise harming someone's personal or social competence or identity. This may be achieved by increasing someone's uncertainty about her/him self, the other, or about the relationship. One can deprive another by attempting to restrict opportunities or to ignore another's personal values, or one can damage the social identity of a person by the lowering of a person's power or status in relation to one's self. Moreover, it is not the individual abusive acts that cause only transitory hurt that constitute emotional abuse, as some emotionally abusive behaviour occurs in all relationships at times, when a person reacts against feeling tense, tired, or irritable, or against feeling badly treated. Emotional abuse, on the other hand, constitutes repeated actions that negatively affect a person's emotional state and attack a person's self-esteem and identity. In order to determine the degree to which someone is emotionally abused one needs to consider the pattern of the messages in the context of the relationship. A relationship may become emotionally abusive through the cumulative and repetitive impact of messages from a partner that negatively affect one's emotions by undermining one's personal or social competence.

Impacts of emotional abuse range from impacts on emotions, to impacts on behaviour, and physical and mental health. Impacts on emotions include anger, shame, guilt, loneliness and sadness, confusion, and fear. Impacts on behaviour include compliance, anticipating a partner's needs, appeasing, seduction, silence and deceit. Impacts on physical health include changes in weight, increased stress

that could manifest itself in abuse of alcohol or drugs or in total exhaustion, and chronic illnesses and a higher susceptibility to infections. Impacts on mental health include loss of confidence in one's self to the point where it lowers one's self-esteem, frequent crying and helpless rage that may result in a breakdown through stress overload or depression, anxiety, acute emotional pain, fear and panic, a sense of split lives, and suicidal thoughts.

Gender roles are largely implicated in emotionally abusive behaviour. They are influenced and partially defined by structural factors such as societal norms, social roles and relative status. Equivalent behaviours of men and women, such as assertiveness or anger, do not convey similar meanings when cultural contexts are understood and appropriately considered. Societal norms, social roles and relative status help to determine which traits and behaviours are regarded as socially acceptable or deviant, and influence the way in which emotional abuse is viewed. It seems to be context and status, rather than just gender, that influences power and explains most behaviour. Society is changing in terms of what gender behaviours are seen as acceptable or not, and this transition time is difficult for women as well as men, as the new boundaries of what is acceptable are not yet clearly defined.

Relevance of reviewed literature for New Zealand

Although emotional abuse and its link to stereotypical gendered relations have been researched, as shown in this chapter, most of the abuse literature is from the United States. In what ways are we different here in New Zealand? Stereotypical heterosexual couple relations have been found in studies from the United States and Britain, and the inequality of men and women exists elsewhere, as in New Zealand. On the other hand, time also needs to be taken into consideration when linking studies with one's data. Ritchie has found that, over a 40-year span, trends have changed in domestic arrangements in New Zealand (Ritchie, 1999; Ritchie & Ritchie, 1970; Ritchie & Ritchie, 1997), so previous research may not always be a perfect indicator for interpreting current data.

Research aims

My aim in this study is to look at emotional abuse that is discrete from physical abuse in the context of heterosexual committed couple relationships. I am interested in the different ways in which men behave that have long-term negative impacts on women, such as years rather than transitory hurt. I am particularly interested in whether gendered roles are implicated in perceptions of emotional abuse, as men's controlling behaviour may be a function of how traditional masculinity prescribes men's actions. Few researchers have addressed emotional abuse in its own right and even fewer have examined subtle forms of abuse in the absence of physical abuse. The next chapter will discuss the methodology that was chosen to collect and analyse the data.

Chapter 3

Methodology

In this chapter I will discuss methodological concerns and outline the process of data collection and analysis. I found it most appropriate to begin with exploring the topic before I narrowed my focus to decide on a qualitative approach, because emotional abuse in relationships is a relatively new area to be studied and because the area is still ill defined.

Qualitative work takes an inductive stance and allows researchers to explore territory about which they only have vague hunches (Marecek, Fine, & Kidder, 1997). Moreover, investigating emotional abuse in relationships is a study of social relations, and qualitative research is the preferred way of researching the area of social relations (Flick, 1998). One of the reasons for this is because positivist methods of enquiry often hide gendered assumptions (Lather, 1988), and heterosexual relationships are built on gendered assumptions and unequal power (Unger, 1998; Ussher, 1997). Furthermore, qualitative methods, grounded in extensive contextual analyses, provide the best means for eliminating unwarranted assumptions about individual actors, and constitute the most appropriate techniques for investigating agency and context (Morawski, 1997), issues that are important in investigating heterosexual relationships. Men's emotional abuse of women has been linked to a denial of or loss of women's agency (Buss, 1990, Heise, 1999, Helgeson, 1994) or autonomy (Douglas, 1994) because of the unequal gendered power in heterosexual relationships. As my approach is feminist, by focussing on the 'power' potential in relationships (as explained in chapter 1) my methodology is also feminist.

Setting the foundation for feminist epistemologies

An epistemology is a theory of knowledge; how we know what we know (Crawford et al., 1992; Thompson, 1992), and it answers questions such as who can be a knower, what tests belief systems must pass in order to be legitimated as

knowledge, and what kinds of things can be known (Flax, 1997; Harding, 1997; Morawski, 1997). Epistemologies are strategies for justifying beliefs, and feminists have argued that traditional epistemologies systematically exclude, whether intentionally or not, the possibility that women could be knowers or agents of knowledge (Harding, 1997; Morawski, 1997). Despite the intense controversies among persons who identify themselves as feminist scholars concerning the subject matter, appropriate methodologies, and desirable outcomes of feminist theorising, it is possible to identify at least some of the common features, goals, and purposes of a feminist approach (Flax, 1997; Harding, 1997; Thompson, 1992).

Features

Feminists of every epistemological stance believe that science is a social activity embedded in socio-historical context and shaped by personal concerns and commitments (Thompson, 1992). Class, race, culture, and gender assumptions, beliefs, and behaviours of the researcher her/himself must be placed within the frame of the picture that she/he attempts to paint (Harding, 1997). A major commitment of academic feminism has been to create a theory and method which centres on creating a space in which women, as well as men, are subjects and not objects, and a reconstruction of meanings which both articulates the individual experience and promotes collective interests (Cotterill, 1992). Among feminists, the selection of problems for inquiry is as important as the justification for selection, because bias can enter research with the selection of the problem (Thompson, 1992). The questions asked or not asked are as significant as the answers (Thompson, 1992). Above all, feminists need to avoid the objectivist stance that attempts to make researchers' cultural beliefs and practices invisible, while simultaneously pinning the research objects' beliefs and practices to the display board (Harding, 1997). In the introductory chapter I made my history and beliefs transparent.

A distinctive feature of feminist research is that it looks at issues that are problematic from the perspective of women's experiences, and uses these experiences as a significant indicator of the reality against which hypotheses are

tested (Harding, 1997). It looks at the plurality of experiences of women as well as men, because there is no universal woman or man, only culturally different women and men (Harding, 1997, Thompson, 1992). Viewing women as well as men as a homogeneous group, distinct from each other, but not differing among themselves, denies the reality of within-group differences. Feminist challenges expose the questions that are asked, and, more importantly, the questions that are not asked (Flax, 1997; Harding, 1997; Thompson, 1992).

Women's and men's characteristic social experiences do not provide equal ground for reliable knowledge claims, because those who hold positions of greater power in any social context can decide what forms of knowledge are credible or acceptable, who will benefit, and who remains unheard or invisible (Maynard, 1994). The unequal social experiences shape men's knowledge horizons and support their interests, in ignorance of the misery generated by the domination of women (Harding, 1997). Less powerful members of society adopt a double vision of the world, because they are sensitive to the dominant, as well as their own marginal perspective, thereby being insiders as well as outsiders, which gives them a deeper and more authentic understanding of social reality (Thompson, 1992). There are three critical elements in feminist scholarship. Firstly, gender is seen as a social construction; secondly, feminist scholarship is based on a belief that women continue to be devalued and oppressed; and thirdly, it challenges the status quo (Flax, 1997; Leslie & Sollie, 1994; Morawski, 1997). This thesis will, therefore, attempt to show that men and women have been socialised to behave in certain ways, rather than believing that they behave in certain ways because they are male or female. It will expose how the women who participated were devalued in their relationship with men, challenge traditional ways of relating, and propose new ways of relating that honour and respect both genders in the relationship.

Goals

Underlying all feminist research is the aim to understand and explore the position and experiences of women that are often ignored or misinterpreted in cultures where men control information (Kirkwood, 1993). In meeting this aim, feminist

research makes every effort to adopt methods of approach that allow women's experiences to become visible, and the feminist technique of memory-work, which will be used in this study, is ultimately suitable for this (Haug, 1987).

A fundamental goal of feminist theory is, therefore, to analyse gender relations; how gender relations are constituted and experienced, and how we think or, equally important, do not think, about them (Flax, 1997). When feminists discuss epistemology, they grapple with concepts such as truth, reality, and objectivity (Harding, 1997; Thompson, 1992). Furthermore, feminist theories aim to make women's experiences visible and allow their voices to be heard (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Haslanger, 1996; Lather, 1988; Morawski, 1997). This is very important in investigating emotional abuse, because an aspect of emotional abuse is that women's voices are not heard (Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994; Loring, 1994), because of the unequal power relations operating in heterosexual couple relationships.

In understanding the link between gender roles and emotional abuse, it is imperative to recognise that the processes that create gender operate simultaneously at the individual, interpersonal, and structural level (Loring, 1994; O'Neil & Egan, 1993). Focusing merely on the individual level may enhance perceptions of gender related differences and obscure the gender differential in power (Hare-Mustin & Maracek, 1988) that gets exposed at a structural level.

By studying gender, feminist researchers hope to distance themselves from existing gender arrangements (Flax, 1997), thereby challenging the status quo. I decided to conduct qualitative experiential research because this type of research is the best way to conduct research in a new area that is still ill-defined (Marecek et al., 1997) and because qualitative research is the preferred way of researching the area of social relations (Flick, 1998).

Qualitative research

What I particularly value about qualitative research is that one hears the voices of participants speak through the data, often with a intensity and power of passion

that one not often finds in traditional academic writings (Gergen & Walter, 1998). Qualitative research can be equally as rigorous as quantitative methods. Good qualitative research requires appropriately selected methods that are applicable to the research area (Flick, 1998). Rigorous qualitative research involves attention to context, meanings, and power relations in data collection and analysis; researchers then situate words, discourses, persons, relations, and groups within local, societal, and sometimes global contexts (Marecek et al., 1997). Qualitative methods, therefore, seem proficient at capturing symbolic meaning, ideology, and subtle interactions between meaning and ideology (Ferree, 1990; Thompson, 1992).

What feminist qualitative researchers do in comparison with traditional researchers is listen carefully to how informants think about their lives (Marecek et al., 1997). When one concentrates on the orientation towards the meaning of objects, activities and events, subjective experience is seen as knowledge, and this informs a large part of qualitative research (Flick, 1998). I became a participant myself in the group conversations with the women, so that I was better able to understand the situation as the participants constructed it (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). What I had in common with all the female participants was gendered perspectives and experiences, although there also remained individual differences, such as class, culture, and experiences, which limited my ability to understand them. I could not fully overcome the separation between the researcher and the researched, as, to some extent, I retained some “expert” status and agenda setting function. I am also a psychologist and counsellor, as well as researcher, which contributed to my “expert” status. However, several of the participants were also counsellors, so this area of my expertise did not set me apart from some in the group.

Duncombe and Marsden stated that, however much an interviewer tries to equalise the relationship between interviewee and interviewer, the interviewer retains the power to walk away with information from which she will shape and publish a version of the respondents’ life, which may not be beneficial to all respondents (Duncombe & Marsden, 1996). They declared that this problem cannot be dealt with by the negotiation of informed consent, since the purpose of

the research may still be unrecognised or yet to be discovered at the outset of the interview. It is, therefore, impossible for researcher and researched to have a completely equal relationship in the research process.

Many feminists work with experientially based knowledge by making everyday experience and language of women, including themselves, the source and justification of reality, thereby becoming the creators of knowledge (Thompson, 1992). A qualitative stance involves listening to, and theorising about, the layers of contradiction and uncertainty, which emerge when people attempt to make sense of their lived experience. Researchers become active agents in bringing their knowledge of theory, of interpretive methods, and of their own intellectual, political, and personal commitment to participants' stories (Marecek et al., 1997). This stance of critically examining assumptions that underlie the established facts of the modern age, marked by acceptance of plurality and the challenging of norms, is part of the post-modern philosophical movement (Monk et al., 1997).

While feminist theories, which have been discussed in chapter two, analyse how feminist research does or should proceed (Harding, 1997), memory-work is a technique for gathering evidence in a feminist way; it incorporates the principles of feminist practices into a method. I will now discuss the origin of memory-work, how it differs from mainstream methodologies of social sciences, and how it operates.

Memory Work

Memory-work is a way of working that combines a method with a methodology, in that it combines techniques with theory and analysis (Haug, 1987). Memory-work was originally developed by Frigga Haug and colleagues in Germany, and was further developed by Crawford and colleagues in Australia (Crawford et al., 1990, 1992; Crawford, Kippax, & Waldby, 1994; Stephenson, Kippax, & Crawford, 1996). Several researchers in New Zealand have also used memory-work (Friend, 1996; Hamerton, 2000; Rowe, 1994). Memory-work, according to its creators, is a specifically feminist method, designed by women for women (Haug, 1987).

Memory-work is firmly positioned against the mainstream methodologies of the social sciences in that it acknowledges that knowledge depends upon interpretation (Crawford et al., 1992). It has a great deal in common with hermeneutic science, which involves the art of reading a text so that not only the intentions, but also the meanings behind appearances, are fully understood (Moustakas, 1994). Hermeneutics do not separate the subject from the object of knowledge, as occurs in positivist methods (Moustakas, 1994). Co-researchers act both as subjects and objects of knowledge, and Haug and colleagues argue that, in memory-work, this is the only possible way of doing research:

The very notion that our own past experiences may offer some insight into the ways in which individuals construct themselves into existing relations, thereby themselves reproducing a social formation, itself contains an implicit argument for a particular methodology. If we refuse to understand ourselves simply as a bundle of reactions to all-powerful structures, or to the social relations within which we have formed us [ourselves], if we search instead for possible indications of how we have participated actively in the formation of our own past experiences, then the usual mode of social-scientific research, in which individuals figure exclusively as objects of the processes of research, has to be abandoned (Haug, 1987, pp. 34-35).

However, memory-work differs from hermeneutic methods in that the collective process does not give priority to the interpretation of an expert (Crawford et al., 1992). Memory-work's strength lies in the deconstruction of the taken-for-granted, in its concern with contradiction, conflict and absences, and in its facilitation of the questioning of existing phallogocentric knowledges, where 'male' subsumes 'female', and is taken to represent human (Crawford et al., 1992).

My reason for choosing memory-work was that it is a feminist method that is egalitarian, inclusive of participants and highlights women's experiences as knowledge (Haug, 1987). It "is based on the assumption that what is remembered is remembered because it is, in some way, problematic or unfamiliar, in need of review. The actions and episodes are remembered because they were significant then and remain significant now" (Crawford et al., 1992, p. 38). Vivid relationship recollections are often the result of poorly handled conflict interactions (Gayle & Preiss, 1999), and memories would, therefore, tell me something about the significant moments in a person's life that had not been incorporated into their life.

As emotional abuse is characterised by continued undermining behaviour, people generally stay in a perpetual state of flux and seldom find their emotional balance. This is mainly because the behaviour is often not recognised by either party as abusive, although women do experience it as hurtful, and when the abuse is not recognised a woman cannot make sense of it and becomes uncertain. To bring together and amalgamate these experiences, one would first need to understand how they came about. My reasoning was that the experiences that had not been integrated were painful experiences that people had not been able to make sense of; this is a salient aspect of subtle emotional abuse (Loring, 1994; Marshall, 1999). My expectation was that memories of undermining behaviour that had been experienced as hurtful were going to be the focus of the memories and that making sense of these hurtful experiences could take away personal blame, thereby helping them to regain their self-esteem. If that were to happen, the method would fulfil the central tenet of feminist research, that research should also benefit the participants, not only the researcher. Feminist methods of research are more than data collection strategies; they also contribute to the consciousness-raising and self-examination central to the feminist movement (Kirkwood, 1993).

One way of raising consciousness is through finding out about everyday practices when people tell stories or memories about themselves and reinterpret these in the light of new learning through group analysis. In telling their own stories, people often draw on public stories, such as stories communicated by academics, politicians or media, to reinterpret and make sense of their own lives (Jamieson, 1997). This very process of drawing on public stories can affect how people think about themselves and can then affect their future responses. Experience itself is seen as a resource in memory-work, and it can, and should, be acknowledged as the basis of theory and research (Haug, 1987). Memory-work is grounded in the belief that people construct their 'selves' from their understandings and memories of past interactions with others (Crawford et al., 1992; Haug, 1987). Memory-work would also enable me to investigate how couple relationships and the people within the relationship are socially constructed, as well as how individuals construct themselves (Crawford et al., 1992). Through stories of hurtful

undermining behaviour, I wanted to gain an understanding of how we construct our selves as not worthy, a salient impact of emotional abuse.

Memory-work operates at the interface between the individual and society, drawing on both psychology and sociology, although neither can provide fully adequate tools for conducting memory-work (Crawford et al., 1992). The relation between oneself and one's memories of a past experience is similar to the relation between other people and one's self, in that one engages with one's memory, has a conversation with it, responds to it as another would respond. This process may be particularly relevant for women who blame themselves for the emotional abuse in their lives, as group analysis of their stories might make it possible for them to see themselves in a different light.

Haug implicitly portrayed women as victims of a repressive social environment and perceived women to be players in the shaping and reinforcing of those same social structures in which they are imprisoned (Koutroulis, 1993). However, having actively participated in becoming what we are also implies that we can change what we are, men as well as women. Memory-work can, therefore, be seen as 'liberation' work, because it should be seen as an intervention into existing practices; our intervention is itself an act of liberation (Haug, 1987). Haug and colleagues stated that this method might, therefore, empower the women participants as theorists, enabling them to make sense of their memories. Crawford and colleagues enlarged on this by saying that it is the 'unpacking' or 'deconstructing' of the memory that is so liberating because one can see the past event in a different light and give it a different meaning, thereby changing the way one saw oneself and so changing one's identity (Crawford et al., 1992).

Memory-work requires the formation of a group of people who together interpret and analyse individual written memories in order to arrive at new theory. The group analysis is designed to raise participants' awareness of the way experiences are socially constructed; this raises their consciousness and is an important aspect of feminist research (Lather, 1988). Raising consciousness is educative, in that it empowers each person to see the problem as external to their selves, which can then assist them in making personal changes. I hope that, as well as raising

consciousness; this research will also become a basis for educating couples in relating to each other in ways that foster equality, respect and care. For the purposes of my doctoral thesis, I will reflect on the collective process, of which I also was a part, and link it to existing research.

Ethical statement

The research complied with the Code of Ethics of the New Zealand Psychological Society and was given ethical approval by the University of Waikato. There is a risk that women who are asked to remember past traumatic events may be re-traumatised. However, the criterion – of having been out of the abusive relationships for at least one year – had given the participants time to re-establish their emotional equilibrium, as discussed under criteria for selection, so that they were less likely to be adversely affected by them. As I am professionally trained as a counsellor I also believed I had the skills to assist a woman finding her emotional balance again. Participants took part on a voluntary basis and the process was explained to them before they were asked to give written consent. Information gathered was completely confidential to our group; pseudonyms were used to guarantee this anonymity before supervisors viewed the material. Feminist research methods view participants as collaborators rather than as being subjected to research. I was, therefore, a participant as well as researcher. I saw myself as an appropriate participant, in that I also fitted the criteria set for participants. The participants were involved in the first level of analysis of the data, which is part of the memory-work process. The group process provided opportunities for all participants to work through any painful memories to a satisfactory outcome and participants all reported having received benefits from being in the group. I will report on this in the last chapter when I evaluate the method.

Criteria for selection of participants

The first criterion was that participants had been out of their, to them abusive, relationship for a minimum of one year. There were several reasons for that. Firstly, labelling oneself as involved in an emotionally abusive relationship generally does not happen until one has reached the disengaging phase

(Landenburger, 1989). The time lapse criterion for this study made it possible for me to ask for participants who now knew that they had been involved in such a relationship. Secondly, in the disengaging phase, generally, one has reflected on the situation, which is a necessary component of memory-work. This allows a researcher to talk to women who are well established in their independence and not so pre-occupied with relationship issues that they have very little time for retrospection and personal exploration (Kirkwood, 1993). Thirdly, I chose to work with people who had had time to re-establish their emotional equilibrium because I did not think it appropriate for me to counsel them if emotions surfaced which they were unable to deal with without the help of a professional. This criterion proved to be especially useful in terms of time lapsed, as emotions did surface in the discussion, but because the participants had re-established their emotional equilibrium prior to coming to the group, their emotions did not overwhelm them.

The second criterion was that the abusive relationship they had been in had been a heterosexual one. I am aware that emotional abuse is not exclusive to heterosexual relationships, but I needed to focus on a specific section of the population in terms of the manageability of the project. The inclusion of a lesbian would not have exposed the gendered differential in power in a relationship, an issue that is salient to heterosexual emotionally abusive relationships (Douglas & McGregor, 2000; Marshall, 1999; O'Hearn & Davis, 1997; O'Neil & Egan, 1993) and one that I am particularly interested in.

The third criterion was that the participants had to be self-aware about their lives and relationships (Hollway, 1989). I wanted participants who had the ability to explore themselves and their relationships by reflecting on why they behaved in certain ways. Having done personal work or having facilitated discussions on gender issues in educational groups, or having counselled or having been counselled, or not wanting to live the stereotypical roles of heterosexual couples without questioning the validity of these, were all examples of having explored gender issues. This objective was only partially achieved in that, even though some women had received counselling, the counselling had not always exposed gender issues. I thought it important in researching emotional abuse, which is

typically seen as a woman's issue, to also include the voice of men's experiences. I reasoned that I could not fully understand an issue, if I did not look at it from both perspectives. Letting men speak about themselves could have said a great deal about their beliefs and practices. I had hoped that in exploring the differences between women's as well as men's understanding of emotional abuse in a relationship, I would have been able to get a clearer view of the construct of emotional abuse. Although I interviewed six men, I had to abandon the men's research for reasons that are already explained. Collecting and analysing data from the men's group did, however, contribute to a clearer understanding of emotional abuse.

Recruitment

The recruitment of participants went without effort, as it occurred by 'word of mouth'. Women I had come to know through my work as tutor and counsellor would ask me what I was doing for my doctoral research. When I explained my project as emotional abuse in relationships they would say, "Oh, I exactly fit your criteria, may I be a participant?" or "I know of a friend who fits your criteria and would probably like to participate". I would then give them my letter of introduction (see appendix 1.1) and wait to be contacted.

When a prospective participant contacted me, I made an appointment to see her. The purpose of the meeting was to check that all the criteria were met, to talk more about the project, and to answer queries. When all of that was satisfactory and I had six women willing to participate, I scheduled the first meeting. All the women who contacted me fitted the criteria and were accepted, although one woman withdrew before the research began.

This approach produced respondents who had the self-confidence to respond to my call for research assistance. Thus the data from the memory-work sessions represent data of a particularly empowered and self-knowing group of women.

Participants

Six women from emotionally abusive backgrounds volunteered to participate in memory-work discussions and I also participated. We all met the research criteria. The women will be individually introduced in the next chapter but some of the salient characteristics are summarised in Table 1.

The project was designed as a study of women who had previously been in an emotionally abusive relationship. They came from a variety of backgrounds and circumstances, placing the researcher and researched either outside or inside of what is normative and powerful in contemporary New Zealand society. For example, although I feel part of the New Zealand culture after having lived here for 30 years, my formative years in Europe had given me, as well as one other participant, a different childhood socialisation from the participants born in New Zealand, thereby placing the two of us outside of what is normative in New Zealand society. However, as we had spent our adult years and time in marriage in New Zealand, with New Zealand men, the socialisation process of women in committed relationships seemed to be similar and we therefore saw ourselves as insiders in New Zealand society in terms of married women.

Table 1

Demographic information of participants

Pseudonym	Age	Country of birth	Years in committed relationship	Years out of relationship	Children	Currently in relationship	Education
Lee	60	New Zealand	28	10	3	Yes	5 th form
Maria	47	Netherlands	18	11.5	2	Yes	University Degree
Kate	51	New Zealand	23	7	3	Yes	University Degree
Natalie	51	Netherlands	22	6	2	No	University Degree
Bridget	46	New Zealand	14	10	3	No	University Degree
Grace	29	New Zealand	3	1	0	Yes	University Degree
Beth	25	New Zealand	3	1	1	NO	University Degree

Note. With respect to education, although six of the seven women, at the time of the interviews, had tertiary degrees, only one woman had a degree at the time of separation.

All of the participants are Caucasian, although not all were born in the same country. The homogeneity of ethnicity within the group was coincidental, as ethnicity had not been a criterion for selection. However, it made my task simpler, because my definition of emotional abuse is based on Western values that may not apply in different cultures.

Data gathering

Both Haug and colleagues' (1987) and Crawford and colleagues' (1992) research projects were long term, in that it took them two to three years to explore the full

parameters of their topic. For the purposes of my doctoral research this was not possible, although the topic would have lent itself admirably to long-term exploration. I decided to hold six meetings of two to three hours each in a timeframe of six months. This was after the initial meeting to become acquainted.

Memory-work processes

The process of conducting memory-work involves a number of discrete stages. Firstly, participants need to write individual memories around particular ‘cues’ or ‘triggers’, which are chosen to elicit data relevant to the topic being researched. The participants in the group each contribute a memory, which is then shared within the research group. As a group the members compare, discuss and analyse the written memories, and in this way the participants become co-researchers. The subsections that follow describe each section of the memory-work process as it was conducted in this study.

Piloting memory-work

My colleague, Heather Hamerton, helped me initially by discussing what she had found useful in conducting memory-work (Hamerton, 2000). She advised me to hold a pilot session with my supervisors, so that I could become acquainted with the process before I actually started the data gathering stage. I generated a list of possible cues that could be used in the memory-work sessions and my primary supervisor, initial second supervisor, and Heather consented to being participants in a pilot session. In the pilot session we each wrote a memory according to the guidelines, using the cue ‘fairness’, and Heather took me through the steps of conducting memory-work. The written memories and group discussion from the pilot session have not been used in this thesis, but the process helped me to develop confidence in using memory-work.

Choosing cues

Our topic of emotional abuse in relationships provided the basis from which to start our memory-work. A necessary aspect of memory-work is that we choose

common memory cues to focus our remembering. The choice of cues is extremely important and some cues do not produce the expected response (Crawford et al., 1992). Crawford and colleagues gave an example of the cue 'saying you are sorry', which may not always produce memories of guilt or shame. Cues may not always produce much meaningful data. Thankfully we did not have these problems in our group. I provided the first cue of 'fairness', as I saw it as a cue that would, hopefully, not plunge us into the more painful issues of abuse to start with. I saw this as desirable because the group was not a formed group, but was in the process of formation. Therefore, I thought it desirable to start with something that would not be too challenging because of the possibility of people not wanting to expose themselves emotionally before trust had been formed. However, the women felt comfortable as a group at this stage, because at the first meeting there had been a great deal of sharing. Furthermore, contrary to my expectations of the fairness cue not being too challenging, it exposed a host of memories pertaining to being subordinated in their relationship and the pain and frustration that had ensued. At the end of this meeting, participants chose their memory cues for the next three meetings. The last two cues were chosen at a later date. The cues that were used to generate written memories were:

- Fairness
- Caring
- Expectation
- Responsibility
- Support
- Love

Recording data

To obtain accurate data, it is important to secure a clear recording of the group discussions, which included the memories that were read out loud to the group. With my recording equipment I used a special sound-grabber that was able to pick up surround sound. We sat in a circle with a low coffee table in the middle with the tape recorder and sound-grabber sitting on top. It generally gave very clear recording, except that it was difficult to hear when several people were talking at the same time. I explained my problem of people talking at the same time to the

group at the next session. After that, the problem was minimal. One problem I encountered was that good recording equipment picks up everything! That included cats fighting in the next room. Their caterwauling competed with the voices of the participants. Another extraneous unwanted sound had to do with us finishing our supper when starting to analyse the memories. You could hear people stirring their drink with a spoon or putting their cup on the table. I also had a problem with 'pen clicking'. All those sounds competed with the sound of voices, which made it difficult to hear at times. I found it hard to ask people to be aware of those interfering noises, as they are natural behaviours, but for the sake of clarity of the tapes I had to ask for their consideration on that account.

The memory-work sessions

Eight group meetings were held over a period of five months (February - June 1998). The group met approximately every two to three weeks. The first session was the introductory session where we got to know one another, followed by six memory-work sessions, and one evening of reflecting and further analysing previous research sessions. This occurred after the third memory-work session.

The purpose of the initial meeting was to get to know one another, to see if we could work as a group. One person withdrew from the group half an hour before the start of this initial meeting and I wanted to work with six participants. This meant that the getting to know you evening to establish group cohesion was incomplete, because we needed to go through that exercise again when the sixth person came on board at the first research meeting.

During the initial meeting

- We introduced ourselves, and gave a short personal history of the past relationships that we had experienced as abusive.
- We talked about the problem of being one person short and what it would mean for the group when the new person came on board. We discussed what strategies we needed to adopt to make that a satisfactory experience.
- We also covered the importance of confidentiality, and I asked them to choose their own pseudonym.

- I asked what they needed in order to feel safe in the group, how we would handle it as a group when one person had difficult personal issues arising and we discussed how we could support each other.
- I covered again the criteria of heterosexuality, and being out of the relationship.
- I explained the research and why I was doing the research.
- We discussed place of venue, day and time, and made up a timetable for six sessions to suit us all.
- I asked what they hoped to get out of the group research. Making sense of, as well as validation of, their experience was central to their hopes.
- My final question was what fears they had about the group. One woman looked at the empty chair and wondered who was going to fill it.
- Then they were given the consent form (appendix 1.2) and demography form (appendix 1.3) to fill out at home.

All the participants appeared to feel comfortable with one another and with the proposed research method. The first memory-work session began at the group's second meeting.

For the subsequent sessions I made a habit to check with the group about how they had integrated the previous meeting's discussion. This inevitably took 30 to 45 minutes. At the fourth session, the women had so much to reflect on that most of the evening had gone without us having done the memory-work, and so the group decided to go home early and to schedule an extra session to make up. This was one of the richest meetings in terms of gathering data, although it was not new memory-work but analysing three previous memories. At this time we also decided on what further cues we wanted to use.

At the end of the research session I sent all the women an individual 'thank you' letter, an example of which is in appendix 4.

Phase one of memory-work

Phase one and two are recursive in that they cannot so clearly be separated because they overlap and feed into one another (see Crawford et al., 1992). Phase

one involves writing individual memories. This is a memory of the past relationship triggered by the chosen cue. The memories are written according to a set of rules. The guidelines I used were based on those of Haug (1987) and Crawford and colleagues (1992). They were explained to me by a colleague (Heather Hamerton, October, 1997), and are described below.

Guidelines used in this study for writing memories.

1. Write a memory from your past abusive relationship
2. Of a particular episode, event or action
3. Do this in the third person, as if you were telling the story about someone else (ie. She... or He...)
4. Give as much detail as possible, including things that may seem trivial or do not seem relevant. (It may be helpful to think of a key image, sound, taste, smell, or touch).
5. Do not try to interpret, explain or include biographical detail, just write from an observer's point of view.

The reasons for these particular rules are to avoid describing an account or a general abstracted description that is likely to include justifications and explanations (Crawford et al., 1992). It is important to avoid these because the group analysis “has to be seen as a field of conflict between cultural values and oppositional attempts to wrest cultural meaning and pleasure from life” (Haug, 1987, p.41).

Cultural values and pleasure in life seemed to be two constructs that are often in conflict with one another for women. Writing in the third person helps to avoid the justifications and “enables the subject to have a ‘bird’s eye view’ of the scene, to picture the detail” (Crawford et al., 1992, p.47). This encourages description rather than explanation. Not all of the group members succeeded in adhering to this guideline, but I did not try to correct them as I found that inappropriate, as well as unnecessary, especially given the emotions surrounding the topic. I just tried to work with what I got. From Rowe’s (1994) point of view, this did not seem to be a problem, as she saw the adherence of writing in the third person a contradiction in terms of feminist methodology, and she therefore did not use that guideline. She did concede that her pilot testing of memory-work had revealed

that the use of the third person did uncover greater details of social importance, and less personal biography and self-justification in the memories. A counter view to Rowe's is that insistence on the third person is feminist because it places emphasis on what happens, and the social relations which facilitate what happens, as opposed to the actor's thoughts and justifications, which could lead to victim blaming (Personal communication, Neville Robertson, March, 2002).

When someone became emotional they tended to forget about the guidelines, even though I would remind them about the guidelines at every meeting before we started. The writing of the memory generally took 10-15 minutes. After that time I would go to the kitchen and make supper, while others finished writing. We would have supper and then start on phase two.

Phase two

After the memories had been written, and while people were still finishing supper, we read and analysed all the memories. The following guidelines for this phase of the memory-work are based on Crawford and colleagues' (1992) guidelines and, once again, we found that we did not always strictly adhere to all of them.

Guidelines for analysing memories

1. Start by each person reading out her memory.
2. Everyone expresses personal opinions and ideas about each memory in turn.
3. Look for similarities and differences between the memories, even when there does not seem an apparent relationship. Everyone should question especially those aspects of the events that do not seem to make sense in relation to other stories.
4. Each person identifies clichés, generalisations, contradictions, inconsistencies, metaphors, and those cultural 'shoulds' or 'commands'.
5. Each person discusses popular conceptions, sayings, images and theories about the topic.
6. Finally, each person looks at what is not written in the memories (but what could be expected to be); what is missing? (Crawford et al., 1992)

The aim of the analysis is to uncover the social, instead of the individual, meanings “embodied by the actions described in the written accounts and to uncover the process whereby the meanings-both then and now-are arrived at” (Crawford et al., 1992, p. 49). For the women this was a very empowering experience that produced new awareness and insights. This also, at times, produced tears of relief. By collective reflection and examination there was a revision of interpretation. By analysing from the individual memory to the social meaning of it, and back again, there was an exposure of the processes of construction, which brought great relief because women were able to modify and transform their previous understandings of hurtful experiences.

Phase three

The third phase of memory-work is a secondary analysis of the material provided in phases 1 and 2. This phase consists of a comparison between the group’s own findings and my analysis of the group’s findings, and linking that to existing theories in the literature. The analysis is evaluated in the context of a range of theories such as feminist psychology and social constructionist theories.

Here I departed from the approach of Haug (1987) and Crawford and colleagues (1992), in that I, rather than the group, completed this third phase. Like Friend (1996), Hamerton (2000) and Rowe (1994), I conducted this third phase myself, this document being the product of my analysis.

Firstly, I transcribed the tapes. I then performed a check of the transcript against the recording, for the purpose of keeping data anonymous. I replaced participant names with pseudonyms they had chosen themselves. Then I had to take out or replace place names and temporal references so that people could not be identified. At times I had to sacrifice informational text because of anonymity. These concerned stories about partners who had professions that were discussed and that made the possibility of identification greater. The ex-partners of my participants had not been asked for consent to this research, and I was, therefore, extra careful not to identify them, even if it sacrificed some very good examples that I could have used as text.

All the seven full conversations, the six sessions based on cues and one on reflection, were transcribed for coding. I used the Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorising software programme (QSR NUD.IST) for my coding and analysis. With no preconceived ideas of what I was going to find, I wanted to see what would emerge. This first step in breaking down the data was open coding and concerned forming concepts. I ended up with hundreds of codes (see appendix 2), which were descriptions of particular behaviours of men and impact of behaviours on women. My next step was to categorise these codes by grouping them around phenomena discovered in the data that were particularly relevant to my research questions (see Flick, 1998), as outlined under research aims. Qualitative researchers embark on an intellectual adventure without a map or even a clear destination. This way of working requires giving up control, going along for the ride, not always having hold of the steering wheel (Marecek et al., 1997). I found this particularly nerve wracking at times, because I was anxious that I may not find anything noteworthy if I did control the direction of the search. It takes faith to do qualitative research.

I decided to redo all the coding, as I had become more interested in identifying underlying assumptions, rather than individual behaviour. This time I used clichés about stereotypical behaviour of how women ought to be, such as women are caring, and women are responsible for maintaining relationships, as a means of categorising behaviour. In the end I found it easier to work with the themes I had scribbled in the margins of my hard copy of the results section. This may have been because I was not very accomplished at making optimum use of NUD.IST. However, I had needed the NUD.IST software in order to organise my results section out of hundreds of pages of transcript.

This recoding gave me another opportunity to re-acquaint myself with the data. I learned to look past the obvious, in order to identify the underlying assumptions, implications and inferences of the process (Flick, 1998). I found this stage particularly difficult, because I had not learned, at first, to understand subtle gender socialisation processes that oppressed women, as I was still influenced by, and unaware of, my own socialisation processes as a married woman in New

Zealand. I continued to read, and to revise the way in which I coded the themes, to read again and find another layer of understanding that changed my view again. It was like an upward spiral, each level adding another layer of knowledge and awareness. In the end I abandoned the presentation of my findings of the group under headings of clichés, which was the intention of memory-work methodology, in favour of presenting the findings under headings of specific behaviour of groups of men that were found to have specific impact on women. This decision meant that I deviated from the intention of memory-work, in that specific behaviour and impact, rather than group analysis was presented. It also meant that I had to, yet again, reorganise my data in a different way.

I have tried to maintain a “both-and” position and have attempted to see the problem through the lenses of both genders. My hope was to provide a balanced view, although I acknowledge that my own personal way of looking at the world and my own biases have inevitably filtered my understanding of the literature and of the data.

The process and evaluation of the method used will be discussed in the final chapter.

The following chapters contain accounts of the themes that I identified in reading the transcripts of the group, and I will discuss the findings and link them to previous research. In order to assist the reader in understanding the claims that I have made in the chapters that are to come, I have included some parts of written memories and some verbatim excerpts from the group discussion. The full memories are in appendix 3. I will also refer to what was discussed in a meeting where no new memories were generated, but where three memory-work sessions were processed. I will make use of that text, as it was a further analysis of the previous memory-work meetings, and it added to the total picture of emotional abuse. I will identify the text from this meeting as ‘process analysis’.

Chapter 4

Dominant control

An overview of findings

I am presenting results and discuss them at the same time. At first I had presented the impact of men's abusive behaviour on women by discussing the various ways in which all the women had been affected, such as addressing loneliness, depression and lowered self-esteem. However, I found that men's controlling behaviour seemed to come in three different patterns and that these three different patterns produced some unique outcomes. Therefore, I decided to present the material in a way that focused on specific patterned behaviour of men and the specific effects of that type of behaviour on women. What I gained by this was that some of the differences in women's experiences became much more apparent. What I lost was some of the group analysis of the women, which is an integral part of memory-work. However, my finding that specific ways of men's abusive behaviour impacted in a specific way on women was of sufficient weight to sacrifice the group analysis. Although none of the men controlled in the same way all of the time, it became apparent that some men used certain types of behaviour more often or most of the time, and that this particular type of behaving impacted differently in some ways.

I have, therefore, divided the results and discussion into three separate chapters. Each chapter will discuss a particular way in which men generally controlled women and the impact this had on those women. This chapter will present the major findings, introduce all the participants, and discuss how dominant men controlled in an overt way, while chapter five will discuss the non-dominant men who were passive controllers, and chapter six will discuss how manipulating controllers controlled women in very subtle ways.

Hardly any psychological research investigating emotional abuse has been done in New Zealand; therefore, the findings in the next three chapters will, for the most

part, be compared to overseas literature, particularly North American research. A notable exception to the lack of New Zealand research on pure emotional abuse that is not connected to physical abuse is the work of Kay Douglas, who has written a book on women's experiences of emotional abuse in relationships (Douglas, 1994), as well as co-authored a book with Kim McGregor on power games in relationships (Douglas & McGregor, 2000). I have drawn a great deal on her work and have used New Zealand authors to give context to men's and women's behaviour, in terms of the way in which they had been socialised, because gendered behaviour is primarily informed by the cultural expectations of the society in which one is raised. Although men in all Western societies over the last two centuries have clung to privileges and power, the social segregation of the genders in New Zealand has been unusually strong, producing a peculiarly sexist New Zealand culture that, at times, is considered by some to differ from other Western countries (Bickerstaff, 1988; Phillips, 1987).

From the six memory-work sessions and the process session, I was able to gain a better understanding of what sort of behaviour this group of women experienced as hurtful, how the accumulation of hurtful and destructive behaviour over time constituted emotional abuse, and how this affected women in various ways. A major theme that arose out of the findings was that women felt emotionally abused when men rigidly adhered to gendered behaviour characteristics and gendered tasks, and expected or demanded the same of women. This way of relating has come about in patriarchal cultures where there is a hierarchy of genders and the gendered roles are there to uphold this hierarchy. Gendered roles, in the form of gendered behaviour characteristics and tasks, always put women in a subordinate position to men, because gendered roles diminish women's agency and promote their communal orientation as the 'right' way to be as women (Buss, 1990; Helgeson, 1994; Ickes, 1993); in contrast, gendered roles for men promote their agency and relieve them of the responsibility to relate in communal ways.

The consequence of believing in separate gendered roles meant that men expected women to be oriented towards others, and to give of themselves, while the men behaved in self-serving ways and generally failed to take their partners into consideration. All these men seemed to have a worldview that their own

standards were the only “right” standards and values, as that was a theme that emerged out of all the women’s stories over the three groups. They, therefore, expected women to alter their view so that it came in line with their partners. Gendered roles generally benefited men. The impact of men’s behaviour on women depended on the extent to which this traditional behaviour was enforced or expected by men of women, and to what extent men themselves adhered to either gendered tasks or gendered behaviour characteristics themselves. This study found three different patterns of men’s abusive behaviour.

The first group of men, the dominant controllers, enforced gendered behaviour on women by behaving in intimidating ways, such as flying into a rage or throwing things, if they became frustrated with women’s behaviour. These men also made women responsible for most things, such as relationship maintenance, family responsibilities, keeping their partners happy, and blamed women for whatever went wrong, while taking little responsibility for any of these things themselves. They stopped women from behaving in independent ways or from speaking on their own behalf, by behaving in intimidating ways if they tried to do so.

The second group, the passive controllers, also behaved in generally traditional masculine ways and their expectations were also traditionally gendered in terms of who should do what work in the relationship. However, although they expected women to conform to traditional roles, they did not overtly enforce those expectations through intimidating behaviour. These men would either criticise women if women failed to live up to gendered norms so that they felt guilty, or men became resistant in that they refused to answer questions or withheld things women valued, such as help and emotional connection.

The third group, the manipulators, were less governed by separate gender role expectations, but these men did seem to believe that they were superior as men and, therefore, they expected certain privileges, such as always being seen as right, having the right to set the parameters of relating, and getting their own way. They subtly manipulated women into conforming. This form of emotional abuse was the subtlest, with the most severe decrease of self-esteem and identity.

Gendered role expectations featured large in the execution of control in the first two groups, but not in the third group. The commonality between all the partners of the women seemed to be men's, sometimes subconscious, belief in the hierarchy of genders. All the partners of my participants seemed to want to be in control in the relationship and to get their own way, but they went about it in different ways. The differences were due to a combination of their belief in the hierarchy of the genders, and whether they enforced this hierarchy through intimidating behaviour, through passive-aggressive behaviour such as becoming resistant and refusing to communicate or to help, or through subtle, manipulating behaviour that ensured women's conformance to their wishes.

I could be criticised for formulating results in these three groups, as the division of the groups is based on men's reported behaviour and I only have women's accounts to go on. Even though there were more commonalities than differences in the findings, the reason for dividing the results was to show how particular behaviour of men had certain specific impacts on women. Previous studies had not explicitly connected how the way in which men subordinated women had a bearing on some specific impacts on women. This finding seemed significant enough to justify my reason for proceeding the way I did.

The impact that men's behaviour had on women seemed to depend on what form of control men generally used. People's individual socialisation and personality may also have played a role in how abusive behaviour impacted, but that perspective has not been investigated in this study. Impact differed for individual women in terms of individual feelings and strength of feelings, and it also came at different stages of the decline in emotional health. The following table shows the impacts.

Table 2

Impacts of emotional abuse

	Dominant control		Passive control			Manipulating control	
	Maria	Lee	Kate	Natalie	Bridget	Grace	Beth
Loneliness*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Guilt	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Despair	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Confusion	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Diminished Self-esteem	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Anger*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fear	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Diminished Identity	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

* Denotes impacts all of the women had in common.

There was a great deal of overlap of impact between the groups. For example, all the women experienced some of the symptoms of depression such as feeling sad and lonely, or feeling guilty or despairing of their situation, and the self-esteem of all but one woman had diminished. Women often identified with each other's experiences, to the point that they finished sentences for one another, because the stories were so familiar to all of them. The women in the dominantly and passively controlled groups felt so unloved as a result of their partner's cold and dismissive behaviour towards them, that they were in acute emotional pain, while the two young women who were manipulated were in acute emotional pain because they were made to feel so bad about themselves that they believed that they were unworthy of love. All of them had become angry at some stage about how their partner's hurtful behaviour had negatively impacted on their emotions.

The main differences that set the three groups apart was that dominant men produced fear in women which made them submissive, while the manipulators made women feel so inadequate about themselves that they started to behave submissively in order to hold on to their only perceived source of love and

affirmation. Passive controllers, on the other hand, controlled through withholding care, affection or affirming behaviour when women failed to live up to gendered expectations. These women were mostly not submissive, although they often conformed to gendered expectations. There seemed to be an undercurrent of power struggles in passively controlled relationships, with women not wanting to be put in the subordinate position in the relationship, and the men not allowing them to be equal, and this is what set this group apart.

Now that I have summarised the main findings, I will give a brief description of the seven participants, of whom I was one, before I start to discuss how the behaviour of men who control in a dominant way impacted on women.

Participants

Pseudonyms have been used to protect the women's identity and the women were invited to choose their own pseudonym. When the word Pakeha is used to describe their ethnicity, it means that they were born in New Zealand, and of European extraction.

Maria is 47 years old and was born in Europe. She was married to Paul for 18 years and has been out of that relationship for 11 ½ years. She has two sons, Steve and Blair, and is currently in a committed relationship again. She has a university degree and works as a counsellor.

Lee is 60 years old and is a Pakeha. She was married to Brent for 28 years and has been out of that relationship for 10 years. She has three children and is currently in a committed relationship again. Her highest level of education is 5th form and she is a farmer.

Beth, 25 years old, is Pakeha. She was in a relationship with Colin for three years and has been out of that relationship for 1 year. She has a daughter, Fiona, and is currently not in a relationship. Beth has a university degree and is currently a student working towards her Masters degree. She is a tutor.

Grace is 29 years old and is Pakeha. She was in a relationship with Kevin for three years and has been out of her relationship for nearly a year. She does not have children and is currently in a committed relationship again. She has a university degree and is presently working as a graduate assistant.

A Pakeha, Kate is 51 years old. She was married to Don for 23 years and has been out of that relationship for 7 years. She has three children and is currently in a committed relationship. Having a university degree, she works as a teacher. Kate and Lee were living on neighbouring farms when they were married and knew one another.

Born in Europe, Natalie is 51 years old. She was married to Ed for nearly 22 years and has been out of that relationship for 6 years. With two children, she is currently not in a relationship. She has a Masters degree and is also currently working as a tutor.

Bridget is 46 years old and is a Pakeha. She was married to Frank for 14 years but has been out of that relationship for 10 years. She has three children and is currently not in a relationship. She has just finished a Masters degree and is looking for employment.

All the women were white New Zealanders, although not all had been born in New Zealand. Natalie was the only one who came from an academic family background.

Dominant control

Lee and Maria were partnered to men who dominated and intimidated them. These men were critical, self-centred, lacked empathy and accountability in the relationship, and Lee's partner also treated her with contempt. These two men had a general lack of consideration for their partners. The main impact of their behaviour on these two women had been fear. I will give examples of the dynamics of dominating control and will then discuss the impact this type of behaviour had on the two women.

Lee: dynamics of control

Lee had been rather quiet throughout these sessions and her voice was heard almost exclusively when she was describing the impact of behaviour. The little text I have of her was all used in the discussion, except this one quote that merely described her situation.

Lee: I used to work like a man on the farm, from daylight to dark, but I was never allowed a wage or any money. I had to beg for every penny (fairness discussion).

That this memory surfaced with the fairness cue shows how unfair Lee thought it was that Brent held such a tight reign on her. The reader will hear in this chapter how Brent degraded Lee privately and in public, by making snide remarks about her, by telling her to keep her big mouth shut, and by telling her that she was useless. Everything she did or said he considered wrong. He would fly into a rage if she disagreed with him, and ridiculed her if she expressed an opinion. Lee was afraid that Brent would kill her if she argued with him, and she learned to keep quiet and to do as she was told.

Maria: dynamics of control

Maria's partner Paul was dictatorial in that he made the rules at home. He made unilateral decisions about everything, from who should be responsible for what work to how Maria should do the work he made her responsible for. His rigid stance was shown in the following fairness memory.

Maria had wanted to go to work. However, he was in the armed services and often away from home. It was decided she'd be a 'stay at home' mum. He said [the children] needed their mother at home. Often she felt lonely, years of evenings and weekends alone, always responsible for the boys. When they were sick in hospital, and when they missed him. She received lots of lovely mail, letters and cards from the Islands, Singapore, and Hawaii. Wasn't she lucky! Slowly the boys grew older, started school, but no, she was not allowed to go to work. "Didn't he provide well enough for her? Didn't she have everything she needed? Ungrateful that's what she was." She thought of another really good idea, she would go back to school and get her School Cert and UE. She made enquires at the local high schools and told him about it when she'd marshalled all her facts. Sounds good, he said, but who is going to pay for your books? All the other arguments she'd thought of before hand. She'd be home about the same time as the boys; she'd be home in the holidays etc. The cost of the books she hadn't thought about. Disappointment was uppermost. She felt deflated (fairness memory).

Maria saw it as unfair that Paul decided that she did not need to work, as he saw himself as responsible for providing for the family. That Maria may have wanted

to work outside the home to meet people, or to get validation for work she did through receiving a salary that would also make her more independent, was not discussed. Paul also implied that she could not use 'his' money to pay for textbooks, and she could, therefore, not further her education. Maria was not allowed to earn money and was not allowed to use the money he earned for things he did not approve of, and in that way she was economically controlled. Paul was so authoritarian that he always set the standards at home and Maria had to comply, as shown in this responsibility memory.

Maria: Responsibility was very clearly defined. Paul went out to work, earned a reasonable income, and as soon as we started a family I was to stay at home and look after the children and the running of the household. At the time I agreed to that, I had no trouble with it, it was the way things were and what I expected; traditional values and roles. Even more than that, we weren't to enjoy ourselves, have fun or pursue our individual interests unless all duty were taken care of – done – finished. This I did find very difficult, Paul was unbending, black and white. In our relationship responsibility was married to expectation and duty and eventually strangled our relationship. I wasn't to waste time reading unless all chores were done. Something that I never accomplished while at home with two growing boys; Slack of me – and my own fault - I couldn't have worked hard enough. My assertions that you could always find weeds in the garden or polish a window, clean a ceiling, mend clothes, knit a jumper or help a child with homework, fill the biscuit tins etc. etc. was met with derision. Only if you were disorganised or lazy was it possible that you couldn't get those things under control. Responsibility meant that I was [seen as] slack, lazy, disorganised or not good enough. By the same token Paul took his responsibility as seriously-if not more so. When I wanted to go back to work, after being dissuaded from pursuing an education, even part time, there was hell to pay. "Don't I provide well for you?" "You have always had everything you need" "Who will be there for me when I need you?" He was working a five-week rotating shift in the police force at that time, and he was referring to those times he would be at home for morning and afternoon tea or lunch [as] it was my responsibility to provide that (responsibility memory).

Paul set the parameters as to how both of them would function as a couple, and Maria either agreed or disagreed, but that did not make a difference as to how things were done. That Maria felt burdened by all the demands is implied in this memory being evoked with the responsibility cue. Paul had high standards of himself and expected the same high standards of Maria. Maria was sufficiently intimidated that she did not openly oppose Paul, not even when Paul was not around to constrain her.

Maria: I had the chequebook, because when he was overseas I had to pay the bills. Even more insulting, I had power of attorney. But he knew he was perfectly safe, much to my disgust. I would not have dared to take any money out of that cheque account without permission. He never said, "you can't have any money"; I was never threatened. All he said was "who is going to pay for your books?" I had the chequebook. All I had to do was enrol and write a cheque, but I didn't. Obviously he did not want me to go by saying that (responsibility discussion).

Paul was also forever criticising Maria and was unreasonable in the things he expected Maria to do, as shown in this expectation memory.

Maria: Small children crying. "Where's their mother for God's sake? Why doesn't she shut them up?" My child crying, my first-born, at 3 months, inconsolable. "You are his mother, what's wrong with him? Why don't you know? If you don't know, why are you his mother caring for him? For goodness sake, do something, anything to shut him up." "Ear ache", the doctor said. "God, you are useless, imagine letting a kid get earache!" Our second son, not feeding, not attaining his milestones; croup, mumps, measles, chickenpox, tonsils and adenoids out, strangulated hernia twice; operated on 6 times before the age of 2 years 3 months. Not walking, "No kid of mine is spending his life on his backside; make him walk". Six times in hospital, and who was there with him? His mother. "Well", said his Dad, "Don't expect me to come to the hospital. I am uncomfortable and can't stand sickness; it gives me the creeps. [It is] much better that I stay away. Really, I would not like to upset anyone. I know I can't cope with that. You don't really mind, do you?" (Expectation memory)

Paul demanded and criticised and made Maria responsible for things she had no control over, such as the crying of a sick baby, and her child's inability to walk. Paul blamed Maria whenever anything in his environment was not to his liking. Furthermore, he abdicated his share of family responsibilities to care for and to nurture their children in every way beyond financially providing for them. Maria was left to deal with the total responsibility for the care of the family without support from Paul.

Maria: I had to stand there while they stuck needles up Steve's spine, and he squealed like a pig. Paul used to tell me: "Don't tell me, I don't want to know. I can't cope." (Expectation discussion)

Paul did not want even want to hear about trauma in the family and so Maria could not even talk about how difficult she found it to see their little son in so much pain. Paul may not have wanted to deal with emotions that he found difficult to deal with, but as a woman Maria was expected to cope, as she was bound by social convention. As the designated carer in the family she did not have the luxury of choosing not to cope.

Paul started to react against Maria becoming stronger and more independent. He became more domineering and in the end he irrationally criticised her so that she could never be seen to be right. Maria believed that her increasing independence, because Paul was away at sea for long stretches, caused Paul to increase his stand over tactics.

Maria: I believe that the more he went away to sea, the more independence I had, the more he had to come home and screw me down tighter. So it got worse and worse and worse because if he had a long trip away and I had been independent and managing and

capable and he'd come home, I had to be reigned in. As I got stronger, his standover tactics had to get bigger (process analysis).

There seemed a direct relationship between Maria's increased independence and Paul's increased domination, in that the more independent she became, the more overbearing he became, and the more Maria started to emotionally suffer. People noticed how Maria changed when Paul was home on leave, although Maria had not been aware of this.

Maria: I was told that I was a totally different person when he was home. When I was working at university and the kids were at high school I met this woman, and her mother was the head mistress at Intermediate school that my boys had gone to. She told me after we broke up that they used to call me "Paul says", because that is what I used to say all the time when he was at home. People knew exactly when Paul was at sea and when he was at home, because I had a perfectly rational conversation when he was at sea. But as soon as he came home I became "Paul says". That was appalling to hear, years later (process analysis).

Paul's occupation, that necessitated him to be away from home a great deal of the time, had, in a way, been Maria's saving grace, in that she could be herself when she was alone. In this way she still kept in touch with what she believed in.

However, when Paul became a policeman she did not get a break from him, and that is when it had been even more difficult to hold on to her identity. Paul even blamed her for having become depressed in the relationship.

Maria: When I was depressed and on anti depressants, it was so bad that my family doctor took the children and put them in a taxi and sent them to the naval base, and he was going to have me committed to a psychiatric hospital. Paul said, "If I could not hack it I should not have joined [married him], shape up or ship out", took my pills and flushed them down the toilet (fairness discussion).

The unfairness of Paul's stance is implied in Maria bringing up this incident under the fairness discussion.

In summary, although in these examples only Maria's partner Paul was shown to be dictatorial and intimidating in his behaviour, the reader will find in the discussion that Lee's partner Brent was equally dictatorial and intimidating. Moreover, he was also shown to have contempt for her by calling her names. These two men showed little or no regard for their partners. Their behaviour was closest to men who physically abuse in that these men had damaged property, such as putting a fist through the wall, in their frustrations with women's behaviour, and this sort of intimidating behaviour is called symbolic violence (Chang, 1995; Marshall, 1996). However, it is different from actual violence or even from overt threats of violence if violence is understood as the unlawful

exercise of physical force, as these men did not hit and did not threaten to hit their partners. For these reasons their behaviour was considered non-physical abuse. These sketches set the scene for making sense of how their partners' behaviour impacted on Lee and Maria.

Impact of dominant control

The main impact of dominant control on women was that they behaved in submissive ways because they feared their partners.

Fear

One of the impacts of their partners' dominating behaviour was that Lee and Maria were afraid of them. These men had intimidated Lee and Maria with displaying aggressive and symbolically violent behaviour whenever Lee and Maria behaved in ways that frustrated them.

Lee: One night when I could not sleep, because I had pins and needles, he got up in total exasperation and started belting holes in walls of the house. And I thought, "my God, is this what happens when I need something." That memory stayed with me. So after that I only needed half that look. And worse is, the holes in the walls. Somebody might know there are holes in the walls. I papered over those holes.

Maria: It's the look and the exasperation, but then I have never been hit myself. One day, he was really really frustrated and he pulled out the drawer of the lowboy and threw it across the room. And the corner of the drawer went through the wall and there was a hole there. And my mother actually asked how it got there and I know I lied. I can't remember what I told her, but I certainly did not tell her how it got there (fairness discussion).

One form of non-physical control that is most closely aligned to physical violence is when men damage objects when frustrated or angry with a partner; some term this type of aggressive behaviour symbolic violence (Chang, 1995; Marshall, 1996). Research has shown that abuse that starts out as verbal attacks can progress to punching holes in walls and may eventually spill over into physical violence (Douglas, 1994; Pence & Paymar, 1993). Lee and Maria had recognised this possibility and were scared of their partners' violent outbursts, knowing the damage that could befall them if they became the targets, although their partners had never actually hit, or threatened to hit them.

The result of this intimidating behaviour was that Lee's and Maria's partners only needed to warn them with a 'look' to keep them in line. A look implied a warning

that these men could erupt into a rage if the women did not adjust their behaviour. Lee and Maria were fearful enough to comply with these implicit demands and were submissive. However, they had not been comfortable with the thought that others might find out about their partners' violent behaviour. Lee had tried to hide the evidence, and Maria had lied about how the holes had appeared in the wall. Lee intimated that if other people knew how violent her husband was it would be even worse than being scared of him. She may have felt ashamed because of her partner's unacceptable behaviour, and she may consequently have been ashamed of herself for being with him, a link that previous research has established (Jones & Schechter, 1992; Keltner & Buswell, 1997; Tangney et al., 1998).

Lee had all the symptoms of a battered woman, even though her partner had never hit her. Lee was afraid of being killed if she dared to oppose him in an argument, as will be heard in her next quote, and she therefore never expressed her rage.

Lee: I would not even argue ... I was told, not quite so delicately, I used to be told to keep my big mouth shut and not put my foot in it, when we went out, if we ever did go out. But if there were an argument I would have been a battered wife if I had argued with him, because he would just get livered with rage. If I ever started I would probably have been killed. That is why I learned to shut up and go away and mind my own business. It must have been intuitive that I did [that] for all that time. But I felt that was what was expected. I did not talk. ... It was a way of protecting myself, and I used to sort of say to myself, "I am not going to let the bastard beat me". (Responsibility discussion)

Lee never expressing rage is in line with Mikula and colleagues' findings that emotional reactions to unfairness or injustice depend on differing variables such as the pertinence of the consequences, the perceived causal agent, and the estimated coping ability (Mikula, Scherer, & Athenstaedt, 1998).

Fear, as well as anger, will be the response to a threat that is seen as difficult or impossible to avoid or to control. Lee may have felt rage, but her fear of Brent stopped her from expressing her rage over being treated so abominably. Her way of coping with the situation was to shut off totally, which is in line with findings that showed that women who fear an abusive partner withdraw emotionally in self-preservation (Jones & Schechter, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993). From there on, a pattern of behaviour was established whereby her partner only had to look at her in a certain way for Lee to modify her behaviour, and Brent's control was established without a word being said. This sort of controlling behaviour of men

is common in physically abusive relationships (Pence & Paymar, 1993; Robertson, 1999), and the only reason why Lee was not hit may have been because she did not argue with him or retaliate.

In these stories, expectations and responsibilities seemed to go hand in hand for Lee. Many women from that generation had been socialised to shut up and to put up with their situation, as New Zealand authors from diverse disciplines have attested (Barrington & Gray, 1981; Bickerstaff, 1988; James & Saville-Smith, 1989; King, 1988b; Phillips, 1987). Lee did what she thought was expected of her and protected herself from Brent's violent temper by shutting herself off. She was the only one of the seven women who had never shown her rage. This may have been because, as a woman with less physical power, she had no control over her safety if her husband became violent. Her self-esteem had been severely diminished, as heard in her feeling so inadequate when he showed his contempt of her. However, her identity and spirit stayed intact, as shown in her defiant self-talk, even though she did not feel safe to verbalise it.

Maria also felt unsafe to oppose her partner overtly and Paul's 'look' was also enough to make her comply. She was much younger than Lee but Paul was in the Navy, an institution that demanded subordination of its men and, in turn, Paul used to run his house like a ship, with him as the captain, although he did not treat Maria with the contempt that Lee's partner displayed.

Maria: The only power I had was not doing the house work, and sometimes it would not be doing the dishes, and it turned into even not making the bed or not doing the ironing. But if I did not do the ironing, I could not have been caught with the ironing not done, so I used to hide the ironing. I still do it. They were sort of protests, but not on a conscious level. I don't think it would have been safe to do that (caring discussion).

Although Maria may have been scared enough not to oppose Paul overtly, she was not as scared of him as Lee was of Brent, as she did covertly rebel at his authoritative behaviour by secretly not doing housework. The reason that Maria was scared of Brent seemed to be because he made her feel so bad if she did not conform to his expectations.

Maria: I knew I was not doing the ironing, so I was quite happy about that, but I would have been scared for him to find out about that. I would have been scared for him to find out that I spent time reading. He would say, "surely to God you have something to do, you can clean the ceiling or weed the garden or, there is always something you could be doing, you don't have to sit on your ass and read books." He was always doing things him self. But I have never realised how scared I have been (process analysis).

Paul set the standards at home and Maria had to live by his standards. Maria's fear seemed to be about what Paul would say, not so much about what Paul would do if she failed to do the household chores. She did not realise that it was her fear of how Paul could make her feel that stopped her from opposing his authoritarian behaviour. Paul had very high standards and was continually keeping everything in immaculate condition, which may have been his conditioning in the Navy. He was, however, also imposing his high standards on Maria, with the consequence that she never had time for herself, because there were never enough hours in a day to keep everything up to his standards, let alone having time for herself. Marshall's study had identified that being constrained from having time for one's self is psychologically being isolated from one's self, and she, therefore, named being constrained in such a way 'psychological isolation' (Marshall, 1999).

The traditional stereotype of New Zealand men is that men are in control of women (Baker, 1988; James & Saville-Smith, 1989; Phillips, 1987), and Paul had exaggerated the traditional stereotype. The consequence of men's exaggerated stereotypical behaviour is that women's agency is constrained, in that if women have different standards they just get discounted. It also shows that the consequences of men's rigid standards being imposed on women through intimidating behaviour may result in women retaliating by becoming passively and covertly resistant, because they are scared to resist openly.

Fearing a partner not only resulted in Maria and Lee becoming submissive, they also hid the evidence of their partners' violent behaviour, and this type of behaviour is typical of women who have been battered (Kirkwood, 1993; Pence & Paymar, 1993). Lee was scared that Brent would kill her if she opposed him, and the lack of physical violence in their relationship may have been because her fear had resulted in her moulding herself to her husband's specifications by not provoking him or resisting his control. Battering is more than just physically violent acts, in that battering involves systematic control that induces fear (Jacobson, 1994). I considered Lee to be a 'battered' woman, as she was subjected to systematic control that induced fear. This is consistent with a statement by Kirkwood who said that many services for 'battered' women in the

United States have found that women can be severely terrorised and abused without the use of physical violence by their partners (Kirkwood, 1993). One shelter for which Kirkwood voluntarily worked had used a definition of domestic violence that included all behaviour that instilled fear and control without any regard for the woman's rights.

Maria's case was slightly different from Lee's. At first she seemed to be in the same category as Lee, in that she was also scared of her partner and therefore only covertly resisted his control by deliberately not doing certain chores and hiding the evidence of this. However, analysis showed that she feared the way Paul could make her feel more than a physical attack. She even physically attacked him once, when she saw that his behaviour made her little son scared (as will be discussed in the 'anger' section). Even then he did not physically retaliate. It shows that her fear of being physically attacked may have been low. Research has shown that fear may come in many guises and that some women may feel intimidated or even terrified by their partner's behaviour (Douglas, 1994; Marshall, 1994), while others may fear irreparable physical or emotional damage to the self in the long run (Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994; Jones & Schechter, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993). However, her fear of how bad Paul could make her feel was not only high, it was also long lasting.

When Maria was asked in one of the sessions why she was still afraid of her ex-partner when she heard his voice over the phone, she started to sob silently. She replied that, even after twelve years apart and him residing in another country, she was still fearful of the way in which he could make her feel so awful about herself, as he had done when they were married. It also shows the marked long-term effects that emotional abuse can have on a person. Fearing a partner may, therefore, be for more reasons than only fear of physical safety. If a woman, because she feared for her emotional safety, behaves in the same way as if she feared for her physical safety, there may be grounds for also considering her battered, as she is also controlled through fear. The levels of fear of these two women were slightly different in that Maria felt that she could take the risk of attacking her partner when he made their son anxious. Fear of emotional safety

may, therefore, be slightly less in degree than fear of physical safety. It is also possible that fear for one's child's safety overrides personal fear.

Maria had not realised that Paul's behaviour scared her, and she only became aware of this through the discussions in the group. In the process meeting, she got in touch with feelings she did not know existed. When Kate talked about being badgered by her partner and not being allowed to have any peace, Maria started to cry softly and responded,

I think that is why I was secretive. I think that is why I had to [disobey him] in secret, because I could not do it overtly, because I would get no respite. It wasn't that I was beaten; I knew not to push it. I never knew why I could not [oppose him] (process analysis)

Paul had always been critical of Maria, but it did not severely affect her until he changed careers and became a policeman. Previously she had long stretches on her own, and had respite from his criticisms. When he became a policeman he was home every day and she had no respite. When Paul left the marriage, Maria changed all the locks in the house but had not realised why she had done that. Maria said, "I actually changed all the locks. I have never acknowledged that I was scared. I just know I changed all the locks. And I had stays put on all the windows." When Natalie asked, "Was it because you were scared to be alone in the house?" Maria responded, "I was married to a sailor, how long had I been alone in the house? It was to keep him out. I never acknowledged that till tonight, till Kate talked about the badgering. That brought it on" (process analysis).

Maria may have been fearful of physical abuse to a certain extent if she did not do as she was told, as was shown in her previous statement that she was not beaten because she knew not to push it. However, the thing she seemed to fear most was being demeaned if she disobeyed Paul's directives, so she only resisted him covertly by not doing things and hiding the fact that she was not doing them.

Intimidating behaviour may make women comply because of the fear of potential physical violence, while openly critical and demeaning behaviour may cause women to fear the resulting feelings of worthlessness. It also showed that the

fear of being made to feel worthless can remain years after the relationship has been terminated.

Anger

Being made to feel worthless and inadequate also made these two women enraged. Anger can be felt but does not necessarily have to be expressed, or if expressed, it may be expressed in different ways. Anger is often the result of feeling that one is not treated as an equal in the relationship (Retzinger, 1991; Ross & Van Willigen, 1996; Schwartz, 1994), and can also be the result of the injustice of being subjected to behaviour that causes emotional pain (Canary & Emmers-Sommer, 1997; Lynch & Kilmartin, 1999). Anger, as well as hate, resentment, hurt, sadness, frustration, and depression have been found to be the specific emotions most strongly related to inequity (Mikula et al., 1998), and all the women in this study had experienced the whole gamut of these emotions. Lee felt extreme anger in the form of rage, but did not express her anger to Brent.

Lee: It did not matter what I did, it was wrong and my sex was useless; I was just so inadequate. And I used to just rage and wish he would try some of these other wonderful women [he used to negatively compare her to]. But my way of coping was to shut off totally (responsibility discussion).

Brent was cruel in the contempt he expressed for Lee. He seemed to be on a campaign to make Lee feel worthless. An interaction pattern, where a woman cannot do anything right, no matter how she tries, such as happened in Lee's relationship, is called an abusive double bind interaction pattern (Chang, 1995). Brent criticised her behaviour, her personality, as well as her sex, and I presume that she meant the act of sex as he still seemed to value other women. There was nothing good about her in his opinion, and this left Lee feeling extremely inadequate. Lee never felt safe enough to express her feelings towards her partner, but Maria was able to access her power and express her anger when her son had borne the impact of one of Paul's rages, when he had thrown his bowl of porridge in frustration.

Maria: There was this porridge dripping from the ceiling onto Blair's head. And for some reason that made me so angry. He had thrown the stuff and left the table and had gone outside. So I said to my other son Steven, "give me your weetbix [breakfast cereal]" and he said, "Why" and I just said, "Give me your weetbix" and I walked out the back door to follow Paul. And here he is, standing behind the garage having a smoke. So I called his name and when he turned I just went 'whack' and shoved it straight in his face. And there is weetbix up his nose and in his ears and the plate had cracked and there was a

great big gash. Oh. God, what a mess! That is the only time I have ever thrown anything (expectation discussion).

Maria had been too scared to show her anger when it concerned unjust behaviour towards herself, but seeing her little boy demeaned had made her angry enough to overcome her own fear of her partner, even to the point that she attacked him.

Kirkwood described that one way in which women started to change their perspectives of the relationship was when they observed the impact of abuse on their children (Kirkwood, 1993). Although Maria may have had difficulties with seeing the origins of change within her self, the opportunity to observe how their son responded to similar behaviour may have shed light on the issue, and it may have been this new awareness that made Maria so angry. Furthermore, because Maria cared deeply about her children's welfare, the realisation that her child was distressed may also have contributed to her anger. Paul did not retaliate. Maria may have thought that her life was not at risk in doing that, in contrast to Lee who thought that she could be killed if she ever argued back. The level of fear, therefore, seemed to be different for these two women, and Maria had identified that she had a greater fear for her emotional sanity than for her physical safety.

Although Lee did not openly show her fighting spirit, as Maria had done, she certainly had not been inwardly submissive. She had acknowledged her feelings of anger to herself by saying, "I am not going to let the bastard beat me"; and she meant, "beating" literally as well as figuratively. Her fighting was an internal process, so that she could stay sane and safe.

Loneliness

Lee and Maria both felt lonely in their relationship. Maria explained how being alone and feeling lonely differed for her.

Maria: I don't mind being alone; I quite like being alone, so being alone does not mean being lonely for me. But especially towards the middle and the end of my marriage, when Paul was at home when he left the Navy and became a policeman, I think that was the loneliest period of my life. I was not allowed to laugh loud when we went out, or if I laughed at a joke I was crass and if I did not laugh at a joke I was a prude, and if I had dinner ready when he walked through the door that was bourgeois, and if I did not have the dinner ready it was 'why didn't I have the dinner ready'. I can't think of a single reason why the man married me. I just was wrong (process analysis).

Maria felt most lonely when Paul was constantly around her, rather than when he was away, something that Beth and Natalie also articulated. Maria spoke of feeling lonely when her partner continually changed the rules on how she should behave, by criticising her no matter what she did. Paul treated Maria as if she was inadequate as a person and she felt lonely when he continually criticised her. In the presence of a partner, the lack of emotional connection is salient; because one expects to have an emotional connection with a partner, whereas when a partner is absent a woman is not confronted with that lack of closeness.

Maria also felt lonely when Paul did not consider her personal needs. Maria had to hide the fact that she was reading, because she was not allowed to have leisure time until all work was done, which was impossible with a growing family, as has been discussed. Paul's refusal to consider her personal needs caused her to feel lonely.

Maria: The book would go quickly under the bed, like, I was not reading, talk about STUPID! But that was lonely. All that was lonely. Him being at sea was not lonely for me at all (process analysis).

Maria's statement shows that loneliness may also be due to not being seen as an individual with needs and rights.

Lee already started to feel lonely when she had only just married, as heard in this text.

Lee: Lee was out on the farm, working beside the wonderful man she was married to. She was happy and cheerful and did not see lots of people, but was always friendly. The trains went past about three times daily. Happy in her work and humming away, she stopped and watched the train going by. She waved, smiled, and shouted out "Hi" to the driver. Next thing she knew she was getting a great lecture about strangers, ignorance and doing the wrong things. Boy, it hurt. She walked slowly away, humiliated, hurt, sad, and lonely (fairness memory).

Lee felt lonely when Brent disapproved of her and behaved in a superior way, by telling her what were the right and the wrong ways for her to behave. That this memory surfaced with the fairness cue shows that she found his behaviour unfair. Her idea of marriage was very different from the reality of her relationship with Brent.

Lee: The worst I felt is when we went out. I would be so lonely for that loving husband and companion, like, what is supposed to happen when one gets married. It got to where I did not want to go out, because it was easier to be at home. Everything would be fine when we went out, except for the odd snide remarks that people laughed at. But to me it would make me cringe. They would be aimed at me (support discussion).

Lee felt lonely because she did not feel supported by Brent, as he always disapproved of her and criticised her, as is shown in this account surfacing in the support discussion. She had expected to gain a husband who would treat her with love, and as a friend; the myth of marriage that often contradicts reality. Instead of treating her with love and care he ridiculed her and put her down.

In a study of the role of emotional abuse in physically abusive relationships, it was found that ridicule was the type of emotional abuse reported by the highest percentage of subjects as most negative for them (Follingstad et al., 1990). These authors stated that ridicule might be the most destructive form of emotional abuse because it attacks the woman's sense of self-esteem and destroys her ability to feel good about herself. Murphy and Hoover found, when measuring emotional abuse in violent relationships, that denigration through being humiliated and domination/intimidation had consistently higher correlations with physical abuse than did the other forms of abuse they investigated, such as restrictive engulfment and hostile withdrawal (Murphy & Hoover, 1999). It seems that ridiculing behaviour may be closely connected to physical abuse.

The lack of warmth towards a partner in the company of others seems to exacerbate feelings of loneliness, because it was not only a private feeling of loss but also a public display to the world of this loss; especially if it was also accompanied by contempt, such as Lee's partner Brent displayed, in telling her in company to shut her mouth or by making snide remarks about her that made her cringe. The hoped-for emotional connection was not only absent and the absence made public, but she was also subjected to emotional attacks on her self. She may have felt ashamed that not only did she know that she was being treated as inferior and unworthy of love, but the wider world was then witness to the way in which she was treated, and in this way shame seems to be connected to loneliness. This finding is consistent with research that has connected feelings of shame to feelings of emotional isolation (Jones & Schechter, 1992; Keltner & Buswell, 1997; Retzinger, 1991). Being publicly treated as if she were inferior, inadequate and unworthy also had the effect that Lee preferred to stay at home, so that she would not be subjected to such shame-inducing behaviour in the company of others. In

this way, emotional isolation may result in self-imposed social isolation, to avoid feelings of shame. It also shows that feelings are sometimes difficult to isolate, as they seem to interact and overlap.

Although Lee had already implied that she did not feel loved in saying she felt lonely in her marriage, Maria was explicit about not feeling loved by Paul, because Paul's dominant behaviour was devoid of respect and compassion.

Maria: I honestly don't think, no matter how much he said he loved me or cared for me, I actually don't think he ever did (caring discussion). If he loved me, well, he didn't even have to love me. What about respect, what about just caring, decency (love discussion)?

Maria was referring here to the absence of care, decency, and respect, in the way Paul related to her. Paul said that he loved her, but his words were not backed up with actions that made her feel loved. His dominant behaviour had precluded behaviours that Maria expected as the bottom line in terms of relating in a love partnership, such as respect, care and decency. Her expectations would also be the bottom line in terms of expectations of behaviour in a love relationship where a man and woman relate as equals (Jamieson, 1997; Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1996; LaFollette, 1996; Schwartz, 1994; Snyder, 1995). Paul did not treat Maria with respect, and Maria did not feel cared for in her relationship.

Emotional loneliness resulted from these women not being allowed to be themselves and generally feeling unloved by their partners because their partners did not treat them with care and respect. Both women spoke of feeling lonely when their partners did not see them as a person with individual needs and rights. For these two women, being treated with disrespect and a lack of love meant that they felt lonely and, in the long term, their self-esteem diminished.

Diminished self-esteem

Kirkwood described the term 'self-esteem' as the degree to which, as individuals, we see ourselves as important and valuable (Kirkwood, 1993). She termed self-esteem as "a fundamental belief in ourselves as worthy of respect, love and fair treatment from others" (p.68). Because a partner is in a position to know us better than perhaps any other, thereby having more power to affect us (Douglas, 1994), being treated with lack of respect by a partner can powerfully affect the way we

feel about ourselves. A partner is in a position to know us better than perhaps any other, and thereby has the power to affect the way we see ourselves. Moreover, it is also because they are around us on a daily basis that messages of disrespect get repeated on a daily basis, and this makes the effect of a partner's behaviour so powerful. An account of the "self" is, therefore, as much about how we are regularly positioned in every day practice (Wortham, 1999). If a partner regularly positions a woman as inferior, and not worthy of respect, love and fair treatment, it is likely to negatively affect a woman's self-esteem. It is not in the discrete instances of being treated disrespectfully that one loses self-esteem, but in the relentless daily doses of that treatment that harm occurs (Loring, 1994; Marshall, 1994), and partners are in the primary position to be able to do that.

Continually being seen as inadequate and not worthwhile meant that Lee and Maria started to believe that they were inadequate and worthless.

Lee: Everything I did was wrong. I felt an earthquake when I was pregnant and I was called "mental"; like, "pregnant women often lose their mental capacities", he said. It was reported in the papers and I put it under his nose. It was quite a strong earthquake but he swore there was no earthquake because he did not feel it. [Saying to Grace] Your ex is probably very similar; I see a lot of similarities. That makes you lose total confidence in yourself. It is pretty hard to put behind you (support discussion).

Continually telling Lee she was wrong even went as far as Brent denying Lee's perceptions. Brent did not accept that he may have been wrong, and kept denying Lee's reality, even in the face of external evidence, such as a newspaper report. It was the relentlessness of never being seen as right in Brent's eyes, as he continually denied her reality, and not the discrete incidents of this that made Lee lose confidence in herself. It seemed that Brent had a reason for doing that.

Lee: I did not really start to grow up till I was thirty-five when I look back. That was the worst thing that ever happened to me, according to my husband. My experience with Brent was, he did not want me to grow and be independent, because his mother was always there for him with meals ready and everything. As soon as I started to become independent he did not like that and things got worse and worse. That I could do things and I went out and got a job and manage a business and that sort of thing. Things got worse and worse because I was not there having lunch ready. I used to get [the morning and evening meal], but he certainly did not appreciate me growing stronger (process analysis).

Lee believed, in retrospect, that Brent kept her feeling bad about herself and off balance, because if she felt insecure she was more likely to be submissive and to look after him.

Maria also felt worthless as a consequence of Paul's continual criticisms whenever he was around, and these feelings of being worthless still recurred 12 years after her separation whenever she heard Paul's voice over the phone.

Maria: [My fear is] that I feel worthless again, I guess. Because whatever I do it is not right anyway. I also don't want to feel so awful about myself ever again, as long as I live (fairness discussion).

Maria made a direct connection between Paul's continual criticism and her feeling worthless. It also shows that fearing the ability of a partner to make you feel worthless can linger for many years after the relationship has been terminated.

Despair

Despair was about no matter how a woman tried to improve the relationship, nothing changed. Lee believed that Brent criticised her so that he could feel in charge, as no matter what she did to try and improve the situation, it did not change.

Lee: It does not matter what you do or how hard you try, it does not improve it (support discussion).

If a woman cannot change a situation, no matter what she does, she may start to despair about the hopelessness of the situation. Lee had put years of emotional energy into a relationship in which Brent treated her with contempt. She received nothing positive from the relationship but a roof over her head. The inhumane treatment she endured over many years, together with the awareness that she could do nothing to improve the situation, meant that Lee despaired about her situation and this increased her feelings of depression.

Maria had the same sense of despair when she found that no matter what she did she was never seen to be doing it right. Paul seemed to criticise Maria for the sake of criticising her, as there seemed to be no rationale for his criticisms.

Maria: It did not matter whether it was one thing one day and it was the opposite the next day. By that stage I was so screwed up anyway I don't think I noticed half the time. But later, it doesn't matter what it was, it was the opposite the next day and I was never left alone. It was just all-wrong, all the time! And I think all the hiding stuff is because it was the only come back I had and the only peace I got. And when you said badgering, I thought "oh Jesus, yeah", I never got any peace (crying softly). I was just never right and I was just never allowed to be me, ever (process analysis).

Paul's criticisms of Maria seemed to be for the sake of throwing her off balance, not because there was anything to criticise. He made her crazy with his irrational criticisms, because, no matter how she altered her behaviour, she was still seen to be doing wrong.

Chang categorised this type of behaviour under double bind patterns of abusive behaviour, where contradiction is used to create instability and confusion (Chang, 1995). The rules are changed constantly to undermine partners in such a subtle way that they are often completely unaware of what is happening, which makes women despair because they think that they are going crazy (Douglas, 1994). This seemed to apply to Maria, as she felt emotionally stressed, confused, and badgered by Paul, and he did not allow her to be herself; any thoughts, behaviours, and feelings that identified her as an individual were criticised and degraded. Feeling that she was losing her mind added to Maria's fears of how Paul's behaviour impacted on her.

Jones and Schechter found that men's behaviour that results in women starting to feel that they are going crazy also deepened feelings of depression and hopelessness (Jones & Schechter, 1992). Maria became depressed, as discussed in her profile, and although the data did not make clear why she became depressed, data did make clear that she had symptoms of depression, such as described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, that were directly related to her partner's abusive behaviour. The DSM-IV describes the mood in a Major Depressive Episode as a person describing they are feeling depressed, sad, hopeless, discouraged, or "down in the dumps", having a loss of interest or pleasure or decreased energy, they may feel a sense of worthlessness (which is discussed under diminished self-esteem) and guilt, and unrealistically blame themselves, looking as if they are about to cry, and they may have suicidal ideation or suicide attempts ((APA), 1994). As the reader will notice, these symptoms are largely the subheadings of impacts of emotional abuse in the three groups, although women may not have described themselves as depressed. Although depression may describe a clinical style and a character style, as well as an affect (Kirkwood, 1993), I use the term 'depression' in this study to refer to

affect; the way in which negative experiences in the relationship had affected their feelings, such as feeling sad, lonely, worthless, hopeless, and in despair.

Lee and Maria despaired of their situation because whatever they did to try and stop their partners' relentless criticisms did not work. Despair is about loss of hope and is central to the dynamics of control, in that the loss of hope is the result of a woman's inability to change the circumstances in her life that are emotionally damaging her, a finding that was supported in other studies on emotional abuse (Jones & Schechter, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993).

Lee, as well as Natalie and Kate who will be discussed in the next section, recognised the point at which she started to fear for her sanity.

Lee: Lee had reached breaking point after 28 years of marriage. She felt she could go on no longer. The responsibility of everyone's burdens and troubles was at long last going to end. Why in all this time did she not realise it should be a two way thing, instead of battling along and covering up for his lack of love and caring, or never taking responsibility for any wrongs? (responsibility memory)

Lee's insight, that this was a one-way relationship where she was made to take all the responsibility and Brent took none, and which had emotionally broken her, enabled her to find the inner resources to leave the relationship. It is often at moments of greatest powerlessness and grief, when a woman is at the outer reach of endurance, that she can find the strength to act to save her self (Dowrick, 1994). It is also often the very things that make many women strong, the habits of hanging in there, taking care of everybody and everything, never giving in to failure, which can work against them when they are holding on to the wrong partner for the wrong reasons (Jones & Schechter, 1992). That Lee survived 28 years of inhumane behaviour is a tribute to her strengths and survival skills. However, the ability to leave the relationship did not stop the impact of abusive behaviour, in that Brent then made her feel guilty for leaving the marriage.

Guilt

Brent and Paul had criticised their partners when the women had not lived up to gendered expectations, including not living up to the expectations that women are selfless and hold the family together at all cost.

Lee: When I finally told Brent that I was leaving him he said: “What will your sisters think of you?” (responsibility discussion).

Brent implied that Lee was not living up to her responsibilities as a woman. Lee, therefore, felt guilty for leaving Brent and breaking up the family.

While Paul held Maria responsible, and had even blamed her for not being able to cope with the stresses of the relationship, Brent blamed Lee when she terminated the relationship out of self-preservation. These women were in a double bind when their emotional health deteriorated, as they were blamed for not coping if they stayed, and they were blamed for leaving if they left. Brent used societal imperatives that made Lee feel guilty for leaving, implying that a good woman does not leave her husband. In other words, dominant men may blame women if women have difficulty coping with abusive behaviour in the relationship, and they may also blame women if they try to save themselves by getting out of a destructive relationship. This type of guilt around family values may last long after the relationship is terminated.

Lee: It would be easy to go back, because of this family thing that is broken. It is a guilt I still have (more than a decade later) (support discussion).

The gendered expectation was that even though men may treat women in an appalling way, women have to put up with that, as ‘good’ women do not leave their husbands (May, 1992). Other research has had similar findings of men criticising women for not conforming to traditional gendered expectations, such as being criticised about their parenting, their appearance, their sexual performance, their cooking, their housekeeping, or their lack of devotion to their husbands, with the result that women feel guilty (Jones & Schechter, 1992).

Paul had criticised Maria for getting a wage for a part-time job she had secretly taken, as Paul disapproved of her working outside of the home. Paul’s criticism made her feel guilty.

Maria: I had been found out in my part time job, another act of resistance remembered, I really need to keep hold of those, it was made clear to me that I was not to have my earnings deposited into our joint account. Nor was I allowed to use the money for anything related to our home. Providing for us was his responsibility (responsibility memory).

Maria: This is the first time that I have realised that my wage, pathetically small as it was, was ‘tainted money’, ridden with guilt. I was not [allowed by Paul] to use it for goodies, even clothes for myself (responsibility discussion).

As a consequence of Paul's criticism, Maria felt guilty for the money she received for her work. Paul dictated how the money Maria earned could be spent. He had implied that when she contributed to finances she exposed him as not being a good provider (see fairness memory), and he saw her financial contribution to the family finances as undermining his position. Paul heaped criticism on Maria for having put him in a position where others could potentially see him as not being a good provider. It may be that Paul rigidly prescribed Maria to adhere to gendered roles in order to save him from possible public criticism about his role as provider. His fear of being criticised by others for not being a good provider may also have been because he needed to be seen as fulfilling his role as provider in order to feel good about himself. Research has connected rigidly holding on to masculine gendered roles with immature male gender role development (Mahalik, Cournoyer, DeFrane, Cherry, & Napolitano, 1998) and Paul may not have felt secure in his identity as a man without fulfilling his traditional role as a man.

Responses to being dominated

Responses to emotional abuse vary, as it depends on what resources a woman has available to use. Maria had not been able to leave her partner, but Lee had found the personal resources to do so. However, in doing so her partner quoted social messages that were typical in New Zealand, such as 'marriage is forever' and 'women should put up with whatever the marriage relationship brings' (May, 1992), so that Lee felt guilty for not conforming to these social messages.

Maria had made a connection between her partner's constant criticism and her feeling worthless, which was discussed under diminished self-esteem, and she made a further connection between his criticism of her, and her feeling worthless and not being able to leave him. When Kate commented that Maria had been wise to not push things to keep herself from getting hit, Maria commented, "Maybe I would have got out" [of the relationship if she had got hit] (process analysis). She thought that she would not have put up with the situation if she had been hit, but being subjected to relentless criticism was generally not seen as abuse and not seen as a reason to get out of a marriage, because the detrimental emotional consequences were not appreciated. In the end, the criticisms had made her feel

worthless, to the point that she then did not have the confidence to get out of the relationship. In a way, emotional abuse gradually and unobtrusively erodes a woman's confidence, so that by the time she realises that the relationship is harmful to her emotional health, she is not in a position to leave because she now lacks the confidence.

Getting out of a relationship is not easy, as there are many constraints to leaving, such as family values, church decrees and tradition. Having confidence is not enough on its own to be able to leave a bad relationship.

Lee: It is not easy to get out though. It is a very hard thing to do. We are conditioned to, particularly our age group (She was 60). I am from a big family; there is not one broken marriage in my generation. ... And here I am, the first person, and my husband; (pause) you break tradition. I was brought up to get married and have kids.

Maria: Stay there till death us do part.

Lee: Yeah, it is very very hard to break away from that.

Keeping tradition may have such a strong hold on women that they find it almost impossible to leave the marriage, even if they became emotionally destroyed in the relationship. Lee and Maria had a discussion on the difficulties of leaving a relationship.

Lee: It takes a long time [to lose the guilt feelings], once I had broken away; it's a long time. I know it is the right thing [to have left] and I have no trouble with that, but it is still a very sad thing, because that family thing is gone too. It has affected all the children. So you lose that.

Maria: Like you said, is it you who is different, and I think it is appalling that people

Lee: can affect you to that degree or control you to that degree is bad, isn't it really

Maria: But I have never realised how scared I have been.

Lee: I suppose why I could see that is, because I have experienced it, and I would be a different person trying to please the man.

Maria: There was a lot of stuff I was doing I was not aware of. Like, I know I said I was doing this covert stuff, [It was] because I was SCARED! Yeah, I probably need to look at that. It feels uncomfortable to have done that and not to have been fully aware of that. Yeah, and the stuff about the locks, like, was I kidding myself? Why did I not face that I was scared of him? I still don't want to ring him (laugh) (process analysis).

In this conversation Lee is alluding that it takes a long time to get over the guilt that was imposed on her by her husband, in being blamed for destroying the marriage. Brent did not take responsibility for his abusive behaviour that caused Lee to leave the marriage, after 28 years, in order to keep her sanity. Lee and Maria were totally in tune with one another in this conversation, to the point that Lee was finishing Maria's sentence for her, and Maria just carried on as if she had said it herself. Lee knew that she had been scared and had been able to make sense of her own behaviour, and, to a point, this had saved her sanity. It had also

made it possible for her to recognise that Maria had been scared, even though Maria had not. They now both realised that they had altered themselves, out of fear, to fit in with their partners. Lee articulated that she was a different person when she tried to please a man. Chang had identified this pattern of adaptation as one of the abusive interaction patterns that characterise psychologically abusive relationships (Chang, 1995). Rather than interacting with a partner, a man interacts at or against a partner, transforming a woman into an object on which he can inflict his emotions. A woman then adapts to a man but he does not account to her, leaving her feeling inadequate and worthless.

Summary of dominant control and its impact on women

In summary, dominant men behaved in ways that caused women to fear them, in terms of their physical or emotional safety, and this resulted in women altering their behaviour so as not to upset their partners. Dominant men were so critical of women that women could never be right, no matter how hard they tried. These women felt hopeless because they were unable to change the situation. One of the two women, Maria, struggled to hold on to her sanity as her partner became so irrationally critical that she could not anticipate how to behave in a way that would prevent more criticism. These two women mostly suppressed their feelings of anger and felt lonely and unloved. The type of dominant behaviour these men had displayed towards their partners was emotionally abusive in that it diminished women's sense of self and, for one of them, her self-identity because she thought she was going insane. A direct connection was made between continual criticisms leading to feelings of worthlessness, which then prevented a woman from leaving the relationship when she recognised that it was detrimental to her, because she had lost her confidence.

That continued criticism leads to lowered self-esteem was supported in a New Zealand study (Douglas, 1994), as well as in several American studies (Chang, 1996; Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994; Marshall, 1996). The role of traditional Western masculine behaviour and the role of patriarchy in this sort of abusive behaviour may not have come through as clearly as in the next group, but these men's relentless criticism of their partners is congruent with patriarchal beliefs

that permit men to think that they can criticise women. Men become socialised to see themselves as superior to women, in that societal institutions expect men to always have a superior position to women, thereby sanctioning male's entitlement to superiority (Kimmel, 1997; O'Neil & Egan, 1993; Pence & Paymar, 1993; Robertson, 1999), and their perceived right to criticise women. I will now look at how the behaviour of men who passively control, through resistance and withholding, impacts on women.

Chapter 5

Passive control

Men who controlled in passive ways had expectations of women that were similar to those of men who controlled in dominant ways. However, these men did not intimidate women into complying, and women, therefore, did not always behave according to men's expectations.

The women in this group were not afraid of their partners because these men did not behave in intimidating ways, in contrast with the first group. Because Kate, Natalie, and Bridget were not afraid of their partners, they did not always behave in ways that their partners expected of them. When the women did not conform to gendered expectations, their partners showed their disapproval by withholding affection, by not talking to them or by other withholding or resistant behaviour. These men's displeasure was mostly displayed in resistant and withholding behaviour, in contrast to the overt aggressiveness of dominant controllers. The impact this frequent silent rejection had on these women was shown in these women becoming intensely lonely and two of the women despaired about their sanity because of the continual emotional pain they were experiencing.

Kate's partner was more dominant than Natalie and Bridget's partners were, but I put Kate in this category because Kate generally was able to question or admonish Don when she felt that his behaviour was unacceptable, unlike Lee and Maria who were too fearful to do that. Don used to get angry when Kate challenged him, but his expression of anger was more through bad moods than through threatening behaviour. Kate did know when not to push things, but she was not afraid of Don until it became apparent to him that she was going to leave him. He then started to display brooding rages, which on the last day exploded in an aggressive rage. In this way he fitted with the men in the first group. Kate's partner was not only more dominant than the partners of Natalie and Bridget, he was also more in touch with his own and Kate's emotions and could be caring and perceptive, and showed that he needed Kate. In this way his behaviour fitted more with the

partners of Beth and Grace, who will be discussed in the manipulating control section. Although he was unlike the traditional Kiwi male, in that he had developed his emotional side, he was like traditional Kiwi males in that he was selfish and would not respond to Kate's emotional needs if they conflicted with his own needs.

I had considerable trouble fitting Don and Kate into one of these categories. What finally made me decide to put them in this group had much to do with Kate being a strong woman who resisted Don at times, even though Don wanted to be the dominant partner in the relationship, and which, therefore, excluded them from the dominant group where the women submitted to the men. I also had to exclude them from the manipulating control group because, even though Don seemed to be more emotionally developed than the men in the dominant or manipulative control group, men in the manipulative control group never got angry and always seemed to feel in control over their partners, unlike Don. Their inclusion in this group came about from having to exclude them from the other two groups. This shows that, although six out of the seven couples seemed to fit more or less into categories, categorising behaviour and impact into groups was not completely successful. This is a first attempt at looking at differences in how men try to maintain their superior position in the relationship and how this impacts on women. A great deal more needs to be known about the topic before one can make predictions about these dynamics in heterosexual relationships.

Kate: dynamics of control

Kate had an energetic and spirited personality, but Don always managed to suppress and constrain her energy, and did not seem to want her to function independently from him.

Kate: Kate carefully broached her plan [for her farming husband to come in at set times for meals so that she could be free to do other things in between] several times to Don, who seemed grumpy, reluctant, or exasperating, and Kate was never sure. But she was a goer, a persistent goer, and she kept trying. Don reluctantly came to this agreement. He came in once from the cowshed, not chatty but quietly "shitty". He did it again the next day and categorically stated, "I have been sick all morning. Your demands are totally unreasonable. My guts are in knots. You must let me come in any old time". Kate's heart sank; she had no answer. She did not think she had the right. She stopped negotiating, thinking, "That's that" (fairness memory).

Don expected Kate to be there for him when it suited him, which meant that she could not plan her days to do things she enjoyed doing. In demanding that she be there at all times for him, he implied that she had no right to an individual life.

Kate became emotionally low, as heard in the following memory.

Kate: Kate can only remember the emotions of that morning, emotions and three actions. Scene; farm kitchen/dining room. Characters; two boys about 6 and 4 (which meant there was a baby girl in the house somewhere as well). Kate sitting at the kitchen table. Actions: Don had walked out even tho' Kate had made it clear over breakfast that she felt really low and wanted/needed company. "Let's plan a fun day" type of conversation had taken place over breakfast. Don had a job that needed doing on the farm, no enthusiasm, no energy, no caring for Kate's state of mind. Don puts on his boots, fobs off taking either of the boys with him and leaves through back gate. Kate sits at the table. She is not crying; she just sits. "Could a person feel worse than this", she wonders. How bad would she have to be before he ever 'gave' her anything when she felt empty? Michael, 4 years old, comes and stands at her shoulder. He stands, not speaking, looking at her. Kate thinks, "Thank God, Michael is standing next to me". Little darts of warmth penetrate her heart (caring memory).

Kate felt totally abandoned by Don when he was uninterested in her low state of mind, and did not even want to take either of their two little boys to give her a break. Kate used to do a great deal of administration for the farm, but Don did not acknowledge this to outsiders.

Kate enjoyed preparing the sale catalogue for publication. It involved about six weeks work in January and February and in those days, before computers stored the data, [it] meant [that] there was much copying and looking up production records, show results, finding/taking photographs etc. Kate enjoyed it but it wasn't that easy and this particular year much harder than ever – just to get at the work was the trouble – endless other pressures and calls on time. Kate talked of her concerns about meeting the deadline for taking the copy to the publisher. She did not moan about it, but she knew she brought the subject up in a chatty way. Kate and Don were excited about this sale. Their cattle were in demand and there was much interest. She took it for granted that there was a job to be done. She could do hers and she knew Don would somehow manage his too. The agent called and looked around the sale animals and came in for a cup of tea to look over the copy. Don brought him in, and sat down at the kitchen table. Kate felt good as she switched on the kettle. She heard the agent say, "How did it go, you've been busy Don, can't have been easy getting the copy ready". "No, no trouble really", Kate heard him say. In amazement she turned the kettle on and thought, "Am I here?" The two men talked about this and that. Kate started to pour the tea. The agent opened the stack of paper and said with a laugh in his voice, "This is Kate's hand writing! No wonder it didn't give you much trouble". Kate thought, "Caught out, serves you right". Husband set his mouth – not pleased. The agent changed the subject. Kate knew her husband did not like being laughed at or caught out and so she did not say anything either; then or later (expectation memory).

Don did not acknowledge that Kate had actually prepared the sale catalogue, and had just appropriated her work as his work, and Kate felt that she had been made invisible, which is heard in her saying, "Am I here?"

Kate: I expected to be given acknowledgment for the work that I had done on the copy. In that moment as I clicked in the kettle, I expected Don to say: "Kate did that, I did not have to worry". I still remember this feeling of utter surprise (expectation discussion).

As heard in the above expectation memory, Kate did not challenge Don for having made her invisible in not acknowledging her work, as the set of his mouth told her that he was angry again. Don always got angry when anyone challenged his behaviour, especially when Kate challenged him.

Kate's son Michael and Kate walked from the house to the cowshed. Warm sunny morning, farm work waiting. Stock to shift and hay to feed out. They chatted about this and that as they walked. At the cowshed they set off in different directions to set things up for their morning. Kate finished first and came back to the farm race and leaned her arms and shoulders over the gate with the sun warming her back. How was Don getting on? She climbed the gate, stood on top to peer over the hedges to the back of the farm. WHAT THE HELL!! What the hell was Don doing, riding the two-wheeler around the back paddock? Hadn't he promised the surgeon, who had given him an artificial hip, that he wouldn't waste his skill as a surgeon? He would buy a four-wheeler. "Yes, a fall off a two-wheeler would and could have him in a wheelchair. Don't hassle him please". He agreed. Hadn't he promised Kate that he would ride the four-wheeler – not just grab the two-wheeler because it was closest? Kate watched him circling on the wet grass in the back paddock. She climbed down off the gate and waited for Don's return. "You're riding the two-wheeler." "Mm, yes, the four-wheeler needed petrol", Don replied as if all in the world was reasonable. "But you said you wouldn't ride the two-wheeler." Don stiffened in rage. Made "you're being unreasonable" mutterings to Kate. Kate felt something 'clunk' satisfactorily into place inside her body. She walked off home across the paddock on a warm sunny morning, thinking to herself, "If you end up in a wheelchair through your own bloody stupidity, there is no way I need to be your wheelchair attendant". The birds sang; and Kate heard them in the gum trees (responsibility memory).

Kate started to recognise that only Don's own comfort mattered to him and that he did not have any consideration for her, or for the consequences of his behaviour on her. This scene was a catalyst for Kate, in that she started to think about whether she wanted to stay in the relationship, as she realised that she did not want to be used by Don. However, when she told him that she was unhappy and was thinking of a separation he became clingy. She had asked him not to call her "love", until she had sorted out for herself what the word meant in their relationship, as the word confused her.

Kate: I think he was being really clinging calling me love, just trying to put a whole lot of hooks on. Like he used it from time to time. And sometimes it sounded okay; it had been quite acceptable. But at that stage he was using it as a tool. Like, "I need you to be my love. I can't manage without you not being my love" [It was an] utterly, utterly loaded word. (love discussion).

It seemed that Don did not want to accept that Kate had doubts about her love for him and he tried to manipulate her into loving him by calling her "love", but without making positive changes in his behaviour towards her. When she finally decided to leave the relationship Don blamed her for having destroyed his life.

Kate: Yes, that is all I heard, "You have destroyed my life, look at what **you** have done" (fairness discussion)

Don did not seem to see Kate as an individual with a life of her own, as he expected her to be there for him at all times, he appropriated her work as his own, he did not feel accountable to her and he was uninterested in her state of mind. To Don, Kate was there to support his way of life and he blamed her for destroying his life when she did not do that anymore. It was all on his terms.

Natalie: dynamics of control

Natalie's partner, Ed, was even less dominant than Don was, but he still wanted to be in control in the relationship. In a conversation, Natalie compared her partner's behaviour with Maria's partner Paul (from the dominant control group), and found that their partners always expected women to live by standards the men had set.

Natalie said to Maria: Paul had standards, like, always working and having everything perfect and then he expected you to live up to his standards. I had similar things, but it was in a different direction. It was not around perfection; it was actually around Ed never ever needing anything in life; not permitting himself to ever needing anything in life. He could live on the smell of an oily rag, he never needed any money, he had old clothes and never needed any new ones, he did not need entertainment, he did not smoke, he did not drink, he did not go out, he didn't, didn't didn't, ANYTHING! And then he expected me to be the same. Basically what it is, is that standards are being set. Like, whatever standards they have are the right ones, and anything that is different from that is not OK. And they might not forbid it but they will be scathing about it or make comments (process analysis).

This theme, of men expecting women to conform to men's standards, was recurrent in all the women's stories over the three groups, as all the partners of the women always thought that their beliefs and values were the 'right' ones. Kate identified with Natalie because Don always saw virtue in not needing anything, and women were then criticised if they did want or need things. Natalie and Kate were expected to live the same Spartan life as their partners chose to do, which was not because of a lack of money but because of different values. Ed used to emotionally hurt Natalie by being unsupportive.

Natalie was in the packing shed, working. The phone rang. It was her sister from Europe. She phoned to say their sister had been found dead in her flat. Natalie's legs gave way and she slumped on the floor of the shed. She was totally in shock. However, they were really busy on [their horticultural block] and she could not be missed to go to her sister's funeral. The family had told Natalie when the funeral was. It was night-time in New Zealand. Natalie got a chair and put it outside under the stars, to be with her family in her mind. When Natalie's husband Ed, who was watching a video inside, saw her, he said she was 'crackers', sitting on her own in the dark outside. When two weeks later the work on the farm had slackened off and Natalie finally had time to reflect on the news of her sister's death, she started to cry, because she realised she would never see her

sister again. Ed said, "What are you crying about? Your sister has been dead for two weeks and life goes on" (support discussion).

That this memory surfaced for Natalie with the support cue shows how unsupported she felt by Ed in this traumatic period. Ed's lack of empathy and care is apparent here when he just made Natalie out to be mentally deficient for sitting outside in the dark at the time of the funeral. He even criticized her for openly grieving over the loss of her sister. Natalie experienced Ed's lack of support around dying in many different ways, from her mother's death to a friend of theirs who was dying of cancer and whom she was temporarily caring for in their home. Natalie, being a nurse, had agreed that she would look after him for a few days to give his family a break.

Natalie: He was a huge man, well over six feet and big, but he had got really really weak by this stage. He was not going to live much longer. He was half paralysed because of his brain tumour. I tried to get him into the bath and bath him, and then I could not get him out. He did not have the strength to help me. So I go to the lounge and say to Ed, "would you give me a hand to try to get Alain out of the bath, I can't do it on my own". And he said, "Do it yourself, you wanted him here". Here I was struggling with this huge man in the bath who was dying and I could not get him out and Ed would not help me. I honestly to this day really don't know what went on for him. He would never ever share what went on for him. So I don't actually know why he was so rotten (support discussion).

Lack of empathy, passive resistance in refusing to help, and an unwillingness to discuss things seemed to be Ed's way of operating in the relationship. He did not feel accountable in any way for Natalie's state of mind when she became depressed.

Natalie was at her wit's end. This was the umpteenth time she was going to a counsellor because she was so sad and kept crying. The relationship had got her down over the years to the point where she regularly needed tranquillisers. She had begged her husband many times to go with her to counselling but he always said, "If you have a problem, go and have it sorted out. I have not got a problem, I am fine". But this time he could see things were really bad as she was crying uncontrollably. He came with her to the counsellor. There were two counsellors, as the one she used to go to had brought another one who specialised in relationships. The counsellors said, after listening to him, that they could not help them as a couple because he did not want to make any changes, but that they could assist her if she wanted to separate. He walked out of the session, having barely been there for 10 minutes (fairness memory).

Natalie experienced Ed's unwillingness to view the way in which they operated in the relationship as unfair, as shown in this memory coming up under the fairness cue. Relationship maintenance is traditionally seen as a woman's role, and when Natalie's emotional state was really bad he was willing to accompany her to the counsellor but was not willing to look at how he contributed to Natalie being so depressed in the relationship. Ed just kept blaming Natalie for their problems.

Natalie: And [put downs] continually happened. It was very subtle, it was very covert, but he worked on me persistently, because it was my [much higher socio-economic] background, it was my education, it was my intelligence, it was my knowledge of languages. You name it; the whole lot, and he just didn't feel up to it. And it wasn't that I ever said anything about it. I always built him up on how good he was with mechanics and with technical things, and I always admired him for things that I couldn't do. Always building him up, but still there was something there niggling at him that he felt that he needed to bring me down a peg or two, and it went on and on and on, incessantly. But never overtly, so I could touch it, or reach it, or name it, or anything like that. It was just a feeling, continually, and it was just wearing me away. And I remember one day, it must have been towards the end, he actually blamed me for us getting married. He said, "You should have known better. You were a worldly woman, you knew everything, etc. You should have known that this couldn't have worked" (responsibility discussion).

Ed seemed to have problems with Natalie's greater abilities and experiences in certain areas, and whenever these abilities came to the fore he made a problem of it, presumably in order to feel better when she felt bad. Ed was very subtle in putting Natalie's abilities down, to the point that Natalie could not name the behaviour that made her feel that way, until at the end Ed became more overt in his criticisms. That Natalie had received a better education than Ed may also have been the real reason why he did not want Natalie to further her education, although he couched his arguments against her desire to study in terms of gendered responsibilities.

Natalie: For many years I wanted to go to varsity, and first there was the excuse that the kids were small and needed a mother so I could not go to varsity, and then he needed me in the business, so I could not go, and then the money could be spent better than on frivolous things like me going to varsity. All the arguments he gave were rock solid from my point of view, when he put it that way. I thought, yeah, he is right and I would let it go again. A few years later I would try again and he would have another argument why I could not go and I would think, "yeah, he is right" and I would let it go again and that went on and on. His arguments were all rock solid. I mean, a mother should be with her children, business comes before personal wishes, and money could be spent on better things than on my education, which was not an essential. It all made sense then (fairness discussion).

That Natalie remembered this incident under the fairness cue indicates that she now thought it unfair that Ed always put obstacles in the way of her desire to study. Ed's covert controlling behaviour, by quoting societal prescriptions to get Natalie to let go of her plans, seems to indicate that he did not think that he could achieve control by overtly demanding of Natalie that she behave in certain ways, as Natalie had a strong sense of self. However, by 'explaining' all the reasons why she should not further her education he made it clear that she was not free to develop herself. Ed generally had a distinct lack of empathy for Natalie, and an unwillingness to look at his own behaviour, or to discuss matters of concern. His control was subtle, in that he used social imperatives to bolster his preferred

position, and he gave her the silent treatment, refused to help, or became emotionally distant and icy to punish her if she did not conform to his expectations of her.

Bridget: dynamics of control

Frank was the least verbal in his disapproval of his partner Bridget, but he showed his displeasure by making Bridget feel that he suffered at her hands.

Bridget: Frank was outside clearing gorse from around their home, which he had bought without her seeing it first. Bridget was inside, snuggled up in front of a heater, reading yet another book. It was a Saturday, mid afternoon. After a while he appeared at the ranch slider. "When is afternoon tea?" he asked. She did not respond but felt a tight knot of resentment flare in the pit of her stomach. "If he chooses to work outside, doing the house proud bit", she thought, "that's up to him. What is wrong with me choosing to read a book?" Again his voice, "You've always got your nose in a book, you don't care about anything else. What about me? I'm working hard!" She felt guilt mixed with resentment and also felt chastened. Again she had not carried out her wifely responsibility, to physically look after her husband, to produce food and drink at the appointed times (Responsibility memory).

It is clear that Frank's agenda carried weight in their relationship. He bought the house without Bridget having seen it. He wanted to tackle the garden, and he wanted afternoon tea provided, and he criticised Bridget when her plans did not fit his. Bridget's preferences were not discussed. He criticised her for making her own choices as to how to spend time on the weekend. Frank had set ideas about how men and women operated in the world, and only his ideas seemed to carry weight.

Bridget: I had this idea when we agreed to adopt children, because I could not have children, somehow I had it in my head, stupid woman that I was, that they were going to be our children and that we were going to care for them. It never occurred to me that I was going to be the [sole] caregiver and that I had to play that role. I thought they were not such bad ideas, about sharing jobs and sharing the care of the kids. But it was, "what planet are you on? The world does not work like that." I felt like a real alien. (Fairness discussion)

Frank expected Bridget to give up her career because it was a woman's job to look after children. He had no empathy for what it was like for Bridget to have to let go of her career and not to have the stimulation and independence that a paid job provided. He was unbending in his opinions.

Bridget: I really believed that I had something to contribute [as a professional nurse], because I knew I was really good at my job. But I was not allowed to do it. I had to stay home. I had to be a mother, which meant cooking, cleaning, and looking after the kids. I was bored out of my tree! But it was like, "this is what women do" (fairness discussion).

While Frank expected Bridget to stay at home and have the responsibility for the children, he was free to do things he liked on the weekends.

Bridget: Frank would often want to go to the beach, to the place we had at the time. But for me to want to go out anywhere on my own without the children, oh, that was a whole different story. And it is not that I could not go, but it was this whole permission seeking, silent treatment when I got back, the punishing face, which was around the silent treatment and 'look what I have been doing for you' sort of stuff. Yeah, so it was like 'Is it worth it?' It became not worth it. (Caring discussion)

If Bridget wanted to do something on her own, she first had to ask if Frank could look after the children, and on Bridget's return she had to cope with his non-verbal disapproval that she had gone out so that he had to care for the children. In the end she found it easier to stay home than to have to deal with his disapproval. When Bridget ended up caring for her dying mother, as well as caring for their three young children Frank did not want to share Bridget's emotional load.

Bridget: He never asked her what [trying to look after her terminally ill mother, who needed a great deal of care, as well as caring for her three young children] was like for her. He went off to work each day, same as usual. He said he did not want to talk about how her dying mother affected Bridget. He could not cope with such things, he said. He just needed to return to normal. (Support memory)

When Bridget was too tired to go away with Frank for the weekend, Frank went on his own and then phoned Bridget to say that he was lonely, thereby pressuring her to come anyway.

Bridget: He wanted to go to the bach (beach house), she didn't. He went. However, after he had phoned her to say he'd arrived etc. and that he was lonely, she felt sorry for him being all-alone. So she packed up the car and the kids and went the next evening. She didn't want to, but she felt sorry for him. So, giving up her 'space' she'd gone anyway. He was ecstatic. She felt cold - again, remote. There was that stuff about wanting to be kind and not to be mean, and so even to put in that extra effort, even though I did not want to. It meant picking up the children who were still pretty young and getting them all organised and driving for several hours, all of that, so that he would not feel lonely (caring memory).

When Bridget did not want to live anymore with a man who was rigid and self-centred and had no consideration for her, Frank accused her of having destroyed his life, as Lee and Kate's partners had done.

Bridget: I used to get from Frank when I left: "You have utterly ruined me, you have destroyed my life. Everything I have done for you, and you have thrown it away" (fairness discussion).

Frank, as well as Kate's partner, felt that women destroyed a man's life by leaving him. It is not clear to me whether they thought that their life style of being served was destroyed, or their image as a man. Frank rigidly adhered to gendered role expectations, and he mainly used guilt-producing behaviour if Bridget did not conform to the traditional mould of women. He was the subtlest of these three

men in his control, as he mainly controlled through quoting societal prescriptions and by showing his displeasure in a non-verbal way if Bridget had not conformed. He seemed to see himself as the traditional head of the household who made decisions and would make Bridget feel guilty if she challenged his authority, by showing that he was disappointed or hurt or by becoming emotionally distant.

In summary, the partners of these women were not always in control in the relationship, in contrast to the dominant men. However, although they may not always have been in control, they seemed to want to be in control, and they reacted by becoming cold and resistant if they were not. They were generally not authoritative and did not forbid women to do things, but they have traditional expectations of the women and did seem to think that they were always right and that their standards and values were the right ones. These women generally experienced resistance from their partners, in the form of them being moody, refusing to talk or being emotionally distant, or withholding help, if women had failed their partners' standards or expectations. Neither did this type of man seem to feel secure if women were already shown to have strengths, such as abilities, education, or personality. Instead, they made it seem problematic that women had strengths and would downgrade these strengths as not important or problematic.

These three men were stereotypical in their thinking about gendered roles, and mostly passive aggressive in their behaviour, with little or no regard for their partners. There seemed to be an undercurrent of power struggles in this type of relationship, with women not wanting to be put in the subordinate position in the relationship, and the men not allowing them to be equal. These little sketches set the scene for making sense of how their partners' behaviour impacted on Kate, Natalie, and Bridget.

Impact of passive control

The main impact of passive control was that women became depressed because their partners punished them, by becoming resistant and cold, for not behaving in stereotypical feminine ways.

Getting emotionally hurt

Natalie, Bridget and Kate had all felt extremely hurt and shattered when their partners had a disregard for, and refused to consider, their needs. At the beginning of their relationships, these women still had faith that if they disclosed that they felt hurt by their partner's behaviour, he would cease to be hurtful. The assumption these women held was that one would not deliberately hurt the person one professes to love.

Natalie: The more I said, the more I expressed myself [in terms of how he hurt me], the more stone-faced he became. And he did so many things to hurt me and I would try and tell him, in the hope that if I told him it would cease, but it didn't (fairness discussion).

Natalie's disclosure of what sort of behaviour hurt her resulted in her feeling even more hurt because Ed neither responded to her disclosure, nor ceased his hurtful behaviour. If a man does not stop behaving in a way that he knows is hurting his partner, it is deliberate, and this realisation may make it even more hurtful to a woman. Natalie had left herself wide open to being hurt, by disclosing how Ed hurt her. Making herself vulnerable meant that Ed now knew how he could hurt her, and he was able to use that knowledge when he wanted to punish her.

Natalie: I'd say, "every time you [refuse to discuss our problems] there's another part of my love for you that is dying. One day there's not going to be much left." And he would not respond. He would not say anything. Nothing!! That was so extremely hurtful to me (love discussion).

Natalie still tried to communicate, to no avail. Ed knew that Natalie felt really hurt when he refused to talk, because she had told him so. Natalie then thought that Ed wanted to hurt her when he refused to communicate. Ed believed, as he was reported as having disclosed in the love discussion, that Natalie would never leave him. He, therefore, may have thought that he could punish Natalie when she did not live up to his expectations, without any consequences for him.

Traditional men have often grown up thinking that their relationships could be taken for granted once they married (Seidler, 1998) because external forces, such as law, tradition, religion, and parental influence, which hold traditional marriages together, exceeded internal forces, such as abuse and failed expectations that could pull a marriage apart (Canary & Emmers-Sommer, 1997; Gottman, 1997). Having taken for granted that women would never leave their marriages may explain why traditional men feel that they can afford to 'stonewall', as Gottman

(1997) calls it, their partners when they want to punish them. I think that analogy accurately describes what may happen when men refuse to respond, as nothing a woman says then gets through. It is effectively a means of discontinuing the communication in any form, and it is a powerful act to convey disapproval, icy distance, and smugness (Gottman, 1997). His need to hurt her seems to indicate that he wanted to be, but did not always feel, in control of her and the way they related. By hurting Natalie he made her vulnerable, and decreasing her personal power may have meant that his would increase in relation to her.

The men these women were married to also seemed to obtain pleasure from seeing their partners being criticised by other people or losing control over themselves, and this seemed specific to this group of men. Kate talked about how Don would actually enjoy it when people told her off if Don behaved irresponsibly, such as not looking after himself, because as a woman she was seen as responsible for him.

Kate: I would be getting the third degree, and he kind of wanked off on this. Like, this put him on a bit of a high. He enjoyed it. A strange enjoyment gained from watching supposedly your loved partner squirm most uncomfortably.

Bridget: If you are out of control that means I am in control.

Kate: Yeah, exactly! (MMM, agreement)

Natalie: That taunting and actually getting pleasure out of my pain.

Kate: Yes, pleasure from pain

Natalie: I saw red that he was able to [emotionally] hurt me so much and stood there, smiling (responsibility discussion).

These men seemed to enjoy seeing women put down by others or seeing women upset. These women felt even more hurt when they noticed that their acute emotional pain was a source of enjoyment for their partners. It reinforces my perception that in order for these men to feel good about themselves, they needed to feel superior to their partners and in control of the relationship. To see their partners put down or upset seemed to build these men up, a finding that links with Jones' finding that controlling men built themselves up at the expense of a partner (Jones & Schechter, 1992).

Another form of hurtful behaviour was when a man showed himself to be perceptive of a woman's feelings and still chose to ignore them.

Kate: And he knew I couldn't stand hearing [the word 'love' at that stage]. He's not silly. He knew there was a hell of a lot of resistance there. He was talking about a brick wall I had around me. He could see it. He was being extremely perceptive, and I felt totally

hurt that somebody could be that perceptive and still not hear what I was saying (love discussion).

Don only focused on what he wanted to see. If he noticed that Kate was remote he would use that as an accusation, but he would not enquire why she was feeling so remote. His sensitivity in picking up on her feelings was used only to advance his goal, not to improve the way they related. In this way he was very much like the manipulators in the third group. Because Kate had been so confused about the meaning of the word 'love', she had asked him not to use it, but he ignored her request. The hurt was compounded because he could feel her remoteness when he used the word 'love', and he still called her love, to make her love him. He had said, "I want you to be my love"(love discussion), as if he could demand such a thing, and she felt hurt because love was all on his terms.

Kate: Don was charging me daily with "You don't love me Kate". I felt totally, I don't know, I felt like I was getting destroyed in this maelstrom of "You don't" (love discussion).

Don seemed to believe that Kate had to love him, and if she did not, there was something wrong with her; this use of obligation to get what one wants is emotional blackmail (Forward & Frazier, 1997).

Women felt hurt when men controlled them by behaving in selfish ways, such as when they refused to discuss problems or refused to honour a request, and a man's refusal to accommodate a woman's needs was another hurtful experience, as Bridget's fairness memory showed.

Bridget: Bridget was at home caring for their two adopted children. Bridget was bored. "Was this all there was to life?" she asked herself. She thought about contacting the local hospital again where she used to work as a nurse. "Yes, it is time I went back to work" she thought. That night, after Frank had come home, tea, bathing etc over, she broached the subject. "I want to go back to work, two or three afternoons a week, 6-11pm". "You are a mother, that's what women do. You should be happy. I won't support you if you do that", he said. Shattered, totally shattered she asked herself 'what about my abilities?' (Fairness memory)

Frank refused to support her in her desire to return to nursing on a part-time basis, because as a mother it was her duty to care for the children. Frank only saw Bridget in her role as mother and wife, and did not acknowledge that she was an individual with professional qualifications that she desired to use. He criticised her for not feeling happy and fulfilled in her role as mother, as that is what he expected of women. It is interesting that in traditional marriages it is accepted that men can have a career while also fulfilling their role as a father, but women

can only be mothers. In these examples it was men's selfish behaviour, such as refusing to discuss problems, to honour requests, or to accommodate women's needs, that hurt these women to the core, because their needs and wishes were negated.

Confusion

While Natalie received little kindness from Ed, Kate's partner was often very kind to her. She said, "I can remember when Don was incredibly kind to me, and often extremely kind. In fact, that was his way of showing that I'm his lover" (love discussion). This kind behaviour seemed to depend on whether it suited his purpose, because when his own needs were jeopardised he would become hurtful. In this way he was like the manipulating and undermining men of the third group who were also kind as long as things went their way. However, Don was much more overtly controlling than undermining men in that he demanded things of Kate. Kate had become confused because what Don said did not match with what she felt.

Kate: She felt so bloody confused, living in a thick pea fog soup, so it was kind of comforting to dwell on a thought that had some clarity. Love and trust, cold words (love memory).

Although Kate became confused because she could not reconcile her feeling that Don could not value her much, judging by the way he treated her, with him professing to love her, she was clear on the thought that words such as love and trust were cold words to her. When Don called her 'love', Kate did not feel loved. It was the cumulative, repeated negative messages that she was receiving, not isolated incidents, that made her feel so confused because Don's professions of love did not make sense in that light. Kate had tried to explain her ambivalence around the word 'love' by saying,

[It is] about, isn't there some respect, or how can there be love present without respect, or without just common human decency and... If all of those things are missing what use is love?" (love discussion).

Kate verbalised the same ambivalence about the meaning of love as Maria had done. Neither was able to make sense of their partners' statements of love, when their partners did not treat them with respect and common decency.

Kate: My being unhappy was my problem; he would come with me needing to do something about that. This sounds absolutely crackpot. He used to tell me that I needed

to go to a chiropractor to fix my problems and then I would be happy. When I was unhappy I was doing that to myself. When I wanted to talk about it he would get really shitty, or he told me once that I was very like my mother. The problems were mine to solve. The problems I felt in my core as mine to solve about the unhappiness. Finally I moved, because I felt that I may break down inside. And then, I just went to my Mum's place. I just went to bed that night and I felt "oh, this is such a relief", and suddenly then the effect of the physical environment, all the interactions that were taking place, then I started to count the cost. But when I was there it was like a thick fog and I was the problem. I had to drive ten kilometres and go to bed in my Mum's house, and then it suddenly started to look clear enough for me to see (process analysis).

Don blamed Kate for feeling bad when he behaved badly, and it was her responsibility to "fix" her unhappiness. Don was not prepared to share accountability for their relationship problems; he just got angry when she wanted to talk about it, which blocked any dialogue.

Kate used the analogy of living in a thick pea fog soup, because of her inability to see the problem for what it was while she was with Don. Don confused her with his behaviour, behaviour fitting the third group of men who were the manipulators. Forward and Frazier stated that manipulators create confusion by using Fear, Obligation or Guilt (FOG) to get their way, and they created the metaphor 'FOG' to explain that type of behaviour (Forward & Frazier, 1997). Forward stated that manipulators pump an engulfing FOG into their relationships, ensuring that their partners will either be afraid to cross them, or obligated to give them their way and they make partners feel terribly guilty if they do not. This is what had been happening to Kate. Don had used gendered roles to make Kate feel obligated to serve him (see fairness memory) and he had made her feel guilty if she did not rigidly conform to those roles, which will be discussed in the 'guilt' subsection. The reason why Kate felt like she was in a fog was that Don blamed her for feeling unhappy, did not allow her to talk about it, and did not give her the space to think. He used to verbally harass her into seeing things his way, which she called badgering; this will be discussed in the subsection 'disattaching'. The only way for Kate to achieve some clarity of thought was to remove her self from his presence, as doing this lifted the fog for her.

Loneliness

Men behaving in self-serving ways led to women feeling lonely, as had happened to the women in the dominant control group, because women came to believe that they were not important to their partners.

Natalie: I was lonely in my marriage, incredibly lonely in my marriage, but I still had other good friends outside of the marriage.... I was most lonely in bed with him (Support discussion).

Natalie felt the loneliest in the presence of her partner, especially when they were in bed, and this form of loneliness has already been discussed under impact of dominant men. When these women talked about loneliness, they talked about emotional loneliness, because they did not receive the warmth, closeness, and safety they had expected from their partner. It seemed to be a kind of deprivation, in the form of men's selfish refusal to consider women, and it was experienced as a painful feeling of constant unfulfilled need for emotional closeness. It was not a general lack of emotional connection with other people that evoked feelings of loneliness, as Natalie clarified, but a lack of emotional connection with a partner, because of the expectation of emotional closeness between partners in committed relationships.

This lonely feeling was most acutely felt when the need or the expectation was great. Being in bed together, for example, carries the expectation of togetherness and safety, and it was being let down in that expectation that caused her to feel loneliness most acutely. Ed had punished Natalie by withholding affection and physical connection, and he did that by refusing to touch her and refusing to allow her to touch him, except for the occasional brief act of sex. He kept that up for 10 years. Natalie disclosed that she did not feel lonely anymore when she moved to a separate bedroom at the end of the relationship, because she did not expect togetherness when she was alone in bed.

These men's consistent lack of empathy for and discounting of women's needs were implicitly telling the women how unimportant they were to their partners, and this had resulted in women experiencing a profound sense of loneliness and sadness; a finding that was supported by American research into women's emotional abuse (Loring, 1994). In fact, Loring found that women who were

emotionally but not physically abused, expressed profound loneliness and sadness far more often than the physically abused or non-abused women. Loneliness seems to be about a failed expectation of emotional connection with a partner, and that expectation may be missing in relationships where women are physically abused. All the women in this study had expressed feeling lonely in their relationship and it may be that this is a specific feeling that results from emotional abuse.

Kate, as well as Grace in the next section, also felt isolated in her loneliness. Emotional loneliness was about lack of emotional closeness with a partner, but, as Natalie had stated, one could still be emotionally close with friends and discuss one's relationship problems. Isolation, on the other hand, seemed to be about feeling that not only did your partner fail to understand how you felt, but also that no one else would understand your feelings of loneliness in the marriage. You were, therefore, isolated in being alone with your feelings, as Kate explained.

Kate: The reason why it is isolation for me comes from [my] story in that it was my problem to solve. I thought it was me. I had to find my own answers. ... I was isolated in my loneliness. I did not know to go over the road to [her friend] Lee. So it is more than loneliness, it is isolation in the loneliness (support discussion).

Feeling isolated in her feelings of loneliness seemed to be about constantly being blamed for her feelings and, therefore, starting to believe that she was responsible for the way she felt, which made her believe that no one would understand her because the problem was unique to her. This kind of isolation is different from social isolation where one is isolated from other people. It was an emotional isolation, where a partner did not want to understand a woman's feelings and made it her problem. If a woman started to internalise her partner's assertions that she was to blame for the way she felt she started to think that it was her fault that she felt lonely, and she, therefore, did not share her problem with other people around her.

Bridget had also been struggling with feelings of isolation, in feeling that nobody in her environment understood her resentment at having to give up so much, once she was married.

Bridget: I guess that resentment was probably something that was my friend for many years. I just thought, "Oh, shit!" I could not explain it to somebody who would say,

“yeah, it is OK [to feel like that] and I understand” and because it was NOT OK, I thought (caring discussion).

Bridget did not get the support of other women in her environment when she explained why she was resentful, because these women just explained her situation with clichés, such as ‘that is how men are’ and ‘you just have to put up with it as a woman’ (process analysis). Research has supported the finding that women who are not traditional in their behaviour and behave assertively or express ideas of being equal to men may feel isolated from traditional men and women (Chang, 1996).

These women felt isolated because they had to find their own answers to their feelings of loneliness and resentment, as there was no support in the burden of their experiences. Isolation was therefore seen as being alone because you are feeling that no one understands, and no one is there to help you fix the problem. Neither the woman’s partner nor anyone else in her environment is there to validate and support her feelings. She is effectively isolated from emotional support. This is very similar to what an American researcher found in her study of psychological abuse. Isolation in her study was “akin to alienation or psychological distance from others and even from oneself; such as when one is constrained from having time for one’s self” (Marshall, 1999, p. 81), which has already been discussed under the previous section when Maria was not allowed to have leisure time. Feeling isolated seemed to stem from continually being made personally responsible for the way these women were feeling, as if their partners had not had any input into the way they were feeling. This was particularly in relation to the partner, but also in relation to the wider society, in that the women felt that they were the only ones to ever have experienced situations like they were in, and they therefore internalised the problem. It is not only that you are alone with the problem; you feel that you are the problem, as I hear when Kate says, “I thought it was me”.

Diminished self-esteem

Self-esteem for this group of women went down, not because the women were seen as inadequate but because they did not behave submissively and their

partners, therefore, often punished them for that by withholding caring behaviour so that women did not feel valued. These women were often not treated in a caring way because they did not always seem to live up to the social code of women and were, therefore, not always supporting men in their way of life. These men devalued behaviour of the women that was not congruent with the feminine role, in contrast to the women who were controlled in a dominant way, as those women started to have a diminished sense of self because their partners portrayed them as globally inadequate by putting their behaviour, as well as their personality characteristics, down. Natalie related how bad she felt when her partner ignored her.

Natalie: One of the worst things for me was not being valued. When he would not touch me, not hold me, not speak to me, and all of that, I just felt like shit. [I felt] that I was not worth a penny in this world. And I hear that in your story and in yours (talking to Maria and Beth). And that is one of the worst things for me that can happen. When there is nothing good about me any more; that I am not valued as a person (fairness discussion).

Natalie, as well as Lee and Maria in the 'fear' and Lee in the 'anger' subsection of dominant control, and Beth and Grace in the section of manipulating control, related their lowered self-esteem directly to the way their partners had treated them. While Lee and Maria's partners had been highly critical of them, which had made them feel inadequate, Natalie's partner was consistently ignoring her and rejecting her, as a way of punishment when she had not behaved according to Ed's expectations of her. That seemed to be a salient difference between dominant and passive control. The first group of men enforced patriarchal privileges through intimidating behaviour and the second group of men punished women for not according men their male privileges. They did this by withholding communication, affection or approval if their social control, through the use of societal prescriptions, had not worked. Men's incessant criticisms and global put downs of the women in the dominant group, and men's withholding behaviour as a response to women when they did not uphold the social code of women in this group, had resulted in a reduction of self-esteem for all but Bridget.

Generally, in traditional relationships, men can afford to behave in self-serving ways, because, as the partner with more social power (O'Neil & Egan, 1993) they do not need to put effort into emotionally connecting to maintain a relationship. This is in contrast with women who, as the partner with less social power, may

feel that they need to put effort into the relationship in order to hold onto the relationship. Women may also put more effort into a relationship because they have been socialised to be nurturers and maintainers of relationships (May, 1992; Munford, 1992).

Consistent self-serving behaviour, which was typical of all the partners of the women in this study, was displayed when men disregarded and discounted women's needs, which resulted in women feeling neglected in the relationship. These men's rigid adherence to prescriptions of traditional masculine behaviour, as well as their punishing behaviour when women did not conform led to these women feeling unloved, as the dominantly controlled women had. Over time the self-esteem of all women but Bridget's had been reduced.

Resisting loss of identity

Prescribed gendered behaviour also brings with it the expectation that women give up important parts of themselves, such as a career, leisure time, opinions and wishes. Abuse literature has named it 'abuse' when such behaviour is enforced; because it prevents a woman from doing what she wants or compels her to behave in ways she does not freely choose (Jones & Schechter, 1992). However, those expectations that men have of women are no more than traditional gendered expectations, and emotional abuse may be no more than men forcing or compelling women to behave in typically gendered ways. This group of women generally did not have prescriptions enforced on them as happened with the women who were controlled in a dominant way, but they were often compelled to conform because of the pressure of social prescriptions that their partners quoted in an attempt to control them. This social control can often be effective, as it is very strong and women often feel guilty if they have failed in those expectations, as will be discussed under guilt.

When women failed to adhere to these prescriptions, these men showed their disapproval by withholding help or emotional connection and would emotionally freeze these women out, which had resulted in women feeling lonely in the relationship. The consequences of not conforming were often so emotionally

detrimental that it was sometimes easier to give way than to live with the consequences. It may be that the extent of women's feelings of loneliness in a relationship is related to the extent that they do not conform to the traditional social norms of women, in that the more often they failed to conform the more often their partners treated them with emotionally abusive behaviour that made them feel lonely.

Bridget and Kate had become aware that in order to love their partners in the way in which these men wanted them to they had to let go of their own identity as individuals. These men expected women to give up important parts of themselves in the name of societal prescriptions that declare that 'good' women take responsibility for the physical and emotional needs of family members and put their own needs last. Expecting women to give up all those important parts of themselves, such as individual needs, wishes, ambitions, and values, is controlling behaviour so that men can be the centres of attention (Jones & Schechter, 1992), and Bridget and Kate had hugely resisted that idea. Bridget had gone to a retreat to try to make sense of her marriage. In this memory she is praying to God for guidance and is taken aback at the answer that came.

Bridget: "God, make me love him, whatever that means. Care for him as a human being? Yes, I can do that. Relate to him as an intimate? Only when sex results. What is this?"
 [The voice of God said,] "You can love him; you only have to give up yourself, that part of you that resists, that is love". "Oh, my God!"

Bridget came to realise that she had to give up her self-identity, in order to be acceptable in Frank's view.

Bridget: I was pretty sure I didn't love this man, whatever love meant. Like, there was this physical feeling, like there was a wall of "No", like "No!" and my sense was I had to get past that in order to be able to love him. My own identity was in there somewhere. I think I came to that realisation.

Kate: For me, to love Don I just felt my life was moving right out of my feet; just used to desert me out my feet. I could actually feel it go. To love Don meant that all that life energy needed to be shelved (love discussion).

Bridget and Kate had the acute sense that if they loved their partners in the way that their partners had expected them to; they would have to give up their own identity and life energy. Their partners' expectations had revolved around women's traditional roles of serving and caring and putting themselves last, as I have noted in all the discussions, and if these women had conformed to those expectations it would have been at the expense of the things that gave them their

identity as individuals. Both Bridget and Kate had recognised that these expectations would have been at the cost of their own identity and mental health, and they had resisted being put in that position.

Tedeschi and Felsen identified the lowering of someone's power or status, such as happens when men make women subordinate to them, as a form of social harm in that it involves damage to a person's identity (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). To love their partners in that way would have meant that Bridget and Kate would have been in a marriage that was not nurturing for them and that would have been detrimental to their emotional health. Kirkwood saw the awareness of a woman, that she had changed significantly over time and in ways that she considered to be negative, as the first step toward moving outward on the spiral of abuse (Kirkwood, 1993). Bridget and Kate were attempting to disentangle themselves from the web of emotional abuse.

Anger

Kate, Natalie and Bridget had all got angry over the way their partners treated them, but their anger was different in terms of the intensity of feeling and how it was expressed. Bridget had been resentful of the way her partner treated her from the start of her relationship, but Kate and Natalie did not recognise their feelings of resentment until they were so emotionally traumatised that they became angry with their partners for making them feel so bad about themselves, often without conscious awareness of the process of abuse. Inequity was felt at that stage, but not understood and, for Kate and Natalie, feelings of pain and sadness were replaced by anger that a partner could make them feel so much emotional pain.

Anger came in many forms and Bridget's example of anger was a venting of frustration.

Bridget: I can remember Frank being so messy and would leave stuff everywhere. So I filled up the bath one day and dropped everything in it. Shoes, his best trousers, his shirt; I thought, "Fuck this, I am sick of this". He was so wild; his best shoes floating in the bath. It was wonderful! (Expectation discussion)

Her anger seemed to have come from resentment at being used as a housemaid. She had not anticipated that being his housemaid, and cleaning up after him, was

part of the marriage contract. An example of what made Natalie angry was when she described how Ed refused to help her get a half paralysed friend of theirs out of the bath, as was described in Natalie's profile.

Natalie: I was just livid with anger that Ed could do that to me. That he could leave me struggling with his friend and he was just sitting in a chair and did not want to help. And when I get really angry I get so much energy that I can do things that I normally never ever could (support discussion).

While Bridget's anger resulted from frustration at being used as a maid, Natalie's anger resulted from the acute emotional pain she felt when her partner deserted her at a time when she really needed help. Ed would have known that it was beyond Natalie's power to lift such a big, heavy man, and he therefore knew that he was leaving her helpless by refusing to assist. His resistance again seems to have been a deliberate act to put Natalie in a difficult and embarrassing position. Natalie's anger had a high degree of arousal, as noted in her saying she was livid with anger, and also noted in her being able to access energy she did not know she had; this intensity of anger is sometimes called outrage.

Outrage is a fierce form of anger when one is unjustly treated (Allen, 1990).

Natalie's extreme anger may also have been embarrassment that their dying friend was witness to Ed's total lack of care or consideration for her. Kate's intensity of anger was similar to Natalie's, and her anger erupted when Don, once again, was uninterested in her low state of mind, and just left her to sit on her own while he went about his own routine. It had made her feel as if her welfare was not important to Don.

Kate feels an eruption of anger. She gets up, walks to the window and grabs the curtains, the whole 'caboodle' falls to the floor; tracks, pelmet, curtains etc. Kate sees fear and anxiety on her sons' faces. She talks to both boys reassuringly. She quietly hangs up curtains, pelmet and tracks again. THE ROOM LOOKS THE SAME (caring memory).

Kate felt so hurt that Don showed such a lack of interest in how she felt that she became angry at the injustice of being treated as if she meant nothing to him. Her anger only erupted after Don had deserted her and she had time to make sense of his behaviour. Her expression of anger was to release the stress she was under, rather than to retaliate. Natalie and Kate had described their anger as a sudden, intense surge of energy that fired Natalie into accessing physical strength she did not think she had, and it fired Kate into attacking the curtains to release that

adrenalin. This adrenalin surge demonstrates the depth of anger these women had felt at being treated in such a hurtful way.

Emotional pain had been about being discounted or emotionally neglected, and that is what made these women angry. The difference between these women was that Bridget had directed her anger towards her partner and had felt empowered by, in turn, making Frank angry, while Kate only expressed her anger after Don had gone out, and Natalie had not expressed her anger at all, but had only felt an increase in energy because of an adrenalin surge through her highly aroused feelings of anger. What stopped Natalie and Kate from expressing their anger directly to a partner may have been because the patriarchal and socialised requirement for women to be obedient, compliant, and submissive causes women to feel shame about fighting back, which may discourage them from expressing anger (Crawford et al., 1990; Dupuy, 1993; Gilligan, 1982; James, 1996; O'Neil & Egan, 1993). However, letting off steam in the absence of a partner may, as Kate had done, may also be a way of temporarily releasing anger if a woman does not feel safe to express her anger directly to her partner (Dupuy, 1993; James, 1996). The partner does not get directly confronted in this way, but the anger gets temporarily released. However, anger that is unacknowledged by a partner does not dissipate (Crawford et al., 1990).

Being treated in a way that caused them such acute emotional pain led to Natalie and Kate becoming very angry. Kirkwood described that when women started to identify that the relationship was having significant negative effects on their lives, they were already starting to move outward from the abuse spiral, and that a second factor in outward movement consisted of a change in energy level, such as anger or fear, of the abused women (Kirkwood, 1993).

While I have already discussed Natalie's feelings of outrage, she had not expressed these feelings towards her partner at that stage. The following example will show how unexpressed feelings of injustice had built to a point of consuming Natalie, as had happened with Maria. Natalie became enraged with Ed's continued hurtful behaviour that made her feel such acute emotional pain.

Natalie: It got to a point where I just totally lost it and I actually punched him in his face. And then he just had a little smile on his face and he said, "Go away pesky fly". It was just a sense of total powerlessness.

Natalie: I was at the end of my tether. I was seeing red; I was not sane any more (expectation discussion).

It seems that Ed was getting pleasure out of seeing Natalie's emotional pain. His smile, which seemed to convey that he felt more powerful when she was vulnerable., is likely to have exacerbated Natalie's anger, as it could have amplified her feeling that he was indifferent to her pain and was actually enjoying the sight of her loss of control.

Natalie had punched Ed in the face and Kate had ripped the curtains off the pelmets; I discussed in the previous section how Maria had thrown a bowl of cereal at her partner, while in the next section I will discuss how Grace was also overcome by anger at the way her partner treated her. These women had been consumed with anger and had exploded. Several studies have supported the finding that women may use aggression at the point of greatest stress or frustration (Campbell, 1993; Dupuy, 1993) by throwing things or hitting a partner (James, 1996). Other research found that when women have either not acknowledged or have suppressed their anger at injustices for a long time, they may experience a blast of powerful rage which seems to come out of the blue and which may often be destructive and violent (Crawford et al., 1990; Kirkwood, 1993; Ornstein, 1999; Retzinger, 1991). In essence they all seem to say that when women cannot cope anymore with the stress of being in constant emotional pain due to their partners' behaviour, they may lash out at their partners.

These men's use of hidden power, through passive resistance, resulted in women using overt controlling behaviour in retaliation, a finding that has been supported by many studies (Burck & Daniel, 1995; Loring, 1994; O'Hearn & Davis, 1997; O'Neil & Egan, 1993; Stets, 1991). A woman is then using power in an attempt to empower herself so that she will become more equal to her partner, as her request for a more equal relationship was denied through her partner's use of hidden power.

These forceful reactions are more often recognised with women who have a sense of personal power (Aguilar & Nightingale, 1994; Frieze & McHugh, 1992; Goldner et al., 1997). However, when these women retaliated they had reacted from a place of powerlessness. Their extreme anger gave them the emotional energy to retaliate. Natalie, like Maria in the previous section and Grace in the following section, did not use aggression as a form of control, but as an attempt to break free from being abused, a finding that was noted in other studies (Eichenbaum & Orbach, 1988; Kirkwood, 1993). Kate's aggression, on the other hand, was only to relieve the extreme pressure she was under, as she exploded with anger after her partner had left.

Natalie recounted how her violent act had made her feel even more powerless when her partner compared her to a pesky fly.

Natalie: Even when I wanted to hurt him I couldn't. And then I really felt, (pause) even that did not have any effect. I can't even do that one right. I felt so powerless. I thought, I can't even hurt him if I want to. I am just like a pesky fly (Expectation discussion).

Natalie's partner, in response to her violence, had been amused by her outburst, and the anguish that made her resort to violence was not even acknowledged, let alone addressed. Kirkwood described how women may move inward and outward on a spiral of control, and while showing anger moved women outward and away from the effects of control, when their anger was trivialised women moved inwards towards feeling controlled (Kirkwood, 1993). This is because most outward movements are accompanied by a response from partners that serves to pull the women inward on the spiral of abuse. Women's recognition that they had changed and their consequent anger about this may have afforded these women greater power and control within the relationship, as this challenged their partners' control. However, it did not shift the fundamental behaviour of their partners, as they were still guided by their desire to regain and hold greater control in the relationship. Guilt feelings were another impact that pulled women inward on the spiral of abuse.

Guilt

Guilt was an impact that was due to either being told by a partner that one was not living up to the social expectations Western society has of women, or by a woman recalling these social messages herself. Natalie and Kate, and even Bridget at times, had felt guilty. The women had discussed the ways in which they had felt guilty. Lee's guilt feelings over leaving her marriage have already been discussed, but other women had also felt guilty.

Lee: I had guilt for a long time.

Bridget: So did I. Being selfish.

Natalie: I had that guilt as well, leaving him in such a destitute state. In fact when I was leaving him he was begging me to come back. He said he had changed and wanted to prove it to me. He asked me to come back once a month, so that I could see how he had changed. It was useless from my perspective, but I had promised, so I went every month for a whole year. I think that in the end it was worse for him too, because of the hope.

Kate: But to have the strength to do that.

Natalie: But I felt so bad. As I said before, he never cried, but by God he cried when I said I was leaving him.

Kate: Don used to just put me on a guilt trip about a possible IQ test or something, neither of us actually knew about. And because I'd been an academic student I was a sitting duck for it, but if it hadn't been that it would have been something else (responsibility discussion)

While Kate and Bridget felt guilty due to their partners' criticism of them, because they did not fit the mould of the traditional woman, Ed seemed to count on Natalie's sense of responsibility for his welfare to try to stop her from leaving him. Natalie seemed to have been so immersed in the societal expectation that women take care of others' feelings, that seeing Ed in tears made her feel bad enough to cause her to make a promise that made him feel better and made her feel worse. She seemed to have forgotten that she was protecting the feelings of the man who had made her feel so bad about herself for all those years.

Women's socialisation to take care of others was again shown to be at the expense of a woman's care for herself. Kate, on the other hand, felt guilty because Don had criticised her about the possibility that she may have been more intelligent than him because she had an academic background and he did not. Here was another man who seemed to have had difficulties with a woman having a higher education than a man, as Natalie's partner seemed to have done. Don seemed to insinuate that women should not be more intelligent than men, and this may be because men are socialised to see themselves as superior to women. When men are critical of women who are more competent in certain areas than they are, it is

typically an abuse that is due to power conflicts within the man because his gender role is threatened, and a woman's emerging power may produce irrational feelings that her power negates his power (O'Neil & Egan, 1993). However, Kate also felt guilty because she had vented her anger on the curtains.

Kate: I would have lived in that house for another twelve years and I often used to feel guilty about the fact that [she had pulled the curtains off the pelmets] (caring memory).

In this example, Kate's feelings of guilt seem to be informed by societal expectations that women do not act out their anger and frustration, as has just been discussed under anger.

Bridget's partner criticised her for not looking after his physical needs, which caused her to feel some guilt.

Bridget: She felt guilt mixed with resentment and also felt chastened [when criticised by her partner]. Again she had not carried out her wifely responsibility, to physically look after her husband, to produce food and drink at the appointed times (responsibility memory).

Again it was socialised messages about how women should be that informed her partner's critique about how Bridget should behave, and that caused her to feel guilty, as well as resentful towards Frank that he had those expectations of her.

The partners of the older women repeatedly criticised women for not living up to traditional gendered expectations, so that the women ended up feeling guilty. Bridget and Kate had a discussion with Lee, who has already been discussed in the previous chapter, about the consequences of telling a partner that they were leaving the marriage. As the reader may remember, when Lee finally told Brent that she was leaving him he had said, "What will your sisters think of you?" Bridget and Kate's partners also blamed the women for the break-up of their marriages, as was discussed in their personal profiles of relationship dynamics, and which I will show together here.

Bridget: And I used to get from Frank when I left: "You have utterly ruined me, you have destroyed my life. Everything I have done for you and you have thrown it away."

Kate: Yes, that is all I heard too "You have destroyed my life, look at what **you** have done."

Women were supposed to deal with whatever behaviour their partners presented and were expected to cope. They were criticised when they did not live up to the social code that women maintain the marriage relationship, and the women felt

guilty for not having lived up to those expectations. Leaving a relationship that had become unacceptable or intolerable was not seen as an acceptable option to their partners, as women were supposed to keep the relationship together. Furthermore, Natalie and Kate had even criticised themselves because they had not lived up to the social code of women. The finding that guilt is produced in women when they are either blamed by others or blame themselves for not living up to Western Societal expectations was also found in another New Zealand study (Douglas & McGregor, 2000), which shows how societal gendered expectations unfairly burden women.

This group of women tended to harbour more guilt feelings than the other two groups of women. This may be because, in the dominant group, the women were fearful of their partners so that they became submissive and most of the time lived up to social expectations of women, while the reader will hear in chapter 6 that manipulated women were made to feel so inadequate that they became submissive in order to try and please their partners. The women in these two groups had more global feelings of inadequacy because of their partners' continued global criticisms, rather than feeling inadequate in a specific area, such as the women in this passively controlled group did. This made the women feel so bad about themselves that they tended to feel ashamed. This finding was supported with research that showed that people tend to feel guilty when they evaluate certain specific actions negatively, in contrast with feelings of shame that result from more global negative evaluations (Tangney et al., 1998).

These passively controlled women felt guilty because they had violated the social code of women that stipulates that women need to put their own needs last, and they felt "selfish" when their partners criticised them for looking after their own feelings. However, feeling guilty for not always putting yourself last, or leaving a partner who has consistently failed to take joint responsibility for the relationship, and who has consistently not respected your needs and wishes, is inappropriate guilt, a viewpoint that has been supported in other abuse literature (Forward & Frazier, 1997). The partners of these women had never expressed or shown guilt over the unhappiness and pain they had caused the women.

If appropriate guilt is about guiding and correcting one's behaviour when one has violated a personal or social code of ethic, one first needs to examine whether the code that one is guided by is protecting all involved and not just one gender. Bridget seemed to have been aware of the inappropriateness of women's guilt in such circumstances, although she did succumb to feeling guilty at times, as was shown in her responsibility memory, where her partner's criticism of her not attending to his needs had made her feel partially guilty, as well as resentful. Guilt was a specific feeling of women in contrast to men, as the partners of these women had never expressed or shown guilt over the unhappiness and pain they had caused them. It, therefore, seems to be a feeling that is connected with feeling responsible for others, a conditioned feeling in women.

Despair

Despair was the end product of the process of being emotionally hurt, becoming unhappy, and feeling hopeless over not being able to change the situation. It was part of the cluster of depressive symptoms, such as low self-esteem, feeling sad, lonely, worthless and hopeless, all of which were repeatedly reported by women.

Bridget, Kate, and Natalie had reported becoming emotionally low, but while Bridget had become unhappy because Frank treated her as his subordinate, Natalie did not understand at first what it was that made her unhappy.

Natalie: I had similar feelings [of unhappiness] but I could not articulate them the way you did (talking to Bridget), or understand it the way you did and I became depressed. I had the same feeling about being stuck and being imprisoned and being a mental cabbage, and you name it. But I was not aware of the processes, the way you were. I could not articulate it; I could not even become resentful because I was not quite sure what was going on; I just felt unhappy (Caring discussion).

Natalie knew that she had changed in negative ways and yet she was unsure of why that had happened. Hochschild also found that women felt profoundly sad, and felt despair without knowing why, and she called this feeling of the problem with no name a type of depression with no identified cause that is often seen in women in relationships (Hochschild, 1983; see also Duncombe & Marsden, 1995). Natalie had disclosed that Ed continually niggled at her to make her feel bad about her competencies, and had constrained her from academically

developing herself by using social constraints to buttress his preferred position, but Natalie did not understand it as such at this time. Most women in abusive relationships become depressed about their relationship at some point. However, the degree to which they become depressed may differ, depending on the degree to which they felt that their circumstances were unbearable and unchangeable (Kirkwood, 1993), as shown in Bridget who was not affected to the same extent as the other women. Ed's deliberate attempts at making Natalie feel bad, and behaving in resistant ways through withholding help and kindness as punishments for her non-conformance, would have been likely to have contributed to her feelings of depression, as he treated her with lack of respect and care.

Because Kate and Natalie's partners had resisted making changes in the way they related to them, these women felt helpless and in despair. Sometimes it was another person, such as Kate's counsellor, who had brought Kate's despair to her attention, as Kate had been in too much of a fog to realise what was going on.

Kate: My counsellor said, "Kate, I am worried about the despair that you are in again". Like, when she said it to me three times I thought: "That road is not easy to stay on when you recognise the other possibility [loss of sanity]. I don't mean that courage came easily to me, but I cared enough about living and enjoying life to give it a shot (love discussion).

Kate's counsellor made Kate aware that she needed to change her situation; otherwise it could seriously affect her mental health. Kate alluded to the courage it took to make those changes in order to protect her mental health; this meant leaving the relationship, which will be discussed in the next section.

Loring stated that most emotional abuse victims are not aware of the depth of their own despair, sadness, and fear until these are revealed in the therapeutic setting, because they almost always focus the blame for problems in the relationship on themselves (Loring, 1994). Kate left her relationship shortly after her counsellor repeatedly voiced her concern for Kate's health. Natalie had realised herself that she was in a bad emotional space. In the fairness memory, as well as in the following discussion, she had described herself as crying uncontrollably.

Natalie: I was in such a bad way, on tranquillisers and crying, crying, crying. And I thought, what has become of me? What has become of me? I just felt such despair. Was this going to be the rest of my life? Was I going to be this unhappy, this dysfunctional? I had come to a place where honestly I thought, I am not going to last much longer, if this is the space I have to be in for the rest of my life. I have to do something (Expectation discussion).

Continual crying is one of the effects of emotional abuse, in that women become totally exhausted by the constant emotional pressure and pain and then find it hard to cope (Douglas, 1994). In Natalie's account I can hear the hopelessness of her situation. She recognised that she had become unhappy and dysfunctional in the relationship, and implied that she was afraid that she would not be able to cope for much longer, without suffering a mental breakdown.

Kate and Natalie had discussed their fear of experiencing a mental breakdown if they had not done something (love discussion). Being at the depth of their despair had been a turning point for Kate and Natalie, as both hinted at the need to change things if they wanted to stay sane. Their basic fear, that if circumstances continued as they were their mental health would be seriously and perhaps irreparably damaged, was a source of energy upon which they drew to work towards leaving the relationship, and what Kirkwood had described as the second step toward moving outward on the spiral of abuse (Kirkwood, 1993). Stephanie Dowrick stated in her foreword to Douglas's book on emotional abuse that it is often at that outer reach of ones' endurance that strength is found to act in self-preservation (Douglas, 1994).

Hopelessness and despair were the end result of men refusing to be accountable for anything, making women responsible for everything, not showing care or consideration for partners, or deliberately resisting partners when they did not conform to men's expectations. These men gave women constant messages that they considered the women to have failed in measuring up to their expectations, and they were then treated as unworthy of consideration. It is interesting that most of the women in this study did not give their partners messages that they considered the men to have failed in measuring up to their expectations, although it did happen occasionally in this group because the women in this group were generally not submissive.

Research has supported the finding that when women feel helpless, through lack of options or choices, it may result in despair that leads to depression (Chang, 1996; Healy, 1998). Natalie, as well as Grace in the next section, had reported frequent and sustained crying, and research has shown that women who feel

trapped and on edge may experience frequent crying and helpless rage, which may result in a breakdown through stress overload or depression (Chang, 1995; Kirkwood, 1993).

Many authors have shown an association between men not taking responsibility, and, therefore, blaming women, and women feeling depressed (Chang, 1995; Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994; Jones & Schechter, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994). It was not one individual thing that made women depressed, but an accumulation of being criticised, made to feel guilty, being made over-responsible while not being emotionally supported, being constrained from having time for themselves, and being constrained from furthering their aspirations, together with being discounted, and being treated in a cold and dismissive way, as has all been discussed before. When women felt sustained acute emotional pain and were unable to change the circumstances in their lives that were emotionally damaging them, they felt helpless and in despair.

Disattaching

Where in the past these women had been caring and supportive towards their partners, there came a time where empathy turned into indifference, through years of emotional pain, and for Bridget this indifference even turned into a lack of empathy for her partner.

Kate and Natalie's outrage seemed to have been a catalyst for change, in that it had started them thinking about whether they wanted to stay in a relationship that they could now identify as destructive to their emotional health. When women link significant and detrimental changes in themselves with a partner's behaviour, it is the second step of awareness toward moving outward on the spiral of abuse, after women recognise that they had changed (Kirkwood, 1993). Bridget also started to emotionally disconnect, but for her the process had been subtler, with more resentment and a lesser degree of anger and despair, and her self-esteem had not deteriorated the way it had for Natalie and Kate. Kate and Natalie's sense of personal power did not surface until they had disconnected on an emotional level, a process that Loring has described as disattachment (Loring, 1994). Loring

differentiated disattachment from detachment by saying that detachment connotes an immediate and complete separation, while disattachment designates an ongoing separation process in which a person, after reincorporating her formerly fragmented self, breaks away from the emotional abuse process. Natalie's process had started when she told Ed that every time he hurt her, another part of her love for him was dying, as discussed under the subsection 'getting emotionally hurt'. She had only found freedom from being hurt after she had emotionally disconnected herself from Ed, as Natalie described.

Natalie: And it's actually funny, that once you make that decision. You haven't perhaps made the decision to get out of [the relationship], but you've just made the decision to stop caring, take responsibility, etc. You mightn't have walked out of the marriage at that stage, but [there is] emotional distancing, and I can really pin point that as well, and how it changed my behaviour. I didn't get upset any more. Nothing [what he said or did] upset me any more. He could do what he liked. He could say what he liked. It just didn't worry me any more. I was not emotionally involved any more, so he couldn't hurt me (responsibility discussion).

Kate could identify with Natalie's point of recognition that things were never going to get better, as Lee had also done. In Kate's responsibility memory she had said that she "felt something 'clunk' satisfactorily into place inside her body" when she came to the recognition that she was not going to be influenced by Don's behaviour any more, and after that she could hear the birds in the trees again. Kate and Natalie had both started to think of an alternative way of looking after themselves. Kate had started to emotionally disconnect because she realised that Don always put down whatever made her happy, and he relentlessly harassed her to see his point of view. He made her so emotionally exhausted, that she just wanted him to leave her alone.

Kate: All the little things that I delighted in were negated in some really cold way. But I was also never allowed to rest inside somehow. Every time I started to rest in myself and may be being myself, then I would get kick-started again. I use the word badgering; I remember that was the word I used in the last few months. Really feeling so low and so tired and so down because "I am getting badgered by you, all the time. If we are going to get anywhere with this that needs to stop so that I can think." And he wouldn't and that is why I went into Mum's again. I said, "Leave me alone" and I can remember that night he started again and I said, "you tell me you don't know what badgering is; this is badgering, leave this alone." The thing was that I had wanted to move into another bedroom and I was sleeping in another bed. I remember him saying, "Can you understand what it is like for me living here and you saying that you have got to sleep in that other bed." I said: "Look, can we just leave this tonight?" "Well, can you imagine what it is like for me?" It was not because he was missing out on sex; he meant, what a hopeless position this is for me. As I describe it, it was not the way it came over, it was totally different. I said, "this is what I call badgering" and he started having a rage session then. At the end of the day the thing he could not stand the most was me telling him to leave me alone. Don't badger me, give me some peace, I want to have a rest (process analysis).

It seems that Don could not stand the thought that Kate was losing interest in him and the relationship and he was losing control over her. But she had not counted on his response to her emotionally switching off to him.

Kate: I had also started to switch off emotionally so I thought, “if you want to go on about badgering and you don’t understand this, I am going to walk into another room”, and sat down. [She said to herself] “I am going to have a rest here with my cup of tea, I don’t even care anymore about all of that.” And he is suddenly behind me. He was like a huge Orang-utan, he is very tall, and he was standing behind me and screaming with rage and jumping up and down over the top of me and I thought, “Oh my God! No!” (process analysis).

Don did not seem able to cope with the realisation that Kate was emotionally disconnecting from him. There may have been a sense of ownership in his behaviour. She had to care, just as she had to love him because he wanted her to be his love, as discussed under the section ‘getting emotionally hurt’.

On the other hand, trying to make Kate care for him could also be connected to his fears of being abandoned by her. Babcock, in a study on attachment, emotion regulation and marital violence, found that for preoccupied batterers, wife withdrawal was a significant predictor of husband violence (Babcock et al., 2000). They theorised that preoccupied batterers’ violence and emotional abuse is related to abandonment fears, whereas dismissing batterers who, in contrast to preoccupied batterers, do not need or want emotional connection use instrumental violence to assert their authority and to control their wives. This explanation may be the reason why Don did not become aggressive with her until he feared that she was leaving him. Either way, whatever his motives for aggression were, Kate was not allowed to be a person in her own right with feelings of her own, and when she owned up to feelings that were incompatible with his wishes he became enraged.

Kate: I did not give a shit any more, and I realise now that I was emotionally withdrawing. But look at the rage, and look at what came my way! No wonder I had been so careful all those years to tiptoe, because it damn well was not safe! I wasn’t ever beaten but that night, boy I was lucky to get out that night I reckon. Not because he, em, it would have been a pat snap, like, you know, he could have gone crazy that night. When you said to me about the emotional, and not the physical, he never did hit me, and there is a big part of Don I know never would, but this brooding rage! If they will sit on it forever they can be as vulnerable as anyone else and just snap. And he is so strong! (process analysis)

Kate realised why she had always been so tentative around Don. She had intuitively known that it was not safe to so openly oppose him. Don had not displayed the same overtly dominant behaviour as the partners of Lee and Maria,

and in the past Kate had felt safe enough to negotiate with him (fairness memory), and to tell him off when he was irresponsible (responsibility memory), but his brooding anger, displayed through bad moods, always meant that she was careful as to how far she could take this.

The final straw for Don had been when Kate became indifferent to him and started to emotionally withdraw; that was when his anger exploded and Kate became scared that he might hurt her. This finding is in line with research on men's controlling behaviour that found that a controlling man is most likely to harm a partner when he thinks she is leaving or slipping out of his control (Jones & Schechter, 1992). Kate suggested that if a man sits on his brooding anger for long enough he may snap and become violent, just like some of the women had snapped and had become violent when they could not cope with their emotional pain anymore; everyone has their limits as to how much they can cope with.

The realisation of the unequal relationship, and the emotional toll this takes on women may, in the end, spell the disintegration of the relationship. The choice of leaving seemed to be the only option that would ensure that they could maintain the control over their lives that they had regained when they had become aware of the abuse, as their partners had responded negatively to their call for equal power. While Bridget had not got as low as Natalie and Kate, nevertheless she also reached a point where she stopped caring to preserve her well-being. I discovered her disattachment process by comparing her individual memories of different time periods in the relationship. Bridget lacked empathy for Frank in the following account, which had been close to the end of their relationship.

Bridget: Frank became increasingly [negative and depressed] when we went to Auckland and he had all this travelling to do over the bridge. [He said one day] "God I feel like jumping off the Harbour Bridge today". I said, "Well it's easy enough Frank." By that time I was well and truly on the way out. Make it easy for me (love discussion).

She intimated here that she had almost completed the disattachment process. Her lack of empathy was in stark contrast to the caring memory a year earlier, when she had given up a weekend of solitude that she had needed so badly, because Frank had gone to the beach and had been lonely without her and wanted her there. In that memory she had said that she did not really love him any more but had shown empathy in wanting to be kind. Her comment of encouragement to his

expressed desire to suicide in the above account almost certainly would have given him the message that she did not care whether he lived or died.

Sometimes a man may threaten a woman with suicide if she does not do what he wants, to pressure her into complying with him, and then it is a form of control (Jones & Schechter, 1992). I do not believe that Frank was threatening Bridget here, but was merely verbalising his low emotional state. However, years of him behaving in traditionally gendered ways that Bridget had experienced as emotionally abusive had ended with Bridget responding to his low emotional state with a lack of empathy. Her response to his distress can be seen as an abusive act, as it let him know that she did not value him as a human being, and if she had started to give him this message on a regular basis it could have negatively affected the way he thought about himself and the relationship, as it is an act that other research also has identified as emotionally abusive behaviour (Marshall, 1994; Marshall, 1996; O'Hearn & Davis, 1997).

Research has shown that emotionally abusive behaviour in committed heterosexual relationships can become bi-directional (Loring, 1994; O'Neil & Egan, 1993). However, bi-directional abusive behaviour seems to be a result of a woman reacting against the control of a partner, as was shown in women retaliating in their outrage at being abused, as well as in Bridget not taking her partner's feelings into consideration in her wish to be rid of her husband. The teachings of her religion had prevented her up to this point from taking the initiative to separate.

However, one emotionally abusive act does not constitute emotional abuse, as it is in the repeated acts that abusive behaviour becomes emotionally abusive, because it then starts to reduce another's sense of self (Kirkwood, 1993; Marshall, 1996; O'Hearn & Davis, 1997). As I have found no other evidence in these memories of Bridget using abusive behaviour towards her partner, I assumed it was an isolated incident. Bridget was not angry, nor was she trying to control Frank, and her comment seemed to be an isolated abusive act, born out of wanting an easy way out of the emotionally abusive relationship, rather than wanting to control, retaliate, or diminish him. Bi-directional emotionally abusive behaviour may

happen in relationships where there is less of a power differential between the genders, such as happens in uncommitted dating relationships as in O'Hearn's study, because the constraints of gendered expectations that exist in committed relationships are not in place.

In committed heterosexual relationships, and especially relationships where there are children, women have less social power than men do. This is because society confers a higher status on men in heterosexual couple relationships with higher economic power than women have. This inequality makes it more difficult to relate on an equal level, and it also makes it more difficult for women to leave the relationship, especially if they feel that their leaving will disadvantage children. This imbalance in power increases not only because women feel constrained from leaving a relationship that is unsatisfactory or damaging because of the resulting economic hardship, but also because societal messages, such as from the church, the family or other institutions, tell women that they should hold families together. All these constraints may compel women to stay, especially when children are involved. Lee, in the first section, had given family values as a reason why she lasted for 28 years in that highly abusive relationship before desperation had given her the strength to leave. Bridget had quoted the teachings of the Catholic Church, as well as family values, as reasons that made it difficult for her to leave. Marriage as a patriarchal institution also makes it difficult for women to leave the relationship, because if women are expected to stay at home to care for the family their financial dependence on a partner makes it difficult for them to consider a life without that financial support.

One of the reasons for a reduction in the power differential between men and women in relationships may be when women have emotionally detached from a partner. Power in a relationship depends, in part, on who in the relationship is "less in love" or has "less interest" (Canary & Emmers-Sommer, 1997; Maccoby, 1998; Stets, 1991) and these three women felt their personal power increasing as their emotional connection to partners was decreasing. Letting go emotionally meant that their partners did not have the same hold, because the women were not compelled to put effort into pleasing their partners in order to receive love.

Moreover, one is less hurt when the other is ignoring, neglecting and not loving one, as Natalie explained.

Natalie: When you really love someone they've got a hold over you. They can make you do anything. I can remember about the time that I finally gave up. In my last year that I was with him he could have said anything, he could have done anything, I couldn't have given 'a stuff'. He didn't have a hold over me any more because it didn't matter any more. And what you said [She is talking to Grace], "You're now free again", you're getting back your own power. When you lose that loving of another person, that's the emotional connection that really keeps you hanging in there. All at once you're free, when that's gone (love discussion).

It is as if a burden is lifted when the recognition comes with a change of mind set, as heard when Kate could hear the birds in the gum tree again when she decided not to be influenced by Don's behaviour any more. Kate started to challenge Don at that stage, as shown in the responsibility memory. However, the decision to physically leave may come a long time after the recognition that the relationship is not going to get better and the resultant emotional distancing, as Natalie made clear. There is a process of unravelling layers of complicated emotional and economic needs. Years of emotional pain caused the women to face all the things that had previously constrained them from leaving, and if women do not fear their partners, it may make it more likely that they become emotionally abusive as a reaction against the emotional abuse of a partner.

Emotional detachment may even turn into a lack of empathy, as happened with Bridget. One can be emotionally detached and still have empathy, in that one still considers the other's feelings, even though one is not emotionally tied to that person. Lack of empathy, on the other hand, means that one is either incapable of, or will not consider another's feelings. Lack of empathy, therefore, gives the other the message that one does not care, because one does not consider the other's feelings, and this seems to be a primary reason why the other gets hurt in the relationship. Men often lack empathy for women, because of the way in which traditional masculinity has socialised men to be emotionally disconnected and not to feel responsible for other's welfare; as a result women often feel hurt by a partner. The way in which men have been socialised to be emotionally disconnected and not to be responsible for others' welfare may, therefore, make it easier for them to behave in abusive ways, because the constraints to hurting a partner, through feeling empathy, are not in place. This may yet be another link

to why women who are in a committed relationship with traditional men feel emotionally abused by their partners.

Summary of passive control and the impact this had on women

In summary, passive controllers often behaved in stereotypical masculine ways: they seemed to want to be in control of a partner and the relationships, and they behaved in self-serving ways. Although these men wanted to be in control, this did not always transpire as these women had started off with a good sense of self. These women did not want to be put in the subordinate position, but their partners did not want them to be equal. These men seemed to gain their strength from seeing women struggle or being upset or put down by others. They largely used social control, in the form of prescribed gendered behaviour, in an attempt to control women. These men punished women for not conforming by becoming cold and resistant. Their control strategies were a form of silent rejection rather than the overt put-downs of the men who controlled in dominant ways. This type of relationship stood out because of the continual power struggles between the genders, which were a unique characteristic of this group. These women became sad, lonely, and depressed and two of the three women started to despair about their sanity.

Women extricated themselves from the emotional hold that men and the relationship had over them by emotionally detaching themselves. For one woman this even turned to a lack of empathy for her partner, which, in turn, could have been experienced by her partner as emotionally abusive. I will now turn to the chapter on how manipulating control impacted on women.

Chapter 6

Manipulating control

Grace and Beth had partners who subtly manipulated them. Grace's partner, Kevin, and Beth's partner, Colin, portrayed themselves as calm, superior, and kind. They differed in their control from the other controlling men, in that they frequently behaved in caring, as well as hurtful ways, and their hurtful behaviour was often covert and indirect. Their calm and in-control exterior, and their ability to switch tactics between caring and hurtful behaviour which confused women, is what set these men apart. Although Kate's partner Don had also been alternatively kind and hurtful, he was different from these two men in that Don used gendered roles to constrain Kate and got in a bad mood if he did not get his way. He was more overt in his control than these men, and he did not always appear to feel in control.

Beth's and Grace's partners never lost control, as they always seemed to feel superior to these women, and they treated these women as children who needed to be guided. These men behaved in ways as if they saw themselves as benevolently superior, as their low-level indirect criticism was sometimes made under the guise of helping the woman to become a better person. However, this benevolence was only surface, as it disappeared when things did not go their way. These men never overtly dominated or intimidated women or overtly constrained their behaviour, but they subtly undermined women's confidence in themselves by consistently disapproving of and showing disappointment in the way these women behaved.

I will now give some examples of the above-mentioned behaviour to illustrate the point, and then I will continue by describing and analysing the impact this made on these two women.

Grace: dynamics of control

Grace's partner Kevin, always put his needs first, never considering the impact this would have on Grace.

Grace: We were always planning things and then at the last minute there would always be something more important to do, so I would stay with him. We never had a holiday once in however many years it was. And I get really nervous every time someone says, "Yeah, we'll go away". I think yeah, right. I am not going to pack my bags (support discussion).

He would look at other women and express his sexual interest in them.

Grace: He used to point out women to me, attractive women and tell me how attractive they were. All these slim women with nice clothes and beautiful hair and he would constantly point them out to me. We were in this hotel room and he said, "Here is pay movies", (nudge, nudge), let's watch pay movies. I have never seen a movie like that before and I was saying "I do not want to watch a movie like that with naked women parading on the screen and you watching them and comparing me with them". He could not understand what difference that made (fairness discussion).

Kevin stopped short of comparing her overtly with other women he thought beautiful, but he made it obvious that he was attracted to women who looked different from the way Grace saw herself, which increased Grace's uncertainty about herself. Kevin knew that Grace thought herself unattractive, and, by telling her how visually stimulated he felt by seeing beautiful women's bodies, he gave Grace the subtle message that she did not stimulate him.

Grace: He would not say you are not as good looking as that woman. He would just say, "This woman was walking down the street today and you should have seen the clothing she was wearing. It showed off everything!" I could always see him watching women and he would tell me how that stimulated him visually. He would also tell me that he found me attractive. He would never say I was ugly, or you are not up to standard or anything like that. He was never that overt. He would just continually tell me how good other people were. And he told me how good I could be. He would just look at me and say, "you just have the most amazing potential, you could do amazing things and you could look amazing" (fairness discussion).

Kevin was good at saying seemingly nice things that hurt Grace. By telling Grace that she had an amazing potential, he was also telling her that she was not yet good enough, thereby increasing her insecurity about herself. By showing excitement at seeing women in clothes that showed women's sexuality; the type of clothes that Grace did not wear, Grace felt that she did not interest him. Kevin had also asked Grace to alter her hairstyle so that she would look more glamorous, and had told her that he missed an ex-girlfriend because other men's heads used to turn when he walked in with 'his leggy blonde'. It made Grace feel that she was not able to make Kevin proud of her. Kevin always wanted things his way and got upset if Grace did not live up to his expectations.

Grace: One of the things I used to say all the time was "You always get upset when I do something you don't want me to do or I act in a way you would not act or that kind of thing. If I was doing something that was different to the way that he would like me to have done it, that's when I got into trouble.

Natalie: So a difference was already a problem.

Grace: So it is, he was right, he was doing things his way. If I was being powerful I tended to be getting in the way of that (process analysis).

Kevin showed disappointment in Grace if she did not behave in ways that he agreed with. He used to put Grace down with logic arguments if she did better at varsity than he did (support discussion) and Grace tried to analyse why he did this.

Grace: I am wondering whether [men] perceive a lack in them selves and can't handle being questioned. Any power that we had was almost questioning their power. Kevin used to pride himself on being able to out argue anyone logically. He used to say, "I know that I am not always right, so if you can prove I am not right I will accept it". But it had to be on his logic. I wonder if there was something behind that. If he had to admit that he was wrong, that was like a weakness in him. So if I were more powerful in some way I would poke hole in him.

Natalie: Like a win/lose thing, an up down one.

Grace: yeah! Very win/lose, yeah! (process analysis).

It seems that Kevin could not permit himself to see Grace as being right, because his black and white view on things told him that if she was right he could not be right, and not always being right seemed to affect the way he thought he ought to be. Grace felt that she could not win an argument or be better at anything, without Kevin experiencing this as problematic and having to react in some way. Kevin's apparent need to put her down or to prove himself right meant that Grace often felt bad, and Grace used to put up with that for a long time until she started to feel so bad that she exploded with anger, like Maria, Natalie, and Kate had done.

Grace: "Responsible, that means you are able to respond", he calmly told her. "You really must learn to control your reactions. Adults have to take responsibility for what they do. I'm not responsible for your anger; you choose to respond that way. You have an anger management problem; I've seen it before. You respond like a child, all explosions and no sense." They had been doing the dishes, they had been arguing for some time. He had calmly declared that she was wrong and what was wrong with her to make her think that way. Yet, she knew she was right (responsibility memory).

Kevin acted in a superior way in treating Grace like a child, by reproaching her over her angry outburst at always being told that she was wrong and he was right, rather than asking her what had made her so upset. Beth's partner Colin also acted as if he was superior to her.

Beth: dynamics of control

Beth: She felt like a stressed out young thing, balancing her full time tertiary studies with five different part-time jobs. She never had time to relax and Colin resented her for that. Why could she never take a break and just come and lie with him on the couch. After all, he had a very stressful job too and he could still relax. Colin was very good at distinguishing between work and free time. If only she could be more like him, learn from his example. But Beth could never sit still, she could never relax, why did she need

to spend so much time in the study when he was home? Why couldn't she study during the day or when he was at work (expectation memory)?

Colin pressured Beth by expecting her to bring home a certain income, even though she was a full time student and also responsible for the house and her little daughter Fiona. Furthermore, he subtly criticised her for being stressed, as if it was a personal shortcoming of hers, rather than a response to being overloaded. He expected Beth to organise her hectic life around his, so that he would not be inconvenienced, as shown in the previous and following account.

Beth: It did not matter whether I had deadlines and had worked long hours, tea still had to be there [on the table at a certain time] (fairness discussion).

The next account shows that he also treated her like a child, like Kevin had treated Grace.

Beth: Colin preened me before we went out to a cocktail party, telling me what to say and how to dress and how to act and what to do, because 'you are not very good at doing that yourself' (responsibility discussion).

Colin, who was a policeman, would regularly punish Beth in a way that looked like it was done as a joke; it was never overt.

Beth: And he would handcuff me to the kitchen sink and he would put the key about 1cm out of my reach, as a joke. But just so I knew where I was. He would be laughing and he would go off and I would be there for 40 minutes while he was at home on his lunch break. It was all done in a jovial sort of manner. I would always be trying to get the keys and say, "Come on, let me off" and he would just be laughing. You could not really be angry when it was done as a joke, but it was not really done as a joke. It was like, "Oh, you haven't done the dishes and I told you to cook me some eggs", like from "Once were warriors" (New Zealand movie), as a joke (responsibility discussion).

Colin thought it was funny when he made Beth a prisoner in her own home. Beth felt that she could not get mad with him because she was then seen as a poor sport. I could notice that it was not just play in the following passage.

Beth: I would say, "let me off, let me off" and he would just carry on. He would put the news on and eat his sandwich and leave me to try and get the keys. One time I nearly got them, with my leg, and then he just put them a little bit further away. And it was not far away enough to be out of reach (responsibility discussion).

Colin let Beth know that he was in control and that she was at his mercy, under the guise of fun. Here is another example of a man who seemed to gain enjoyment from seeing a woman powerless. Colin wanted the world to know that Beth was a good scholar, but privately he would covertly punish her if she came home with a good mark.

Beth: Colin always wanted to go to varsity and never did, and so, if I got good grades they were his little prizes. He used me as his little show thing. He was quite proud of my achievements. But then he used to grind you down in other ways. He would be quite outwardly approving to other people and then he would start with his little comments at

home like [me] “being a six out of ten” and “his little crackpot”. These little things would get more and more frequent whenever I got good grades (process analysis).

There was a discrepancy between how Colin portrayed himself towards the world and how he portrayed himself at home. At home, Colin would put Beth down whenever she did well in her university courses, by assessing her as a woman and giving her a mediocre grade or by calling her his little crackpot and calling himself the glue that held her together. Beth also felt that Colin disapproved of her in other ways but she was mystified how she received those messages. She had not identified how she knew when he disapproved, until the group, through questioning her, made her aware of how Colin controlled how she did the housework.

Grace: So you Maria were told verbally [how to do the household chores], but you Beth weren't.

Beth: You would never have “not done it”; I don't know why, because he would never get angry with me. He never ever got angry. But you just would not “not do it”.

Natalie: What would he do instead of getting angry?

Beth: I don't know what he used to do.

Natalie: So how did you know?

Bridget: I wonder if it was a set of the mouth and a certain way of looking.

Beth: Yes, he would look disapproving (responsibility discussion).

These two men were generally not stereotypical in their implementation of gendered tasks, but, nevertheless seemed to have the need to feel superior and to have their own way, which are gendered behaviour characteristics. They were capable of being considerate and kind, if that suited their goal of getting their own way, and in this they were different from all the other partners of the women in this study, except for Don whose behaviour spanned the three groups in some ways, as discussed before. I will now turn to what impact this behaviour had on the women.

Impact of manipulating control

Subtle and varied control confused women so that they could not recognise that they were actually controlled. Beth and Grace became uncertain, but willing to please their partners. They were striving to become the person their partners wanted them to be, but, no matter how hard they tried, they could never quite achieve the standards their partners set for them. Their self-esteem diminished to such an extent that they became dependent on their partners as their only source of

love, because they thought that no one else could love them. They had also lost the confidence to leave their partners when they realised that the relationship was emotionally destructive to them.

Sadness

One of the things that occurred early on in Beth's relationship was that she started to lose pleasure in the little things that used to make her happy. Loss of pleasure occurred when a partner continually belittled the little things that made a woman happy, as if her happiness did not count, something that Kate had also reported. Beth started to notice; that in order to avoid being belittled she had to let go of the little things in life that made her happy.

Beth: I can remember one time there was a little violet underneath the tree and I don't know when it changed but I stopped looking at them. I always used to pick daisies when I was four and my aunt used to always pick me daisies. I really really like daisies that just grow in the lawn, and I used to pick them and put them inside in a little vase and I used to have them in my bedroom. And Colin thought that was just the most ridiculous thing he had ever seen, so I stopped doing that. It is just those little things I think that I really felt in the end that got ticked off. It is the little things in life that are actually really important. I could not even take pleasure in the dewdrops on leaves; that had all gone. Those types of things really make my day, and it was those types of things that were being belittled constantly (process analysis).

When the things one gets pleasure from are continually ridiculed, one stops getting pleasure from them. Sadness is often the result of losing something valued (Douglas, 1994), and is also frequently blended with other emotions such as depression, anger, or experiencing low self-esteem (Canary & Emmers-Sommer, 1997). It can be experienced as a profound sense of loneliness because of a partner's constant and subtle discounting of feelings (Loring, 1994). It seems to be one of the first emotions that women in emotionally abusive relationships experience. It almost seemed that Colin deliberately belittled Beth, and this may have been to put her down if she did well at University so that he could feel better about himself, as discussed in the profile of Beth's relationship with Colin. It is also possible that he measured value in his own terms and that he ridiculed Beth for attaching value to something that in his eyes had no value. Either way he did not respect difference. Although the things Beth took pleasure in may have been little, the impact on her of losing them was big.

Loneliness

Beth and Grace had started to feel lonely in their relationships, as had all the other women. Beth's feelings were similar to Maria's and Natalie's, in that she was most lonely when she expected Colin's support and did not get it.

Beth: The times when I felt most lonely were when I had Colin around to be my support person, to be on my side (support discussion).

Loneliness was directly connected to lack of support. Whenever she felt stressed and upset, Colin generally made her feel worse by blaming her for it, or by treating her like a child. Whenever she was elated, such as when she got a good mark at university, he brought her down, and whenever she took pleasure in little things, such as daisies and violets, he ridiculed her.

Beth and Grace, like the other women, had felt lonely when their partners continually found fault with, or did not emotionally support, them. Loneliness, therefore, seemed to be about not being considered or valued. It seemed to be a kind of deprivation, and it was experienced as a painful feeling of constant unfulfilled need.

Grace described how she had felt isolated in her loneliness, as Kate in a previous section and Beth in the following subsection have described.

Grace: I think that was the isolation too, that the logic said that the problem was my expectations (process analysis).

Grace: There is a form of isolation in it, when you feel completely within yourself, because there is nowhere to go, or no one understands, or because you feel you are nuts. You are just all on your own (support discussion).

Grace felt isolated in her loneliness because Kevin continually made her personally responsible for the way she was feeling, as if he had not had any input in that. It was not only that she was alone with the problem; she started to think, as Kate and Beth had done, that she was the problem, as I hear when she says, "you feel you are nuts" and "the logic said that the problem was my expectations".

My findings showed that the only women who believed that it was their own fault that they felt lonely were those who had partners who, as well as being emotionally abusive, could also be very kind and caring at times and who had

become confused about discrepancies between their own negative feelings and where they came from. Kate, who had been discussed in the passive control section, had been the only woman in that group whose partner had, at times, been very kind and caring when it suited him. Grace and Beth also had partners who could be very kind and supportive. These three women had started to internalise their feelings of loneliness, in that they started to believe that their partners were right in thinking that they were responsible for these feelings, as I will show again by putting their previous quotations together here.

Kate: The reason why it is isolation for me comes from [my] story in that it was my problem to solve. I thought it was me. I had to find my own answers (lonely subsection).

Beth: [I was] very lonely, we were talking about that another time. And thinking then that something was the matter with you, intrinsically the matter with you because he was doing all that (confused subsection).

Grace: There is a form of isolation in it, when you feel completely within yourself, because there is nowhere to go, or no one understands, or because you feel you are nuts. You are just all on your own (lonely subsection).

Grace: I think that was the isolation too, that the logic said that the problem was my expectations (process analysis).

Don first made Kate responsible for feeling the way she did (in the 'confused' subsection under passive control) and she finally came to believe that she was responsible for feeling the way she did (in the 'lonely' subsection). Beth had thought that there was something the matter with her because she could feel lonely while Colin was so kind (in the confused subsection). Grace believed that she felt isolated in her loneliness because Kevin had convinced her with his logic that her expectations were unrealistic, and that it was abnormal to have such unrealistic expectations.

It seems that when emotionally abusive men also show caring behaviour, women tend to get confused where their feelings come from and start to believe their partners when they assert that the women themselves are responsible for their feelings of loneliness, and this results in emotional isolation. While loneliness was about a painful feeling of constantly unfulfilled need, isolation seemed to be about starting to believe their partners' accusations that they were the orchestrators of their own misery, which left them isolated from other possible support.

My finding, that all the women felt lonely in these relationships, was also found in Loring's study. She had researched emotional abuse in relationships, and had

categorised her participants as emotionally abused, battered as well as emotionally abused, and non-abused (Loring, 1994). Her findings showed that in spite of a men's ability to make women feel bad about themselves, women who were emotionally abused still longed for their partners' affirmation and respect, and they expressed profound loneliness and sadness far more often than the women who were also physically abused or women in the control group. Loneliness seems to be a specific feeling connected with the emotional maltreatment of women by partners who are emotionally abusive, but who are not physically abusive, because they were still emotionally connected to these men. Emotional isolation, on the other hand, seems to happen to women who, because of a partner's variable behaviour become confused about their own feelings. Unable to make sense of their partner's variable behaviour, they start to believe their partners' assertions that it is their own fault that they feel lonely. Feeling lonely in a relationship, therefore, seems to be a hallmark of women who are emotionally abused.

Confusion

Feeling confused was related to not understanding why a partner who was often so nice to them could behave in such hurtful ways. The partners of Beth and Grace confused them with their variable behaviour. Grace's partner, Kevin, was nice and caring as long as he was in control and got what he wanted. If he felt that his control was jeopardised, he would find fault with Grace, which had the effect of Grace feeling so bad that she often gave in to him to make up. Kevin put Grace down when he thought he was losing an argument with her, or if he thought that Grace was feeling good, or was academically achieving. However, the constant belittling started to take a toll on Grace, as heard in this example.

Grace: He kept putting her down until they were standing at either end of the small narrow kitchen; it had a concrete floor. She felt the anger and helplessness, the frustration, the pain. She felt her muscles tighten until she was absolutely rigid; she wanted to lash out. He kept pushing until she lifted the glass in her hand and threw it. At the last moment she threw it at the floor at his feet; she could not throw it at him. The glass smashed into many pieces. Finally he was quiet for a moment. He walked past her, out of the kitchen. "I'll come back when you have cleaned it up, I can't do the dishes with glass on the floor". She started to cry. "Silly girl, you have to be responsible, that means able to respond" (responsibility memory).

Grace did not know where she stood with Kevin. She felt so much emotional pain and was so frustrated because her point of view was never respected that she felt very angry with him. This was the same surge of anger that boiled over about continual injustices that women had talked about in previous sections. But the moment she lost control, Kevin was there to console her. This is very different behaviour from the men in the other groups, who either ignored or were amused by women's displays of anger. Kevin behaved as a benevolent teacher, teaching a child how to behave and how to control herself, and he did not take any responsibility for making Grace feel so bad. He might have used a kind tone of voice when he spoke to her, but it made Grace feel really small. It also made her confused that the person who regularly hurt her so much was the same person who could be so nice to her and who consoled her in her grief.

Beth's partner, Colin, also alternated his behaviour towards her between being kind and being hurtful. Beth never thought of her partner as abusive because he did so many nice things for her.

Beth: Colin used to do heaps of things for me, take me to the movies. If he'd done anything, like bad, he'd always buy me Roses chocolates, which is my favourite. ... Sometimes, if I was studying and was really stressed out and was not very happy, he would buy me chocolates and put them under my pillow. And one day, like, 'cos I used to, like, sometimes beat myself up, so I used to have big bruises and stuff on my face, and pull my hair out, and he would, like, help me cover them, and still take me out. He wouldn't say anything to anyone about the bruises. And he used to buy me clothes, which, looking back later, I found out that that had a whole hidden agenda thing. ... He would do lots, like, well the whole car thing, he did let me use his car for two whole years and I didn't have to pay anything for it.

Beth and Colin were not married but lived in a de facto relationship. She appreciated all the nice things Colin was doing for her. She even saw buying chocolates for her, to buy back her favours after he had done something that she described as bad, as a 'nice' gesture. Colin was behaving in a similar way to Grace's partner Kevin, in that he would behave in hurtful ways that resulted in Beth feeling really bad and then he would be incredibly kind to make her feel better. He was often hurtful, such as taking away her pleasure in things, and making her out to be a bad mother and inadequate housewife (responsibility discussion under subsection 'despair'). Beth became confused about how such a 'nice' man could hurt her so much. These men did not take responsibility for their hurtful actions and did not apologise, but rewarded women by being nice towards

them when they did not show their self-confident and positive side. These men regained a power advantage in the relationship when they undermined their partners' confidence, because men's undermining behaviour made these women feel bad while also being confused about why they felt bad.

Other researchers have also found that many controlling men manipulate by doing "good" things on the one hand, and "bad" things on the other. They can be charming and caring at times, while also being cold and abusive at other times (Douglas, 1994; Jones & Schechter, 1992). These researchers also found that such men will shape their behaviour to get what they want, and that they will switch tactics to achieve that goal, with the consequence that women get confused because they cannot anticipate their partners' behaviour, or make sense of it. This study found that men who like to be seen as nice and caring, but who still want to get their own way, mainly use this type of manipulating behaviour, and that dominant and passive controllers were much less likely to use this sort of behaviour, as they used other ways in which to control women.

I also noticed that Beth described herself as behaving in a way that women do who have been abused as children, in that she self-mutilated (Bass & Davis, 1988; Briere, 1989). If she had been abused as a child it could have left her particularly vulnerable to emotional abuse, because of the likeliness of a low sense of self due to previous abuse. The confusion may have come for her when Colin triggered her self-mutilating behaviour because of the way in which he behaved towards her, and he then comforted her when she did self-mutilate. This type of behaviour is similar to what Kevin displayed when he consoled Grace after making her angry.

Beth and Grace had been receiving mixed messages about their partners' affections for them. Beth describes here how getting mixed messages about Colin's affections made her so confused that it drove her crazy.

Beth: Sometimes there was a huge difference between some of the things he did, and some of the other things he did, like, it really did your head in. But I couldn't say that he did not do things that were nice. ...It was just to do my head in. ... Sometimes he does these things. And look how nice Colin is, 'cause he let me use his car (love discussion).

At the time Beth could not make sense of this unpredictable switching back and forth.

Beth: I can remember being quite confused about it, 'cos I remember thinking that I knew Colin loved me, but I just didn't feel loved. Do you know what I mean? Like, I knew, like he always used to say [that he loved me], and do things [for me]. [I was] very lonely, we were talking about that another time. And thinking then that something was the matter with you, intrinsically the matter with you because he was doing all that (love discussion).

The emphasis that Beth put on words is underlined in the text. Beth started to think that that there was something wrong with her that she could feel so unloved and lonely with a man who professed to love her and who did nice things for her. If he had only displayed bad behaviour towards her, it would have been much less complicated for her to identify her feelings. Beth started to dismiss her own reality of feeling unloved and, therefore, lonely and now attributed these feelings to a deficiency in her, which was heard in her saying, “thinking then that something was the matter with [me], intrinsically the matter with [me] because he was doing all that.” It was hard for her to make sense of all these conflicting feelings and actions.

Several studies on emotional abuse have found that it is the mixed messages that can be so damaging, because of the confusion they create in a person, thereby focusing women's attention on what may be wrong with them to try to make sense of the variable behaviour (Douglas, 1994; Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994; Marshall, 1996). Subtle abuse, in this way, seems to have more devastating effects on women's self-esteem. Maria (who was dominantly controlled) had also grown confused, but her confusion was around never being able to do anything right, no matter what she did, and not about her partner varying his behaviour, as he was constant in his criticism of her.

Grace and Beth were not only confused by their partners' change in behaviour, they also got confused when their partners denied their perceptions, as Lee's partner had also done. Colin made Beth believe that she was seeing things that were not there, or not seeing things that were there.

Beth: He would buy shoes and he would hide them. And then I would say, “Oh where is that shoe box?” and he would say, “I haven't bought any shoes, what shoe box?” And I would say, “I have seen some new shoes in the wardrobe.” And he would say, “No, there are no new shoes”, and then I would go, “Oh, I am sure they were there”. And then about two weeks later he would come out with these shoes that I [had seen] in the cupboard.

But he would never ever ever admit to having the shoes in the cupboard in the first two weeks. He used to do it all the time. He would say, "Could you make me a cheese sandwich?" And I would say, "Oh yeah, OK" and I would go to make the cheese sandwich and there would be no cheese, and I would go, "But I am sure there was cheese. Oh well. Sorry Colin, we haven't got cheese." And then about half an hour later he would be eating a cheese sandwich, because all I can figure is that he would have hidden the cheese, and then when I went to find it, it would not be there. He did that all the time, and that is why I thought I was losing my mind. Why I went so crazy in the end was that I did not know what was reality and what wasn't, because he would always do that (responsibility discussion).

The effect of often being told that what she believed to be true was not based on reality resulted in Beth starting to fear that she did not know what was real any more. Beth linked the hiding of the cheese incident to something she had learned in one of her psychology classes several years prior to the incident, and had related to Colin. At the time he had laughed about it, but she now realised that that information may have been used against her and that it may have been a deliberate act. Beth became uncertain about her self and her abilities, and it may be that Colin had deliberately done that so that he could mould her to his specifications.

Beth: That brought up that whole idea about Colin preening me before we went out to a cocktail party, telling me what to say and how to dress and how to act and what to do, because 'you are not very good at doing that yourself' (responsibility discussion).

The mind games had helped to place Beth in a position where she did not trust her own abilities anymore, and Colin could, therefore, tell her what was the right way to behave, and how she should dress. It almost seems as if Colin was undermining Beth's reality so that it would be easier for him to control her behaviour. He started to treat her as if she was a child, as Kevin had done to Grace. Grace could identify with Beth's experiences and feelings of going crazy, and she said to Beth,

Grace: I used to end up with the same feeling that I was nuts, but not nearly to your extreme. And I don't know whether it was deliberate on Kevin's part, but I actually have a relatively good short-term memory and I can put something in my short-term memory and I will be able to recount it for you, word for word. And we would be talking, and I would say that such and such happened, and he would go: "no, it didn't". And we would go through this over and over again until I literally doubted my own ability [to remember things], and I would still study and walk into an exam with the stuff still in my short-term memory and be able to do this stuff word for word. ...Kevin would say, "You are wrong, you are wrong, it did not happen, you said this" and I would say, "I didn't say that" and he would say, "yes you did", over and over until I could not work out whether I had a good memory or not (responsibility discussion).

Kevin was emotionally badgering Grace into accepting his perception as the only 'right' perception, to the point where she started to internalise the negation and to doubt her ability to remember things, even though her exam marks proved that she

had a good memory. Grace found that after a while she could not make the distinction any more between what had not happened and what had happened.

Grace: Yeah, you start doubting everything, like if you can't even remember what somebody said to you this morning [because he denied saying it], you start doubting everything, and you doubt your own intuitions. And in the end you doubt absolutely everything (responsibility discussion).

The impact was not felt in the occasional, but in the constant denial of these women's reality. If people are told often enough that what they perceive to be true is not true, it will start to eat away at their confidence in their own perception.

Another thing that made Grace feel that she was going crazy was that Kevin would say hurtful things to her and then blame her if she got upset over what he was saying about her.

Grace: This was another one of my problems. It was that I was totally oversensitive, completely touchy, he could not say a damn thing without me getting up tight and it was my problem. But he had this expectation that the further into a relationship you got, the more intimate you became and the rest of it, [and] then he could say anything. He could say whatever he liked, no matter what. Because it was his expectation that he should be able to do that with me. ...If I could not trust him enough for him to say whatever was on his mind then I was oversensitive and I was stopping the relationship from going any further (process analysis).

Kevin denied Grace's right to feel hurt about what he said to her, calling her oversensitive. Whenever Grace got upset by his hurtful honesty, he blamed her for being oversensitive and for not being able to handle it when he was trying to be intimate, in being honest with her. In other words, Kevin told her that adversely reacting to being put down was "stopping the relationship from going any further". When Kevin used the term "oversensitive" one needs to ask what his standard for sensitivity was. Was he comparing her with himself? Was he not sensitive to others being hurtfully honest with him? Did she need to be like him? Was it desirable to be like him? It was obvious that only his reality counted.

Grace differentiated hurtful honesty from caring honesty in saying, "My argument to him was that the closer I got to him the more I cared about the impact I had on him. So, if my saying something to him were going to hurt him I would not say it, because I cared." Grace wanted to be intimate with Kevin, but got so confused about Kevin's way of being intimate, which made her feel awful, that she became scared that she wanted something from the relationship that was going to hurt her.

Grace: It was scary, because the more we got in to it the more I found I was nuts. I think that was the isolation too, that the logic said that the problem was my expectations. I wanted too much, I expected too much from him. Like, "where was I getting these ideas from? I had been reading too many Mills and Boons", which I don't read but it was these movies that have been corrupting your mind. Men are not like that (process analysis).

Kevin used logic to show Grace how wrong she was to feel as she did. Grace started to feel isolated, as has been discussed, as well as being fearful of going crazy, in that Kevin presented the problem as hers alone. As one can see, it is often difficult to isolate the various emotions, as they all seem to interact and overlap. It is often difficult to talk about one emotion without also mentioning another one.

Kevin's actions were crazy making, in that he said on the one hand that men are not emotionally intimate, and that she expected too much if that was what she wanted, while on the other hand blaming her for stopping him from being intimate when she got upset at his attempts at "intimacy". With his logic he was bulldozing Grace into believing that she was the problem. He generalised his personal problem, of being unable or unwilling to connect on an emotional level, to all men, and on those grounds he discounted Grace's feelings as unrealistic. His reality was the right reality in his mind, and Grace's reality was the wrong reality.

By denying that men can be affectionate and attentive, Kevin put the responsibility for his unresponsiveness on Grace's shoulders by telling her that she expected too much, and that men just are not affectionate. He thereby also denied that men are capable of changing. This freed him from having to put energies into the relationship, as well as denying her what she needed, by naming her needs as unrealistic. He set the parameters of the relationship, and he called her attempt at setting parameters unrealistic.

Research has supported the finding that women may become confused (Loring, 1994), and may even think that they are going crazy, when a partner repeatedly calls their own perceptions of reality about relationship problems into question (Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994; Jones & Schechter, 1992). Loring found that the impact of one's feelings as unreal was powerful, in that when a woman starts to

internalise the negation she feels her self eroding away, because she does not know her self any more (Loring, 1994).

Grace's experience was the exact profile that Loring had painted of the dynamics of emotional abuse (Loring, 1994). Grace and Kevin's discussions followed a familiar pattern of emotionally abusive behaviour, where Kevin would use rationalisation to discount Grace's point of view and would call her insulting names, thereby negating her ideas and feelings, which would produce tears in her and a desperate plea to respect her feelings. The abuse would culminate in Grace being called hypersensitive and therefore being blamed for feeling hurt by Kevin's abusive behaviour.

Every person has multiple sides to their personality, and all of us may behave in different ways, depending on context. But the "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde" behaviour of manipulating men, named after the character in Robert Louis Stevenson's novel, seems to be a deliberate tactic some men use to achieve a destabilising effect on the partner, which is advantageous to their own goal of being in control (Douglas, 1994; Jones & Schechter, 1992). These researchers discussed how nice men who are controlling would show the darker side of their personality after a period of time, and suddenly become selfish or forceful when things did not go their way.

Various explanations have been given for why men control women. Feminist theory explains men's need to be right as the result of gender hierarchies in patriarchal structures. Social constructionists may explain how masculinity and femininity are defined in relation to one another, where one is the inversion of the other. If being seen to be right is associated with hegemonic masculinity (Seidler, 1998), and if masculinity is defined as an inversion of femininity (Daley & Montgomery, 1999), then a man cannot admit that a woman is right.

Furthermore, if a man wants to be seen to be right, he may shed doubt on a woman's reality if it differs from his, and in this way undermine her. Grace's example shows how the hegemonic masculine behaviour of men needing to be seen as 'being right' can be experienced as emotionally abusive, because Kevin's need to see himself as right caused him to act in a way that shattered Grace's

confidence in her own perceptions. Other researchers have reported this finding and they argued that hegemonic masculine behaviour is controlling because it puts women down (O'Neil & Egan, 1993; Sattel, 1998).

Furthermore, a man may even impose his reality on a woman, as Kevin did, so that his reality becomes dominant, because men's superior position to women in patriarchal cultures gives them the right to criticise women and to define their reality. This belief system is grounded in traditional New Zealand masculine ideology (Habgood, 1992; Ritchie & Ritchie, 1978). A man may, therefore, not accept that a woman has a perception that differs from his, and a woman may then get criticised and put down if she has a different view. The consequences of this sort of behaviour are that men get to set the parameters of what is real and how the couple should relate. If a man regularly imposes his reality on a woman, it may result in a woman starting to lose confidence in her own reality. The way in which these men made Beth and Grace lose their confidence seems to be related in these examples to men's need to feel that they are right and that they have the right to define women's reality.

While the behaviour of Grace's partner Kevin, in always wanting to be right, could be explained by prescriptions of masculine behaviour, the behaviour of Beth's partner went beyond that. Colin's behaviour seemed to have been calculated behaviour and intentional, and the difference in impact was expressed by Grace who had said that her feelings of confusion were not nearly as extreme as those of Beth. It may be that when men use calculated and intentional behaviour to confuse a partner in order to control her, that this has a greater impact than when men use societal prescriptions in order to control a woman. Intention, therefore, does seem to affect the impact of abuse; a possibility that I raised in chapter 2 in the subsection 'lack of agreement in definition'.

It is possible that there is an interaction between men's need to be seen as always right and superior to women, and their use of male privilege in order to satisfy that need. In this way, one can interpret the behaviour of some men who use male privilege as behaviour of men who have an insecure identity as men if they cannot define themselves in terms of traditional masculine behaviour that supports men's

superior position in relation to women. I am inclined to believe that these two men were very secure in their superiority as males and their privileged rights as males, as they were always shown to be calm and in control; they seemed to be merely implementing those perceived rights.

Research has found that the frequency with which men show love and care, such as Colin helping to cover Beth's bruises and still taking her out, and Kevin consoling Grace, is related to the impact of abuse, in that the more often men behaved positively, the stronger the negative impact of their abuse was (Marshall, 1994). This is presumably because frequent caring behaviour builds emotional connection, which makes it harder to believe that a person who loves you so much would want to hurt you. This paves the way for a woman to internalise the cause of her partner's bad behaviour by thinking that she must have deserved it, as she can find no other plausible reason.

The emotional connection in these couples was much stronger than in all the other couples, and the strength of the emotional connection seems to be linked to women's vulnerability to being hurt in the relationship, as Natalie had previously articulated. This may explain why the self-esteem of Beth and Grace was more eroded than that of all the other women in the study.

Loss of self-esteem

Where other women's self-esteem had diminished over time, Grace and Beth's self-esteem had deteriorated to a greater extent than the other women. Their partners always found something wrong with them and made them feel as if they were not quite good enough yet, while also strengthening the emotional bond by often being kind. These two women, therefore, wanted to improve themselves, because they thought their partners loved them. This is very different from the women who felt inadequate in the dominantly controlled group who had been made to believe that they were totally inadequate in everything and that there was no hope of improvement. Grace and Beth, on the other hand, were told that they had potential that had not been reached yet. They strove in order to become acceptable to their partners.

In this memory, Kevin let Grace know that he was dissatisfied, and that something was missing in their relationship, but that he was not quite sure what it was.

Overall Grace felt she was never quite good enough. She was almost there; she could be if she tried. He didn't know quite what was wrong; he was trying to explain why he felt dissatisfied, like something was missing. He was having trouble finding the right words. Grace persevered with him, patiently waiting, helping him. She thought she was doing the best thing, allowing him to express himself. In her heart she knew that when he got there and found the words, it would hurt. She knew that something would be missing in her. Finally he started. He missed an ex girlfriend. He did not want to go back to her; that's not what he meant. He missed her vivaciousness, her style, the way she turned heads when she walked into a room, her glamour, always front and centre, always the limelight. He missed being envied for the tall leggy blond on his arm. Couldn't Grace put in a little more effort, perhaps drying her hair like this - he shows her a photo of yet another ex. Looking glamorous was all a function of time and money. Grace felt her heart sink, she wasn't glamorous, those kind of things just weren't important to her. The outside sparkly bits were almost irrelevant. She felt so inadequate. People often told her how smart or loving she was, never attractive. And here was the one person she thought she could count on to find her attractive, and she hadn't quite made it yet (caring memory).

By talking about all the things he was missing from past relationships, Kevin let Grace know what attributes he valued and believed she did not have, and this made Grace feel inadequate. Kevin did not openly tell her this, but he did it in a roundabout way, so that it did not look as a criticism; however the impact was perhaps even more devastating because it was harder to recognise what was happening. Although Grace did not use the words 'loneliness' and 'isolation' in this context, she described the same feelings as Beth did under the 'loneliness' section, in that she had been counting on Kevin's support and validation of her, and did not get it. She did not look good enough in Kevin's eyes, and still needed to do more work in order to come up to his standards. Kevin's subtle criticisms made Grace try even harder to please Kevin, as heard in these examples.

Grace: I never measured up to Kevin; I never measured up at all. I was constantly striving, constantly striving to be better. Nothing I did was good enough. I couldn't even clean the toilet well enough for him (responsibility discussion).

Grace: I never tried to rebel against the standards, ... it was more along the lines of, who I was, was not quite up to scratch, and I could be better if I just tried. He could see all this potential; if I just keep trying I could deal with my anger management problems and I could deal with this and that (process analysis)

Grace was expending all her energy in trying to be what Kevin wanted her to be. Women are more likely to want to work on themselves if they are seen as not quite good enough, rather than if they are seen as never able to make the grade, such as Lee was portrayed. Women are also more likely to want to work on themselves if they think that their partners love them, as these two women did.

Beth identified with Grace, in that she was also incessantly found to not quite measure up, and was not allowed to be herself either. Several of the women joined into the conversation about not being good enough, and striving to be better in order to win approval.

Beth: I was never allowed to be me either. Always proving me wrong, always. And never being good enough, and that is I think why I stayed too. I thought I was so lucky to have this wonderful man who accepted me,

Bridget: who was changing me for the better, help me advance,

Grace: investing all that energy in making us nicer better people. I can really relate to that, what you are saying about you saying it being constant.

Lee: It didn't matter what

Grace: There was always something that was not quite right, always something that needed to be done that little bit better, or a little bit more, or a little bit harder. It was a constant striving.

Beth: Striving, that is it!

Grace: We seem to be wanting that approval, and just constantly striving for that approval and there seems to be a constant on your part Maria and Kate, a constant, all the time you are not good enough, you are not doing the right thing, in the right place.

Kate: Where I stopped caring about approval, I think it is a little different

Lee: Towards the end approval could go hang (process analysis).

It struck me that these women were so in tune with one another that they finished each other's sentences. It seems that partners' constant finding fault, in contrast to an occasional criticism, resulted in women not feeling good enough. Grace and Beth saw their partners as benevolent benefactors who were trying to make better people out of them and they strove to be better people, in the hope of securing approval, which, in the end, seldom came.

Beth: I always tried to get Colin's approval. I would do the ironing if I thought I would get his approval. Like, striving to get his acceptance; I was trying for that the whole way through. That is why I had nicely polished skirting boards (process analysis).

Beth's example of doing ironing to get approval is in response to Maria's example of covert resistance in the form of not doing the ironing. Her example of polished skirting boards came from her fairness memory where she described how her house was spotless and shining. Beth would do anything if she thought it would get Colin's approval. Research has found that many prescriptions men make as to how women should behave can be encapsulated as 'do not make me mad' (Chang, 1995), or perhaps in these cases 'do not disappoint me'. Chang stated that women's consequent behaviour can then be seen as obsessive-compulsive in that a woman may go to extraordinary lengths to keep the house exactly the way her partner expects of her.

Beth was not afraid of making Colin mad, as he never got mad. She wanted to live up to Colin's expectations of her and was striving to live up to them because she needed his approval to feel good about herself. His constant disapproval of whatever she did had resulted in lowering her confidence so that she needed external validation to feel good about herself. Kate and Lee had stopped caring about approval, because they had realised in the end that they did not need the approval of a partner, as they had been able to emotionally detach themselves. Beth and Grace, on the other hand, had started to feel so inadequate that they thought that they were lucky to have a partner who accepted them, as Beth articulated in the above text, and as Grace expressed in the following text. Grace had found that if she told Kevin that he was hurting her by always putting her down, he would turn things around and tell her that she was oversensitive, and she would then be told that she needed to work on that flaw as well.

Grace: It got to a point where I did not want to tell him if he was doing something that hurt me, because that would be one more of my flaws. It got to the point when I was upset about something, I would say to myself, "You are just being over sensitive; a normal person would not react like this." I did not need to hear him say it, I could do it all myself! I did not want him to know how awful I really was, continually needing him, and I was so lucky that he still loved me after I was so awful (responsibilities discussion).

Grace started to internalise her feelings of inadequacy, as has been discussed in the loneliness section. It was likely that she felt ashamed of herself for continually being hurt by him and needing him at the same time, in that she described herself as an awful person. In a study that examined the relationship between shame, trauma symptoms, and emotional abuse in the context of dating, marriage, and romantic partnerships, it was found that there was a strong relationship between the bringing on of shame and subtle forms of abuse (Mullally, 2000).

People who have an adequate sense of self can generally resist an attack on their self, knowing that the attack is unrealistic, and many people may, therefore, see it as a personal deficit if a person is negatively affected by criticism. However, if someone continually infers that one is inadequate and disguises the message in a loving and caring context, it would take a strong person to keep resisting it and to keep believing that one is worthy.

Many studies on emotional abuse have shown that if a woman gets positioned on a daily basis as not worthy of respect, love and fair treatment, she may start to focus her attention inward to try to make sense of a partner's variable behaviour (Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994; Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994; Marshall, 1996). Self-esteem was so weakened at this stage that these two women were seeking the source of a partner's behaviour in themselves. Self-esteem was one personal resource upon which these women might have drawn to re-establish their power and defend themselves against the emotional impact of the abuse, by insisting to their partners that they did not deserve to be treated in this way, but when this resource became unavailable for help as a result of the emotional abuse, they had even less power. It seems to become a downward spiral, where emotional abuse negatively affects a woman's self-esteem to the point that when a woman starts to recognise that the abuse is destructive to her health she does not have enough self-esteem left to either challenge the abuse or to leave the relationship.

Grace became brittle in the relationship, in that she started to alternatively snarl and cry, to protect her hurt feelings.

Grace: I know that I had become very grumpy, very snappy. If someone looked at me sideways I'd snarl, you know that whole thing? And I had gone from being a happy, let's go and dance in the rain kind of person, to a, "If you come any closer I'm going to cry" kind of person. And I think that he saw that as, I had some sort of facade up when I first met him, "This is my best face", and then, as I got into the relationship, I let my true self come snarling out, kind of thing (love discussion).

Grace's mood swings had been in reaction to the chronic stress in their relationship and had resulted in her continually being on the verge of crying. She had become totally exhausted by the constant demands and pressures Kevin placed on her, and Kevin then blamed Grace for having hidden her "true" self from him in the beginning.

Many women in abusive relationships suffer mood swings as an understandable response to the stress (Douglas, 1994). Continually being on the verge of crying is one of the effects of emotional abuse, in that women get totally exhausted by the constant demands and pressure, and find it hard to cope (Douglas, 1994). Grace had lost her identity as a "happy, let's go and dance in the rain kind of person" and was reduced to becoming a brittle and depressed stranger to herself. Her snappiness was an attempt to prevent Kevin seeing how she was feeling, as in

her experience showing vulnerable feelings had ended up in her being hurt even more. Kevin, however, seemed to have believed that personality is fixed, and if there was a negative change in Grace then the previous expression of her personality had been a façade to trick him into loving her, rather than her behaviour being a reaction to his abusive behaviour. It had been yet another reason to criticise Grace. Kevin then started to tell her that she needed to change her behaviour, because no one would like her the way she was, but he did this in a soothing way, as if he were helping her.

Grace: When he was there, I was so very aware of my imperfections and of how inadequate I was. He used to say things like, "no-one is going to like you when you are so angry all the time" and "People don't like angry people, they like people who they are happy to be around" and things like that. So I honestly felt like no one would ever really like me. In the end what it did, it was one of these circles where I became grumpier and grumpier and people started keeping their distance. It was like a self-fulfilling prophecy. I don't have a problem making friends, so it is not me. But he kept on saying it to me. So I felt really inadequate, that I wasn't good enough. I had to try and be better and all that kind of thing (process analysis).

Grace started to feel so bad about herself that she became afraid that people would find out how awful she was. She graphically explained this process.

Grace: There was an anti smoking campaign on TV and they had this apparatus all set up so that the nicotine was going through a sponge and they were saying, "This is your lungs". And they wrung the sponge out and all that black stuff came out. Whenever I thought about myself I thought that my insides were like that black sponge. That is who I am, that black sponge; that is what I am like. I have to just admit this and live with the fact that I am this really yucky person. And I lived in constant fear that people would find out how awful I really was. There were always people who liked me but that was because they only saw the outside. If you knew what I was really like you would all run away (fairness discussion).

Repeatedly being put down resulted in Grace thinking that no one could ever love her, as she now believed that she was a bad person, a link that has also been found in other studies of emotional abuse (Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994). Beth had previously expressed that she had also felt so bad that she felt lucky that Colin still accepted her. She was really attuned to Grace's bad feelings about herself, and the two of them had a discussion about how they felt they were only fooling people who thought that they were nice.

Beth: You wear a little mask eh, when things go a little better you think; people don't know what you are really like, you are just pretending.

Grace: Exactly, I used to get very good at fooling people to think I was actually quite a nice person. It was like "ha, what do you know, you just got taken in, cause I'm not really; I know I am not", because I believed Kevin. He had such logical rational reasons for what he was saying.

Beth: Yes, once people say something really nice you think, "they don't really know" and so anything they say never reaches the standard, or it does not mean as much to you as when Colin would say something, because he truly knew me. There was a bad me; that horrible manic-depressive me, the crackpot (process analysis).

Their feelings of worthlessness had become stable, in that both of these women had come to believe that they were bad, and that nothing they did could change that, as heard in Beth saying, “when you are actually a horrible person inside your own body ... you have to live like that for the rest of your life” (fairness discussion).

Chang had also found that women who continually receive criticism from their partners, no matter how hard they tried to please, started to believe that they were inadequate because of an inability to keep their partners happy, and therefore deserved to be abused (Chang, 1996). How we feel about ourselves derives in part from how important others see us as being (Voss, Markiewicz, & Doyle, 1999). Grace and Beth had come to see themselves as bad because their partners continually told them that they were not measuring up to their expectations of them. Although they strove to meet their partners’ expectations of them they were never able to attain the set standards. This image of themselves as ‘bad’ had become stable, and both of these women could identify with one another, in that they had thought that there was no hope of ever becoming lovable. Jones and Schechter discussed how a controller’s ongoing criticism can even undermine the sense of self-worth one draws from other relationships in one’s life, in that we believe that the person who lives with us should know us best and must therefore be right (Jones & Schechter, 1992). I noticed this in Grace’s remark that when she experienced people liking her, she believed that if people really knew her they would find out how awful she was, and in Beth saying that what others said about her did not mean as much as when Colin said something, because he ‘truly’ knew her.

It is, therefore, possible for a controller to completely define how a woman feels about herself, as a woman may start to disbelieve others who contradict the view a partner presents of her. It also means that a woman then becomes dependent on the very person who is abusing her, because she now believes that no one else could love her.

Grace: You know, I was saying about how I couldn’t leave Kevin because he loved me, and I was never separated from him emotionally. I think it relates to something that Beth said about being that co-dependent, and about how lucky I felt that he was putting up with

me with all these deeply, emotional and psychological problems I had. I didn't have that trouble leaving my first partner. And when I was with Kevin he was telling me about how I had all these problems and I'm thinking, "Oh God! It wasn't my first partner at all, it was me, and I was treating him badly. I mean, look at me, I've got this anger management problem, and I can't even think about things logically", and all that guilt from the past came up (responsibility discussion).

Grace started to believe, as Beth had done, that she had caused all the problems in her relationships, as seen in this memory.

Grace: She sat quietly at the desk with her head bowed and her hands in her lap. The quieter the room seemed the louder the turmoil [inside her] became, building and building until it was enormous. She desperately scabbled for pen and paper. It seemed her hand was possessed as she scribbled the same words over and over, in large unintelligible letters randomly across the sheet. An attempt to release the monster within her; ME ME ME ME ME ME ME. Tears welled in her eyes as she whispered "It's all me, it's all my fault" (support memory).

By this stage, Grace believed that she was so bad, that it was as if a monster was residing in her, and she may have made that analogy because of the way she had started to snarl at people, as a way of protecting herself. By making Grace believe that her inadequacies had caused the problems in her first marriage, as well as in theirs, Kevin made Grace totally dependent on him for the love and affirmation she desired. She did not believe that another person could love her with all her problems, and she became as accomplished as Kevin was in putting herself down.

Grace: I never rebelled because I was so convinced that I was wrong. That rather than rebelling I used to join the fray and beat myself up for not being 'good enough'. So there were really two of us going at me sometimes! So, that was a really good skill to have with Kevin, and he put it to good use. I think it was just our age difference; there was 11 years between us. ... So from that point of view, when he came in and told me that I was wrong, I had it all wrong and it was my problem, I believed him. That was just one more reason to believe him (caring discussion).

Kevin undermined Grace's sense of self by using the power differentials of gender and age as a leverage to convince her that she was wrong and he was right. The age difference had contributed to Grace seeing Kevin as the wiser and more knowledgeable one, which made it easier for Kevin to manipulate her.

The more Grace and Beth believed that they were not worth loving, the more they needed to stay with the very person who was making them feel so bad, because of the belief that no one else could love them. Herman likened this behaviour of women in abusive relationship to the traumatic bonding that occurs in hostages who come to view their captors as their saviours (Herman, 1994). With respect to emotional abuse, this traumatic bonding is also known as the "Stockholm

syndrome”, which is a model based on the paradoxical psychosocial responses of hostages to their captors when their captors use a method of control that alternates terror with kindness (Loring, 1994). Beth and Grace’s view that they could only expect love and approval from their partners because they had come to believe that no one else would see them as worthy of love caused them to cling to their partners. Grace realised now that not being able to emotionally separate from Kevin was particular to that relationship, and had not occurred in her previous relationship. She was, therefore, able to externalise the problem in the research sessions, and to separate it from all the negative labels Kevin had put on her.

Even after Kevin had left Grace, he still seemed to believe that Grace had been the problem in their relationship, judging from a conversation Grace related between a friend of Grace’s and Kevin.

Grace: I had a friend who told him that she was glad that we had broken up and he said, “how can you say that when I have looked after her so well?” And my friend said, “When she was with you her self-esteem just continually went down” and he said “but she always suffered from low self esteem, that is something she came in with”. And she said “you can either make your partner feel better or you can make it worse, can’t you” (caring discussion).

Kevin used Grace’s low self-esteem to bolster his argument that she was always at fault in everything. Although it is mainly Grace’s voice that came through in this section, Beth had been totally in tune with Grace’s feelings and had started to feel just as bad.

These findings, that women who have been subtly undermined have their self-esteem diminished to a greater extent than those who have been more overtly emotionally abused, has been supported in a recent study that showed that having one’s sense of self weakened through undermining acts resulted in the broadest effects for women’s emotional state (Marshall, 1999). In Marshall’s study, subtle psychological abuse had stronger and more consistent associations with women’s emotional state and relationship perceptions than did their partners’ overt psychological abuse, violence, or sexual aggression. Marshall’s finding may explain why these two women’s self-esteem had gone down the most, as they started to think that they were so inadequate and of so little value that they desperately hung on to their partners. Marshall found that the frequency of men showing love and caring, and the frequency with which they tried to help

women's self-concept, was related to the impact of abuse (Marshall, 1994). Ironically, she found that the more often these men behaved positively, the stronger the negative impact of the abuse was. It may be hard to conceive that a man who is frequently loving in his behaviour and is shown to actually help a woman to feel better about herself can also be abusive. Hurtful behaviour seems to hurt more when one is not expecting it. This may be because the abrupt change in a partner's behaviour does not make sense and is, therefore, only explicable in terms of one's own behaviour. One may, therefore, be more likely to internalise the partner's behaviour as being caused by one's own, and therefore deserved.

Loss of identity

Diminished identity starts to occur when women routinely give up their beliefs, feelings, and opinions in order to have a relationship. Kevin always manipulated Grace to get what he wanted. One way in which Kevin manipulated Grace was that if she did not go along with what he wanted, he would tell her that he loved her, because he had found out that Grace would then do what he wanted.

Grace: If we were arguing and I was resisting him; if I'd say, "No I'm not going to do what you say", "No I don't go along with that", he would tell me that he loved me and I would put it aside. Now it would fester, and obviously I got more and more unhappy as the relationship went along, and these things built up and built up, 'cos they were never dealt with. But what would happen is, I would capitulate. I would climb that wall and say, "You're right. I'll do what you want" (Love discussion).

Being emotionally connected to Kevin prompted Grace to give in to please him in the name of love, as women have been socialised to do. However, she slowly started to lose her identity as she was giving up things that were important to her.

Beth also gave up her beliefs, feelings, and opinions, and did what Colin expected of her, but Beth went further than Grace, in that she also started to wear the clothes that Colin liked on her, even though she did not feel comfortable in them. Colin was often very nice to her and Beth felt grateful for that, but he belittled her as if she were a small child that needed to be told how to dress and how to behave, and she accepted that.

Beth: He used to dress me. He used to buy my clothes, tell me what to wear and what to say. Like, "don't talk about this and don't talk about that, and make sure that you mention this" on the way to the police do. He used to do it nicely though. He used to say, "come on, we have got this do and I'll get you an outfit to wear". It would be clothes that I would never ever wear again. But I used to think, "it is so sweet of him, he really

does love me". And it was only stuff that he liked, and when we split up I just chucked out bags and bags of all this label clothing that I never ever liked; ever! (process analysis).

Colin was very nice in the way he said things, and he seemed to be very generous in buying her labelled clothing, even though he never asked her what she liked.

Beth: Since it was given you don't want to say you don't like it; it was a gift. But it was my identity that went out of the window! (process analysis)

Beth ended up wearing clothes she did not like, and she did not like herself for wearing such clothes, but did not dare to say she did not like them, as she saw him as her benefactor and did not want to upset him. As a solo mother and full time student, she relied on him financially. The unequal power in this relationship was such that Beth did not dare oppose Colin, as she could end up as a poor solo mum again if Colin did not want her any more. Therefore, she always did what Colin asked of her, but at the cost of losing her identity.

Other women in this study had also been expected to give up those important parts of themselves that made up their identity, because prescribed gendered behaviour brought with it the expectation that women give up their needs and desires, so that women support men's way of life. The women in the dominant control group were made to give up the things that made them individuals because of their fear of their partners' intimidating behaviour, while the women in the passive control group often resisted expectations to give those things up. The women in this manipulatively controlled group started to voluntarily give up their needs, opinions and values that defined them as individuals, in order to please their partners. They had started to feel so bad about themselves that they saw their relationship as the only source of love and validation. They were willing to give up those things that defined them as individuals in the hope that their sacrifice would be rewarded with love and kindness.

The finding that women give up those things that define them as individuals in order to preserve the relationships has been supported in feminist literature and research (Chang, 1996; Culp & Beach, 1998; Hare-Mustin, 1994b; Stoppard, 1998). These authors stated that this happens especially to women who have internalised social roles. Although Beth and Grace, to a certain extent, had transcended the traditional separation of gendered work roles, in that they

contributed to the finances and expected their partners to help with household tasks, their beliefs still seemed to be steeped in traditional expectations of women as carers and peacemakers.

Giving in is not always detrimental, and there are plenty of times when giving in to pressure does not mean that much to us. However, women also give in to pressure when it is detrimental to their own needs (Hare-Mustin; 1994b; Lynch & Kilmartin, 1999), and that is what happened to the women in the dominantly controlled group and in this manipulatively controlled group, and to a lesser extent in the passively controlled group. Moreover, if one falls into a pattern of giving in to pressure about things that are not good for one's sense of self, it takes a toll on one's self-image (Forward & Frazier, 1997). For women, this may mean that a woman may think that when a man pressures her to give up her self in order to please him she cannot be important to him. It is in the repetitive yielding to a partner's wishes that are counter to one's own needs that self-identity is diminished, and not in the occasional yielding. When one starts to yield because one needs the relationship, then one starts to behave in a way that destroys one's identity in order to hang on to one's relationship. Grace and Beth had come to feel so bad about themselves that their sense of self had been shattered, and their partners were, therefore, able to make these women behave in whatever way they wanted without undue pressure, and these women would oblige because they now needed this relationship. Many studies have shown that when women stifle their self-expression through continual low-level criticism, this silencing of the "self" may eventually turn to a loss of "self" (Chang, 1996; Kirkwood, 1993; Marshall, 1996; Marshall, 1999). While diminished self-esteem occurred across the three groups, diminished identity only seemed to happen in this manipulatively controlled group.

Anger

Although these women appeared to be passive, there were times towards the end of the relationship when they also got angry, as all the other women had done when they were at the outer reach of endurance. This study found that there seems to be a threshold for tolerating emotional abuse, and women had different

thresholds before they became so angry that they gave in to the urge to want to hurt their partner. Beth's anger over the way Colin made her feel had boiled over, because she now needed him and he treated her at the end of the relationship as if she did not exist. She had thrown a hot cup of coffee over Colin, to try to get a reaction out of him.

Beth: Just wanting to get some sort of reaction out of them, I think. That pouring of a hot cup of coffee over Colin, I wanted to hurt him, make him feel something (responsibility discussion).

Colin had, however, again ignored her, by simply wiping the coffee off himself while carrying on with his reading. To Beth it seemed as if she did not exist for Colin, as if nothing she did would impact on Colin, not even when she tried to hurt him, and this made her feel even more powerless.

Grace also became outraged in the end, because of Kevin's lack of regard for her. Grace had mostly suppressed her feelings of resentment and gone along with what Kevin wanted, but her anger started to surface when she realised that it was Kevin's behaviour towards her that caused her consistent and acute emotional pain. The only things that seemed to matter for Kevin were that he was seen to be right and that he got what he wanted. In the responsibility memory, Grace had described her feelings of anger and helplessness, in being put down again, and the frustration and pain she felt at being treated like that, to the point that she had wanted to lash out. Grace, who was generally articulate in describing her feelings, gave an account of the process that led to her becoming angry, as described in her responsibility memory.

Grace: The anger normally came when he was telling me I was wrong about something when I knew I was right... It would start with "this is what I need and you are not fulfilling it" and get into a case of me saying, "Well, you did not tell me that you needed me to be doing that this weekend". And he would say "but I did". And then we would get into this either "you should know these things, what is wrong with you if you don't" or we get into the "he said, she said" arguments, where he would just literally tell me that I was just flat out wrong. And who was I to tell him what he had said and all that kind of thing. This was also starting to get on a bit in the relationship, where I was really starting to feel, without the words to describe it, I was feeling battered. I was rebelling against feeling battered even though I didn't know what was happening (Responsibility discussion).

An accumulation of frustration and pain at having her reality routinely denied and being seen as not good enough had resulted in Grace feeling emotionally battered, and this made her so angry that she had wanted to lash out at Kevin.

Grace: I had gone past my point of control. Like, I had just gone past my ability to stop it happening. And I just wanted to hurt him. That was it (Responsibility discussion).

Grace was at the outer reach of endurance, the point where emotional self-survival had become more important than her relationship. At this stage she was, as Kirkwood describes it, moving out on the spiral of emotional abuse, because she recognised that the relationship was destructive to her (Kirkwood, 1993). With that recognition came the energy to fight against abuse. Beth and Grace's expression of anger showed that they had not totally lost their self-esteem and that there were limits as to how much abuse they would endure. When their limit was reached they would express their feelings of injustice. Although Grace had become outraged, she had still been able to contain her desire to hurt him by throwing the glass that she had intended to throw at him on the floor at his feet.

Grace: At the last moment I still stopped myself from doing what I really wanted to do, and that was hurt him. It was scary because, I have not got any children, but I am a mother. And the thought of hurting someone is just awful and yet the intensity of my need to hurt him was incredible, and I actually stopped myself doing that (responsibility memory).

Grace's intended act of violence had turned into symbolical violence as a means of letting off steam, as Kate had done. However, Kate had let off steam because she did not seem to feel safe enough to show her anger in the presence of her partner. Grace threw the glass on the floor and not at Kevin because she saw hurting someone as an immoral act. Colin thought her outburst childish (see complete responsibility memory in appendix 3.3), and the reader heard in the 'confused' subsection how Colin had calmly told her that he would come back to dry the dishes after she had cleaned up. He treated her as if she were an irresponsible child, and did not acknowledge his part in Grace becoming so angry. Grace was extremely responsible in not giving in to her intense urge to hurt Kevin, but Kevin appeared to regard her anger as just a tantrum rather than an expression of her feelings of total helplessness. Grace felt that Kevin never took into consideration how much self-control was needed not to throw the glass at Kevin, as she really wanted to hurt him.

Kevin's lack of empathy for the state Grace was in was disconcerting. His calmness was cruel in a way, in that he did not acknowledge her distress but treated her like a child in making her clean up before he would finish the dishes. There was no remorse that he had pushed her to such an extent that the generally

compliant Grace had become so outraged. His patronising calmness was the same as Beth' partner's calmness after the coffee throwing incident, in that both men could afford to be calm because they were in full control of the situation. This sense of staying calm and superior was typical of these men, as dominant men became angry, and passive controllers would become resistant and get into power struggles with women. These two men did not need to struggle for power in the relationship, as they seemed to feel totally in control.

The final insult was that Kevin had treated Grace like a child again when she had started to cry in frustration. He may have been speaking in a nice, gentle tone of voice when he said, "Silly girl, you have to be responsible, that means able to respond", but his words increased her sense of incompetence. His behaviour appeared to have come from a place of caring but not from feeling accountable, and this resulted in Grace feeling belittled, which is emotionally abusive, a finding that has been supported in many studies of emotional abuse (Chang, 1995; Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994; Loring, 1994; Marshall, 1994). Furthermore, Kevin again changed from being hurtful to being caring, as soon as he knew that he had control of the situation again. Grace and Beth had not felt relieved by their emotional outburst, and feelings of helplessness and anger were not dissipated because they were not able to put a stop to the emotional pain they were enduring. Crawford and colleagues, in a memory-work study of anger, also found that when one is unable to act, or when it is clear that anger will be ineffective and unproductive, anger builds up and is not dissipated (Crawford et al., 1990).

The inequalities in these two relationships were apparent. These men controlled by positioning themselves as the benevolent teacher who gave women advice for their own good, which is part of a pattern of emotionally abusive behaviours (Douglas, 1994). Kevin was particularly patronising in saying, "Silly girl, you have to be responsible, that means able to respond". His rationalisations of the event made Grace over-responsible for her anger and he blamed her, as heard in him saying,

I'm not responsible for your anger; you choose to respond that way. You have an anger management problem; I've seen it before. You respond like a child, all explosions and no sense (responsibility memory).

Kevin not only refused to accept any responsibility for his behaviour in getting Grace so angry, but also twisted it in order to shift the responsibility onto Grace. This sort of behaviour further emotionally undermines a woman and overburdens her with the responsibility of the relationship, and is also part of a pattern of behaviours that constitute emotional abuse (Douglas, 1994; Jones & Schechter, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993).

Although Grace did reclaim her self by expressing her outrage, her violent outburst had made her feel even more powerless, in that Kevin had reprimanded her by saying that temper tantrums were childish and by advising her to grow up. He devalued her anger by treating her as a child for expressing her anger. Beth and Grace, like Natalie and Maria, had found the strength to act in self-preservation when they were at the outer reach of endurance. However, the act did not empower them because Colin ignored Beth's violence as if she did not exist and Kevin had belittled Grace.

Despair

Beth started to despair about her situation. No matter how hard she tried to get his approval, in the end it did not come any more.

Beth: And I think that was, I don't know, it was sort of, put him in that power play, where whatever I did had no bearing on his existence. But whatever he did always affected me (love discussion).

Beth felt helpless, because she had become dependent on Colin for love and affirmation and by this stage he mostly ignored her. It seemed as if she meant nothing to him. He could, therefore, do as he liked, while she turned herself inside out to please him. Beth's desperate need for the relationship gave Colin more power over her.

Beth had become obsessed with leaving the relationship in the end because she was in so much emotional pain, but she could not emotionally distance herself from Colin, because she did not think she had the external or internal resources to leave. She saw suicide as her only way of escape.

Beth: I think I just became obsessed with getting out of my relationship with Colin, and at that point I could only see suicide as the only way, so I became obsessed with killing myself. [I could not walk out of the relationship because] I was dependent on him, and

Colin said that I couldn't be a good mother, and I wouldn't be able to afford it. Financial reasons were pretty strong, and also the fact that I was a bad mother, 'cos I'd forgotten I'd forgotten [her first daughter who died] her birthday, and that gave Colin so much leverage because, what sort of mother forgets her first child's birthday? What sort of mother does that? And so he used that for ages. That was one of the huge things why I tried to kill myself as well, was I'd forgotten [the anniversary of her child's] birthday. ... And she's been dead for 9 years, you know (responsibility discussion).

Colin kept Beth an emotional prisoner in their relationship by pointing out to her that she could not make it on her own and by increasing her emotional pain through criticising her value as a mother, which made her feel so guilty. He convinced her that she could not financially afford to leave him, and by convincing her that she was not a good mother, this also meant that Beth thought that she could not raise her daughter on her own. Colin had turned a single incident, because of a memory lapse through stress, into a global personality deficit in Beth. This is another example of the subtlety of emotional abuse, where, through a woman being made to feel inadequate and guilty, she loses the ability to access her personal resources, with severe emotional consequences. Colin was not stopping Beth from leaving, but, by convincing Beth that she needed his money and by convincing her that she was inadequate, a bad mother, and an emotional "cot case" (he used to call her a crackpot and called himself the glue that held her together, as heard in the processing session), he made her believe she could not exist without him. In order to consider establishing an independent life, she would have had to draw upon the skills and abilities that Colin was negating. She saw her situation as hopeless and could not deal with the constant emotional pain any more, and attempted suicide as her only way out of the relationship.

Research has supported the finding that emotionally abusive bonding makes women feel so trapped that they may develop suicidal ideations as the only means of exiting the relationship (Douglas, 1994; Jones & Schechter, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994); this is the ultimate form of self-blame and internalised self-annihilation (Loring, 1994).

Recovery

Neither of these women had been able to leave the relationship, and their partners had eventually left them. What made Grace recover was the knowledge that Kevin did not love her anymore. When he said he no longer loved her, Grace realised that she would not get the things she needed from him anymore, and that freed her from the need to please Kevin or to win his approval. She had not totally lost her self-esteem, as was noticed in her getting angry when she was at the outer edge of endurance. She started on the road to self-recovery by taking notice of what other people were saying to her.

Grace: Towards the end of my relationship I was able to talk to a friend about this, and I started to actually trust him more than what Kevin was saying. Because I would say to him 'I'm nasty, I'm horrible, I'm grumpy and I'm angry' and he would say, "you are supportive and loving and friendly". He would never say, "oh no, you are not angry" because that is so false you see through it. He would just constantly tell me what I was good at and I really hung on to that (process analysis).

Kevin's perception of Grace did not totally define her anymore and she was able, at this stage, to hear what other people thought of her. Even after Kevin left Grace, she still had to deal with Kevin denying her reality. When Kevin sent her yet another unwelcome e-mail after the separation, Grace responded.

Grace: And so I just sent him an e-mail back saying, "Do not contact me again". And the next day I got a phone call. He said, "I've just got your e-mail", so he obviously didn't take it very seriously. And he goes, like, "I can't believe you're saying this. Why?" And I said, "I want to have nothing to do with you, nothing". He's going, "You have to tell me why". "I don't have to do a damn thing". And eventually I said to him, "Because this is what you've done to me". He started in, "I've never done anything like that to you; I've only ever loved and supported you." "You're doing it again", and I just hung up. It was a shock to him that I was doing that. And I don't actually want to talk to him. I don't want to, because I know that if we got into this, I would say, "This is what your actions have done. This is how it hurt me. As a person, this is how you hurt who I am". And he would say, "I never did that. I never intended to hurt you. There's no logic in what you're saying". And I just don't want to do that (process analysis).

Until the bitter end Kevin denied Grace's reality. He demanded an explanation that Grace was loath to give, as she knew that Kevin would deny her reality. When pressured to give an explanation, Kevin once again denied her reality. When she hung up in his ear he was shocked into the reality that Grace definitely did not want him back. For the first time she had been proactive, in discontinuing a conversation that made her upset, and she was able to revert to her former self again.

Grace: I [had] continually tried to force myself into this mould, and at the end of our relationship it got to a point where, when he moved to [another town] and I stayed at varsity, I had so many comments like, "I did not know you were like this, I have never seen you before". And someone else said, "welcome back!" I was just happy and

laughing and bouncing around the room and not taking anything seriously. The way I dressed changed. My flatmate commented that I looked younger; I was dressing younger because Kevin did not like caps on women, and he did not like denim jackets. One of the first things I did was grab a cap and stick my hair up in it. I dressed differently. All kinds of little bits and pieces. I was more open and less down, less grumpy, less touchy. Towards the end of our relationship I got really touchy if somebody looked at me sideways. I would literally jump at anyone. And within 24 hours of him going [out of town] everyone could just say whatever they liked (process analysis).

While Grace's return to her former self went smoothly, Beth was devastated when Colin left her. However, her self-esteem had not been totally eroded either, as she was also able to get angry. One does not get angry when one does not think that abusive behaviour is justified. However, one may refrain from showing anger towards a partner when the need of that person in one's life is so great that one does not want to take the risk of showing anger in the fear of losing that person. She said, "only when we split did I want to get Colin angry, but until then I was always trying to please him" (process analysis). Beth said, "I used to say that to Colin after we'd broken up, 'But I need you'. And [her daughter] Fiona on the phone too, 'My mum needs you', like, I was just really crumpled" (process analysis). "I was a mess, I was a cot case at the end of it. It was only because I had that woman counsellor that got me through; otherwise I would have been gone [dead]" (responsibility discussion).

Beth needed the very person who had eroded her sense of self and was pleading for him to come back to her, even though he hurt her so much. Research has supported the finding that a woman may even experience traumatic bonding, a type of attachment to a partner that intensifies the loss of selfhood, when her sense of self has been eroded in the relationship (Loring, 1994). Beth did recover, with the help of a counsellor, and found that she was capable of being a good mother and was able to be financially independent, and she became a part-time tutor while studying for her Master's degree.

Summary of manipulating control and the impact this had on women

In summary, manipulating controllers, like the other men, also wanted to be in control of the relationships but they did not need to enforce or struggle for their

power, as they seemed to feel totally in control in the relationship. They undermined the women by shedding doubt on the women's perceptions by continually telling them that their perceptions, thoughts, and feelings were wrong. Their put downs were generally subtle and not cutting, as they tended to undermine women by making them feel uncertain about themselves or the relationship. They treated women as children and, no matter how hard women tried; they were never able to come up to the standards their partners had set for them. These men were less rigid about adhering to gendered roles, as these men contributed to household tasks, but they took every opportunity to stay in control and to get things their way, and they would use whatever means necessary to achieve that goal. This meant that they varied their behaviour to achieve that goal, and they would often be caring and attentive if that was what would give them what they wanted. At other times they would become hurtful to make a woman feel bad, if that would achieve their goal. This ability to switch tactics between caring and hurtful behaviour to achieve control confused women and is what set these relationships apart from dominating and passive controlled relationships.

The impact this had on these women was that their self-esteem was almost totally destroyed, to the point where they felt themselves lucky to have a person in their lives who was still prepared to stay with them. They strove and strove to become the person their partners wanted them to be. In this striving they lost their self-identity to a large extent, as they gave up what they valued, what they needed, and what they believed in, in order to become acceptable to their partner, in the hope that he would then remain with them. It also meant that one woman finally attempted suicide as a means of escape from the relationship. She could not cope with the continual emotional pain any longer and thought that she was not able to survive without her partner. This type of emotionally abusive behaviour was shown to destroy self-esteem to a greater extent than the types of abuse that happened in the other two groups, because the subtle and confusing aspects of this type of emotional abuse caused women to find fault with themselves. I will now summarise the main findings of this study.

Summary of all data

Most men did not seem to set out deliberately to hurt women but set out to have their own way, and that is what hurt women as their needs were seldom met. The partners of these women did whatever was needed to achieve this goal without regard for the impact this had on women.

In the process session I summed up the session by saying that it was the women's strengths that all the men over the three groups had often reacted against.

It was our strength or power that was often reacted against by our partners. Kate, with your social skills and your exuberance, Grace, your superior cognition and emotional intelligence, Bridget wanted to be a career person and that was not what he had intended for his wife, Beth was kept dependent even though she was succeeding so well in academic work, Lee for your exuberance and independence which was not appreciated, Maria, overburdened with responsibility and kept dependent. I really felt that we were not allowed to have our strength or our power. It was always reacted against. Is that something that rings a bell?
 (others, yes, yes!) Kate: Very strongly,

The women agreed with my analysis that men reacted against women's strengths, and that this was one of the overarching behaviours with all three types of men. All the women in this study had experienced being put down if they behaved in an independent way, or if they were more competent at something than their partners, or were liked by others because of certain character traits. The partners of these seven women did not seem to want them to be strong and independent, and these men seemed to want to be superior to their partners and to be the centre of women's attention. This link between women's strengths and controlling men reacting against that strength by criticising women or putting them down was supported by a New Zealand (Douglas, 1994), as well as by an American study (Jones & Schechter, 1992). It is likely to be connected to patriarchal beliefs in Western societies that grant men superior status to women. All these men needed to feel, or thought they had the right, to be more important than women and to see themselves as better than their partners, because they seemed to think that that was the way in which the world operated. The partners of these women did not give up their plans to accommodate women, like the women did for the men. It always seemed to be a one-way process, with men asking and women giving.

All of the women had reported feeling lonely in their relationship. This is consistent with Loring's finding, that the women who were in emotionally abusive

relationships where there was no physical abuse present reported feeling lonely far more often than women in physically abusive relationships where emotional abuse co-occurred (Loring, 1994). All of the women also reported some other symptoms of depression, such as sadness, guilt, despair, and lowered self-esteem, which is also supported in other studies on emotional abuse (Chang, 1995; Chang, 1996; Douglas, 1994; Jones & Schechter, 1992; Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994), although not all women reported the same symptoms of depression, as Kirkwood (1993) had also found.

Differences were found in the way men controlled women and in the impact this had on women. Dominant men who intimidated women with their behaviour were always in control in the relationship because the women feared the men's raging tempers and submitted to their orders. These men never had empathy or consideration for their partners. They both put women down for the way in which women behaved, and the most intimidating of these two men also treated his partner contemptuously by attacking her personality. These women were resentful of the way they were treated, and only submitted to their partners because they feared their partners.

They had both become depressed and both had started to feel inadequate and worthless because they were consistently and overtly degraded and constrained. One woman used self talk to prevent her partner's abuse getting her down, and the other used to covertly resist her partner by secretly not doing chores, or taking a part time job without her partner's knowledge. Both had been able to marshal personal resources at a time when they were at the outer edge of endurance. One was able to leave the relationship and although the other had not been able to do this, she was able to attack her partner when she saw that her son was negatively affected by her partner's abusive behaviour.

In passively controlled relationship power struggles between the genders were overt, unlike the other two groups. Men who controlled in a passive way were not intimidating in their behaviour but used societal gendered prescriptions to pressure women into conforming to their wishes. While dominant men enforced compliance through intimidating behaviour, passively controlling men responded

to women's non-compliance through silent disapproval, by becoming resistant and withholding affection or help. These men implicitly criticised women for not behaving in traditional, gendered ways by silent rejection, but they did not attack women's personality like the other two groups of men did. All three men who were passive controllers had shown a distinct lack of empathy and consideration for their partners, like the dominant controllers. The resistance of these women to societal expectations is what O'Neil and Egan (1993) termed women's empowerment, because of women's effort to overcome the restriction of freedom created by patriarchal culture. These women empowered themselves by resisting these restrictions.

While with dominant men women started to experience a diminished sense of self because their partners portrayed them as totally and hopelessly inadequate, the self-esteem of passively controlled women decreased because their partners silently rejected them for non-conformance to traditional roles, and this meant that they were sometimes seen as too competent in relation to men. Not fitting the mould could actually be about being more competent than, or having superior strengths to, their partners. The partners of these women expected women to perform to a high level in the areas of traditional women's work, and frowned if women were competent in areas that were considered to be the male realm. The partners of these women may not always have felt that they had a higher status in the relationship than the women; the social power that traditionally they may have expected as their right. This was because the women possessed other forms of power, such as higher education and abilities that these men did not have. These men punished women in a covert way, by being resistant and withholding favours or kindness, when women did not conform to their feminine role of helpers and supporters of men. This need to punish women for non-conformance may have been because these men felt that they ought to be superior and in control, even though they did not feel that they were. This finding was supported in research that showed that men who thought they ought to be more masculine and in control than they were expressed their control in a more covert form in order to maintain control (Weisbuch et al., 1999).

Women's attempts at empowering themselves and men's emotional abuse of their partners seemed to be directly related. These men increased their emotional abuse of women through punishing them every time women attempted to empower themselves. These women became depressed, and for two of them their self-esteem had decreased and they had started to despair over their emotional health, because of the continuous emotional pain they were enduring when their partners emotionally rejected them for non-compliance to traditional norms. Men's resistance is a form of hidden power and, when used regularly, it constitutes emotional abuse, as was shown in the impact this type of behaviour had on these women.

The self-esteem of one woman in the passively controlled group was not affected. She was depressed because she was constrained from having agency, but she was able to see that not complying with gendered expectation did not make her a bad woman, but made her partner abusive if he covertly punished her for that. She was able to recognise and resist the prevailing ideology that sees women subordinated in relation to men. She did not want to adopt and conform to this gender ideology because it did not fit her sense of self and her self-identity. This finding was supported by Duncombe and Marsden's theory that when there is no fit between gender ideology and a woman's sense of self and identity, women may resist the prevailing ideology (Duncombe & Marsden, 1998). Awareness of the abusiveness of gendered expectations seemed to have protected this woman to a certain extent from the effects of emotional abuse.

Research on the role of emotional abuse in physically abusive relationships has found that if the target of emotional abuse believed the actor was justified in ridiculing, threatening to leave, or restricting her behaviour, low self-esteem might occur, but that not believing he is justified had fewer negative effects (Follingstad et al., 1990). However, they only found this in participants who experienced high levels of abuse and not in participants who experienced low levels of abuse. This seems to indicate that in Follingstad and colleagues' study women only became aware of the injustice of abuse when the level of abuse was high. My finding showed that a woman can also be aware of emotional abuse, and be protected from the impact to a certain extent, when the level of abuse is low

and subtle. The important finding is that a woman's awareness of unequal gendered practices can protect her from abuse to a certain extent. The difference between Follingstad and colleagues' findings and mine was that, in their study, abuse needed to be at a high level for consciousness to occur, while my finding showed that a politically aware woman picked up on the unfairness of subtle abuse, which protected her from its negative effects to a certain extent.

Men who controlled women by manipulation were generally kind and caring, and only became hurtful if they did not get their way. They never intimidated their partners nor used traditional gendered roles to pressure women into conforming. These men were not immersed in traditional beliefs about gendered work roles but just wanted to get their own way. These men set themselves apart by always staying calm and in control; as dominant men became angry, and men who passively controlled would withdraw and become resistant in order to pressure women into submitting to them. The two manipulating men did not need to struggle for power in the relationship, as their calm and patronising behaviour indicated that they seemed to feel totally in control. They seemed to feel superior to their partners and tended to treat women as children. Their put downs were generally subtle and not cutting, as they tended to undermine women by making them feel uncertain about themselves or the relationship, often in a patronisingly helpful way to try to 'improve' women. Such men shaped women's behaviour to get what they wanted, and they switched tactics to achieve that goal, with the consequence that women became confused, because they could not make sense of sudden changes of behaviour. This study found that men who portrayed themselves as nice and caring but who still wanted to get their own way mainly used this sort of behaviour. Dominant and passive controllers were much less likely to use this sort of behaviour, as they had other ways by which to control women.

The women who were manipulatively controlled saw their partners as benevolent benefactors because these men were frequently so nice to them, and they thought that when their partners were critical they were just trying to make better people out of them. These women came to think that they were not 'good enough', as they never came up to their partners' standards. They would then strive to be

better women, in the hope of winning approval, which in the end seldom came. They became confused, because they could not understand why a 'nice' man could also be so hurtful.

These two women were the only ones whose self-esteem was almost totally destroyed, and their identity was also severely diminished. When these women started to believe that they were bad, because their partners always portrayed them as not quite good enough and in need of improvement, they also started to believe that no one else could love them. They clung to these relationships because they thought that no one else would want them. They were manipulated into giving up their wishes, their beliefs, their values, and their feelings - all the important aspects that created their identity – and they did so in an effort to hold onto the relationship. It was the close emotional connection these women had with their partners, together with their partners' continuous low-level subtle criticism of them, that had confused the women to the point that they had started to take responsibility for the way they were feeling, instead of recognising the abusiveness of their partners' behaviour. This study found that self-esteem had to be almost totally destroyed before women behaved, without being forced to do so through fear, in ways that diminished their identity; they gave up their own needs, feelings and wishes in order to become acceptable to their partners. In emotionally abusive relationships identity tends to get destroyed through a partner's confusion-producing behaviour, which weakens a woman's sense of self so that she ends up submitting her will to her partner. This is in contrast to battering relationships where a woman's identity gets destroyed because she is prevented from behaving in ways that identify her as an individual.

These two women had not been totally passive, in that both of them had become angry with their partners when they were at the outer reach of endurance, but they had not been able to access enough resources to extricate themselves from a relationship that was emotionally destroying them. One had attempted suicide as a way of exiting the relationship and her partner left her shortly after that. The other woman found her emotional strength after her partner had left her. The realisation that she did not need to deny herself any more in order to be accepted by him, as he did not love her anymore, gave her the freedom to become herself

again. It also gave her enough insight in the relationship to be able to be strong enough to resist his attempts to get back into her life again. It shows how strongly women can be affected by a loving connection, to the point that the presence or the absence of love in the relationship can make the difference between women accepting or rejecting the abuse of a partner.

This study showed that men and women seem to be equally capable of rage, and women may hit men, but in this study men and women became enraged for different reasons and their rage had a different impact on the other gender. The women in this study became enraged when the emotional pain of not being considered or valued grew to be unbearable for them. Some became violent in an attempt to redress the power imbalance, while their partners became enraged when women did not behave or feel, as men wanted them to. This finding, that men and women are both capable of aggression, has been widely acknowledged. However, men became angry and aggressive when women did not submit to their will, while women became angry and aggressive as a reaction to abuse, a finding that has been supported in other studies (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997; Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994; Pence & Paymar, 1993). It may be, therefore, that when women are emotionally abusive, they are so as a reaction to abuse. Moreover, none of the partners of the women had been afraid of the women's violence and the men had either ignored the violence or had made fun of it, but the women were already afraid of their partners when these men became enraged because of the possibility of being physically hurt by them. The imbalance in physical power between the genders may, therefore, also need to be considered in terms of what is considered emotionally abusive. Equivalent behaviour does not convey similar meanings when cultural contexts are understood and appropriately considered (Reid, 1993).

My findings also showed that the only women who started to believe that it was their own fault that they felt lonely and isolated in the relationship were the women who had partners who, as well as being emotionally abusive, could also be very kind and caring at times. They had become confused about the men's inexplicable changes in behaviour towards them, and they tended to internalise the reasons for why they were feeling so bad, as other researchers have found

(Douglas, 1994; Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994; Marshall, 1996). This was in contrast to the women who started to connect their emotional state with their partners' abusive behaviour.

An interesting finding was that only one woman had a degree before they separated and all the other women, except for Lee who has no degree, received their degrees after separation. This made me curious as to why most of these women attended university after they separated. The stories showed that one woman who was controlled in a dominant way was forbidden to further her education because her duty was to be with the children, while the partner of one woman who was controlled in a passive way told her that educating herself was incongruent with her responsibility towards the children. The two youngest women did attend university but their manipulating partners had frustrated their attempts at succeeding.

In terms of understanding these findings, I turned to a study on gender role perceptions of women in abusive relationships. That study found that all their female participants wished they were achieving more in life than they were, and the authors stated that the higher ratings of achieving as an ideal rather than as a characteristic of the self suggested that the women felt stifled in the relationship (Ellington & Marshall, 1997). This may have been why many women in this study pursued an education post separation. Bridget and Maria had stated that they felt bored at home while Natalie had described herself as a mental cabbage. This seems to indicate that these women may have furthered their education post separation because they had not been intellectually stimulated in their roles as wives and mothers, while also being constrained from intellectually stimulating themselves through education or reading for pleasure. Traditional gendered roles in marriage may mean that some women are not allowed to develop themselves when they want to, and they may then grow bored and frustrated. University studies may have given them the intellectual stimulation they were craving for.

All the women had married tradesmen or men in the police or armed services. None of these men had university degrees. A lack of higher education may be a reason why the older men did not want their partners to further educate

themselves, and why the younger men frustrated their partners' academic achievements, as success would make women more educated than their partners. A lack of higher education may also have been a reason why many of these men rigidly held onto gendered roles, as better educated couples in New Zealand generally tried to redefine and expand their family and career roles in the second half of the 20th century (May, 1992). Another New Zealand study in the 1980s, the time that most of the older participants were still in relationship, reported that 74% of fathers helped a great deal with childcare, while 48% of mothers were in paid employment (Ritchie, 2001). The same source also found that 57% of men in the 1970s and 76% in the 1990s shared decisions about money equally with a partner. This clearly shows that gender role patterns in New Zealand are in the process of changing. It also shows that the partners of all but the two youngest women were conservative, in failing to follow new trends of relating in marriage.

The manipulating partners of the two youngest women did not seem to hold onto beliefs in gendered tasks, and this could have been due to a difference in age and changes in gender roles in New Zealand, as shown in Ritchie's study. However, these men still seemed to be traditional in that they seemed to want to be superior, in control, and to have their way, which are traditional masculine characteristics. The underlying belief system did not seem to be very much different for these men, judged from their behaviour, but they may have thought that they would not achieve their goal to be in control if they had used gendered prescriptions as a means, because their partners were young, well-educated and unlikely to have accepted traditional gendered expectations.

The women in this study were between the ages of 25 and 60, with four of the seven women between 46 and 51 years. This is important to keep in mind, because social attitudes and social pressures do change, although slowly. There are now different social expectations of the roles women occupy, with more women being educated and holding paid employment (May, 1992; Ritchie, 1999). This certainly was reflected in the difference in belief systems between the older women and the youngest of the group, with the older ones having been more constrained by gendered roles in certain areas; this applied in particular to the oldest woman in the group.

Grace and Beth, the women who were manipulatively controlled, were university students and the youngest of the group, both still in their twenties. Their partners did not overtly constrain them by demanding or expecting them to behave according to gendered norms. However, through subtle undermining behaviour and manipulation they managed always to get their way in the relationship and reduced these women to subservient roles of carers and helpers.

Bridget, Natalie, Kate, and Lee had walked out of their long-term marriages, while the partners of Beth, Grace, and Maria had left them. This was important, in that the women who had walked out had become aware that their relationships were destroying them and had been able to marshal their personal resources in order to leave. Beth had also wanted to get out of her relationship but had not been able to do so, because she had lost her confidence to such an extent that she did not think she was capable of surviving on her own. She had tried to suicide as a means of escaping her relationship. Grace, who was manipulatively controlled, and Maria, who was dominantly controlled, had also lost their confidence to a great extent and were also not able to leave their relationships, even though it had become clear to them that their relationships were damaging their emotional health. The reason these three women were unable to leave seems to have been that their partners behaved in ways that created instability, to the point where these women started to distrust that they could ever do anything right, including making decisions. It had rendered them helpless and unable to function outside of the relationship. These are some of the social factors that affected the impact of emotional abuse.

The women in this study experienced gender role restrictions, devaluations, and violations of equal rights, and they are abuses of power. This study, therefore, showed a direct relationship between gender role socialisation, power conflicts, and abuse, a link that was also noted by other researchers (Chang, 1996; O'Neil & Egan, 1993; Pence & Paymar, 1993). I will now turn to the conclusion of this thesis.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore issues around emotional abuse in heterosexual relationships where there is no physical abuse. A second aim was to find out what impact this had on women. Furthermore, my aim was to arrive at a working definition of this type of emotional abuse. I was also interested in the way gendered role prescriptions are implicated in women's perceptions of emotional abuse. All these aims were achieved. I also had some serendipitous findings, including identifying some sort of pattern in specific clusters of men's behaviour, and outcomes that were unique to these specific clusters of behaviour. The different patterns of behaviour had in common that they all seemed to be related to men's beliefs in male supremacy over women, which gave them the perceived right to be controlling in the relationship. This was an exploratory qualitative study with only seven women, and the results can, therefore, not be generalised.

Summary of findings

In summary, the misuse of unequal power in these heterosexual couple relationships led to all seven women becoming lonely and depressed, and resulted in lowered self-esteem for six out of seven women and diminished identity for two out of seven women. The only woman whose self-esteem was not negatively affected was the woman who was aware of unequal gendered practices, and this seemed to have protected her to a certain extent from the severity of impact of emotionally abusive behaviour. The degree to which a woman's self-esteem was diminished by her partner's behaviour seemed to be related to how covert and ambiguous his controlling behaviour was, in that findings showed that the self-esteem of women who were partnered with men who behaved in covertly controlling and ambiguous ways had diminished the most over the three groups. Diminished identity seemed to be connected to women voluntarily giving up their needs, feelings, and beliefs, the very things that identified them as individuals,

when their self-esteem had deteriorated to such an extent that they needed a partner's approval to feel good about themselves. They, therefore, surrendered those things that made up their identity in the hope of becoming acceptable to their partner.

The main differences that set the three groups apart in terms of impact of emotional abuse on the women was that dominant men produced fear in women which made women submissive, while the manipulating men made women feel so inadequate about themselves that women started to behave submissively in order to hold on to their only perceived source of love and affirmation, having come to believe that no-one else could love them. Women's submissive behaviour was the result of either partner's intimidation or manipulation of them, and three of the four women affected in this way had been unable to leave a relationship that had clearly been destroying their mental health. A woman's increasingly submissive and adaptive position to accommodate her partner, whether this was the result of fear or of being made to feel inadequate, resulted in a gradual loss of the woman's self as separate and unique.

An undercurrent of power struggles was noted in relationships where men controlled women in passive ways. The women resisted being put in the subordinate position in the relationship, and the men did not allow them to be equal, and power struggles between the genders are what set this group apart. If these women did not live up to what was traditionally expected of women, their partners punished them by becoming resistant, by withdrawing from women and by neglecting them. This made two of the three women feel so bad that in time they started to despair about their sanity because they felt so lonely and isolated in the relationship. However, all three women in this group had been able to extricate themselves from the relationship once they realised how emotionally destructive it was.

There are degrees of impact of emotional abuse, and the number of ways in which abuse has impacted, as well as the degree of each specific impact, seems to contribute to the overall level of impact. My findings showed that, although the two women who had been overtly abused had recognised their partners' behaviour

as abusive, five out of the seven women in this study had initially not recognised their partner's behaviour as abusive. It had nevertheless caused them to feel lonely and depressed. The women whose partners were dominant controllers had realised that they were unfairly treated by their partners and had been resentful and felt angry at an earlier stage in the relationship. The reason many women had not realised that their partners' behaviour was abusive was that either they believed that gendered practices were the norm, even though they felt hurt by them, or the abuse was done in a covert and indirect way so that women did not recognise the behaviour as abusive and internalised their own negative feelings. Most of the women did not seem to recognise the contradiction between their traditional gendered practices and their striving for non-traditional gender traits, as women in Oliver's study had done (Oliver, 1993). The women only knew that they felt extremely pressured and stressed, although they did not recognise that these were consequences of gendered practices that put women in a subordinate position of care and responsibility, with no reciprocal care or emotional support. This emotionally depleted all of the women over time and manifested itself in depressive symptoms, such as feelings of loneliness, confusion, and despair, which turned for most into a reduction in self-esteem. Some effects of emotional abuse differed, in terms of kind and degree, depending on men's behaviour and women's social awareness and their internal and external resources. There may be a relationship between women becoming submissive in an emotionally abusive relationship, either through a partner's intimidation or manipulation of them, and their inability to leave a relationship that had clearly been destroying their mental health. Three of the four women who had become submissive were unable to leave, while all three of the women who challenged male privilege had, in time, been able to break away from the abusive relationship.

I believe that the qualitative aspect of this study contributed to my being able to distinguish different ways of control that led to some different impacts. The qualitative approach made it possible to identify certain taken-for-granted behaviours of men and women that negatively impacted on women. The qualitative approach also made it possible to distinguish between different styles of abuse and to determine the meaning given by women to abusive acts. Now that specific differences in styles of abuse have been shown to exist and have been

shown to impact in different ways on women, it may be possible to quantify these differences in future to see if these differences will hold when measured in large samples.

This research may have extended the knowledge of emotional abuse by showing that when gendered behaviour is seen as natural and, therefore, unchangeable, as opposed to social practices that produce certain behaviour, this can obscure the emotional abusiveness of gendered practices. Many women felt hurt but thought that their position was normal for women. This research also showed that men frustrated women's attempts at letting go of traditional gendered practices so that women were constrained from moving towards being equal with men.

I do not think that it is useful to blame individuals who are immersed in cultural practices and social expectations for these emotionally abusive practices. I prefer to take a feminist social constructionist position in explaining emotional abuse in heterosexual couple relationships and support Goldner and colleagues' (1997) explanation of abuse. They stated that the patriarchal structure of power and privilege in society positions men to experience humiliation when gender divisions blur, while it positions women for punishment if they claim what are considered male prerogatives (Goldner et al., 1997). Having taken this position I was also able to make space for Willott's (1999) suggestion that it may not only be gender, but also class, education, competencies and age that situate men and women in multiple different positions regarding power. This positioning made it possible to explain why some men did not overtly use their power, and chose to control women through being resistant, rather than dominant. These men seemed to experience humiliation when women had power in the form of superior competencies or education to their own, as they used passive means of punishing women for having power, which they may have considered a male prerogative. This may have been because in patriarchal structures power and prestige have been connected to the male gender. I will now assess the method I used for gathering and analysing the data.

Reviewing the method of memory-work

The following section will assess memory-work as a method for anyone who is interested in using a similar methodology. The strengths and weaknesses of memory-work became apparent in my study. It has proved a useful tool in terms of bringing to light gendered practices that the women themselves were not aware of.

Wearing different hats as a researcher in a memory-work group

At times there was tension between the individual research aims of conducting doctoral research and memory-work's ethic of equal participation of the group members. Other researchers who used memory-work as a method for their doctoral theses have also noted this conflict of interests (Hamerton, 2000; Koutroulis, 1993). A researcher's concern to gather information that would meet her particular research aims creates conflict with the feminist principle of honouring a collective decision-making process in the research group. This meant that, at times, I would facilitate, as well as participate in, the collective, with tension between the two roles. If participants meandered off the task, or used the sessions as a means to air frustrated feelings, I had to negotiate between directing people to the purpose of the meeting and respecting participants' needs to air their feelings. Although the process was collaborative, in that as a group we analysed the memories, most of that was lost when I chose to separate the results into three different groups to emphasise difference in men's behaviour that contributed to different outcomes. By doing this I clearly gave more weight to my role as researcher than as participant. Furthermore, I had the ultimate control as to what was used and what was discarded from the words said, and that alone makes doing PhD research an unequal situation, a point acknowledged by another researcher (Koutroulis, 1993).

Although the way in which PhD research makes use of memory-work is different from the collective process described by earlier memory-work groups (Crawford et al., 1992; Haug, 1987), I encountered no resistance from the group in solely writing up the collective theorising of the group. Group members were happy to engage in discussion but had no inclination to be involved in systematically

collating or writing up the information. In fact, one member of the group said that she did not envy me the task of making further sense of the data.

Bridget: From an academic point of view, researcher, I'm thinking, shit I'm glad you're doing this and not me. (Laughter) (Process analysis)

Her comment arose out of the group trying to make sense of what had been happening to us in our relationships, as it had been a bewildering, although exhilarating, experience to find that the social practices that had made us subordinate in our relationships had been responsible for the way we felt, and that we had not been personally responsible for the negative way in which socialised practices had emotionally affected us. Participants were all given the transcripts and I invited them back for another meeting at a later date to share the way I had analysed our discussions, but few suggestions for alteration ensued. Maria corrected me on my finding that emotional abuse is continuous, which is also supported in all other research on emotional abuse, in contrast with physical abuse that is generally cyclical (Chang, 1996; Douglas & McGregor, 2000). She commented that her husband's abuse had been only cyclical. Yet, the data showed that she was abused on a daily basis in consistently being subordinated and constrained, and that his frequent criticism and control of her increased when he left the Navy and was home every day. I think that the difference in opinion was around differing definitions of emotional abuse. I also think that she may not have been aware of the extent of his abuse, as she had stated in the memory-work sessions that she was only just becoming aware through the research process of the many ways in which he had abused her.

Memory-work may have been a collective process, but my thesis was not a collective enterprise, and I relinquished my position as co-researcher for the position as sole researcher by taking exclusive responsibility for the choice of material, for carrying out the second level of analysis, for linking the material to other studies, and for this thesis.

Guidelines in memory-work

Memory-work involved preparing written memories according to a set of guidelines, as discussed in chapter three. Several issues were important in collecting data with the tool of memory-work.

Stage one: use of the third person

Each participant received written instructions that included writing the memory in the third person. Most of the participants mainly used the third person “she”, although Lee mostly wrote in the first person. Elevated emotional arousal seemed to increase the use of first person, as rules seemed to be forgotten when participants were emotionally aroused. The use of the third person was meant to encourage “necessary distancing” (Haug, 1987) that would enable one to take a “bird’s eye view” (Crawford et al., 1992) of the memory. These researchers believed that keeping distance from the memory would allow more objectivity when examining the socialisation processes that the memories were meant to uncover. Although participants may, at times, have lapsed into the first person when writing memories, by the time the memories were analysed the group members were well able to distance themselves from the memories.

The participants found that writing in the third person worked well in terms of uncovering socialised practices the women had not thought about previously. They found that the process revealed why they and their partners had behaved in certain ways; they had been socialised to behave in those ways. In writing their memories, the women had, at times, included interpretation, something that the guidelines had asked us to refrain from. However, from the women’s point of view, it actually added to the subjective experience to include their thoughts and feelings in their writing, in that it became more powerful for them. The memories of “responsibility” come to mind here, where the self-interpretations of responsibility by certain members had added to the discussion, as other women would challenge those interpretations by exposing socialised roles. The group then analysed socialised practices that make women more responsible and men less responsible in many ways. The participants’ interpretations created a picture that informed common everyday understandings.

What is remembered is remembered because it is significant and problematic

Crawford and colleagues have stated that whatever is problematic and significant is remembered (1992). Memories reflect the self in dialogue, and the “I” remembers what happens to “me” and the “she” reflects on what happens to “her” (Stephenson et al., 1996). The way one portrays oneself in the memory discloses one’s socialised beliefs that inform one’s behaviour. Clichés block a person’s understanding, by assuming a consensus about whatever the cliché portrays. The task of memory-work is to uncover those hidden meanings. Accuracy of memories is generally not deemed relevant (Koutroulis, 1993), as in memory-work it is the meanings given to actions that need to be uncovered. In the way that I have finally presented the findings, based on men’s reported behaviour, I have deviated from memory-work, as I assumed that the memories were accurate. Analysis includes exploring the social meanings attached to words (Koutroulis, 1993). For example, what does it mean to be a wife or a mother? What are wives or mothers expected to do? Social meanings of the words wife and mother equate with being caring, supportive, nurturing, and self-less in putting themselves last at the expense of their own needs.

The participants remembered what had been particularly problematic, in contrast to something that was significant but not problematic in their relationships; this may have been because of the focus on abusive behaviour in this study. If a memory had been particularly hurtful to them and they had not yet integrated the experience, the memory reappeared in several sessions with different triggers or cues. Two of the participants had a memory of an event that resurfaced, if not in several memories, then at least in several discussions arising out of different memory cues. Grace had been devastated when Kevin told her at an intimate moment in bed that he did not love her, had never loved her, and thought he never could, but he did not want to leave her. That memory had resurfaced in at least three different sessions. Maria had repeatedly called attention to the fact that Paul had dictated how and when she had to do the housework.

Choosing triggers or cues

Haug (1987) and Crawford and colleagues (1992) stressed how important it is to choose appropriate triggers, in that certain cues could elicit rehearsed responses that would produce prejudiced memories, as happens when a feeling cue, such as anger or happiness, is used. When one uses a feeling cue, the review of the memory is biased by how one felt in that memory, while other types of cues that were not based on feelings were more likely to uncover socialised and taken-for-granted behaviour. For this reason, we stayed away from feeling words as triggers to memories. It was also important to use neutral cues instead of negative cues (Crawford et al., 1992); for example, one would use “support” rather than “lack of support”. That way the cue could relate to you or your partner, thereby widening the possibilities of memories. In our group the triggers generally came up in the negative, such as lack of support or responsibility of care, as a large aspect of emotional abuse is experienced in men’s failure to do certain things, such as failing to be fair, to take responsibility, to support, or to show care.

An interesting cue was the cue of love, as the women found that the way in which a partner showed his love was often as hurtful as if he had not shown love at all. Expecting a woman to behave in a certain way, which meant that she had to forgo her own wishes in order to please him because he said he loved her, was as hurtful as when a man did not say that he loved her. The cue uncovered all sorts of socialised practices and gendered expectations of women in love relationships that had left women feeling lonely, constrained, burdened, suffocated, or exhausted by the way in which they were expected to show love and by the ways in which men showed or failed to show their love.

The memories that came up repeatedly in discussion were the ones that had actually been previously rehearsed, in that women had thought about the issue a great deal but had not yet integrated the experience. Integration means that people are able to make sense of their experiences, which enables them to let go. I noted that little new material had come up for them in recounting those memories, and that those memories seemed to have mainly been a vehicle for airing hurt feelings.

For example, Grace had repeatedly told us about how her partner told her that he did not love her, never had and never could, but that he did not want to leave her. She had been severely traumatised by that statement, as it had confirmed her sense at the time that she was unlovable; she had not been able to make sense of him not wanting to leave the relationship but just wanting to tell her how he felt. It would have been less confusing for Grace if Kevin had made arrangements to leave the relationship when he said he did not love her anymore. His abusiveness, in making this statement while not planning to leave, was something that she only started to understand in the research sessions. The two youngest women seemed to have gained the most out of the research sessions because their partners' abusive behaviour had mainly not been acknowledged or understood up to this time.

Another possible reason why different triggers produced the same memories in some group members may have been that all the cues that had been used interrelated and interacted in terms of relationship dynamics. More than one cue may, therefore, evoke the same memory.

Stage two: exploring commonalities and differences

In stage two the written memories are analysed by the whole group. The collective analysis is a time of questioning; the different stories are compared by looking for similarities and differences. The women spent a great deal of time expressing opinions and ideas about each memory and putting their common experiences in a wider context. If, for example, they found that they had all felt lonely and isolated in their relationship, they looked at what loneliness and isolation represented for them. They looked at what it was in their partner's behaviour that had caused them to end up feeling lonely and isolated. They were able to trace them back to masculine prescriptions of 'men needing to be right' so that women's voices were silenced or discounted, and 'men only being allowed to show emotions that showed their power' to be seen as masculine, which precluded feelings that made them close to their partners. Furthermore, the belief that 'men are superior to women' meant that men seemed to feel it as their right to behave in selfish ways. Feelings of loneliness and isolation came from not feeling valued

and understood by their partners when the men behaved in those traditional masculine ways.

The participants' written memories had revealed the compromises they had made and the constraints they had lived under. They were also, at times, able to see that men behaved in a certain way because they had been socialised as men to behave in that way, and this avoided personal blame, even though women had felt hurt. Sometimes the women saw differences in personal experiences but realised that the differences had the same underlying theme, such as Maria not being allowed to work and Beth having to work. The group realised that, although their experiences were different, the underlying unifying theme was that men made the rules and women were expected to live by these rules. This was even apparent in the third group where the men did not believe in gendered family tasks, but engaged in stereotypical gendered behaviour that allowed them to feel they had the right to override women's ideas and values.

At times, if the group's interpretation of a certain memory were different from the person who wrote it, the group would start asking particular questions to help the person understand why she had come to that conclusion. The group did not query the accuracy of the memory and assumed that the memories were a correct representation of the actual event. On the other hand, they acknowledged that the memories had been constructed, and that in the process of remembering they had attributed meaning to events that had made certain actions significant. Grace and Beth had both come to understand their situations through the deconstructive questioning processes of the group. Grace had believed that Kevin had done so much for her and that she, therefore, had to give up some important parts of herself, such as giving up her pride, her anger and personal time. Through the continuing reappraisal and reconstructing of the memories, she finally said, "I don't know now what he did for me". She realised that he had always told her that he did so much for her and that she had to reciprocate, but she now saw that, in reality, it had been she who had been the continual giver. Beth had gone through a similar process whereby, through the group questioning her, she had come to a new understanding of how her partner controlled her by facial cues as to how to behave. This deconstruction work had been a powerful experience for

them, as they realised that they had been blind to their partners confusing but destructive practices.

Clichés

Exploring the clichés was also a part of the analysis. Clichés support myths and cultural imperatives of how men and women ought to behave. The group had discussed issues such as why partners tell women that they cannot go to university, or cannot resume a career, and how they reasoned that pursuing personal goals would interfere with women's role as wife and mother. It was only in the unpacking of such clichés that it became apparent how women had been controlled, as the women realised that these clichés were advantageous to men and disadvantaged women. The use of clichés in memories should, therefore, be challenged, as they block our understanding by assuming a consensus of beliefs (Koutroulis, 1993). The women had explored many clichés, such as women are responsible for the care of the family, and men are unemotional, that had become apparent within the written accounts when they discussed their memories.

Exploring clichés had revealed how societal expectations had restricted both genders in their repertoire of behaviours. The main restrictions that surfaced were that women were not supposed to be autonomous and men were not supposed to express feelings, except anger. Exploring clichés also revealed gendered responsibilities, with women having to be responsible for most things in the family and men being held responsible for very little. When men used clichés about what 'good' women do, it gave the women messages of what roles each gender had to fulfil, as well as what behaviour characteristics were approved of or frowned upon. I had initially presented the findings under headings that were clichés, such as the ones mentioned above. However, when it became apparent that the manner in which men controlled women produced some unique differences in impact, I chose to present the findings in their present form, which deviates from memory-work in that the group findings were lost. In summary, while the use of clichés block a person's understanding by assuming a consensus about whatever the cliché portrays, the exploration of clichés reveals how social practices are not 'natural' but learned.

Stage three: the secondary analysis

This was the last stage of the process, where the analysis of the information gathered from phases one and two was compared with a range of theories in the literature. The process of writing up the data necessarily involves further thinking and analysis of that which has already been debated and analysed in the group, and becomes the third level of analysis (Koutroulis, 1993). This stage is additional to the first level of analysis that analyses the individual memories and the second level that collectively analyses the memories, looking for differences and similarities in the accounts, which was done as a group.

I found this last stage exceedingly difficult and I have analysed and re-analysed the data from differing perspectives. Every time my limited understanding of the hazy topic brought me to a halt in my analysis. I had to search for different literature to try to make sense of the data. My searches led me to gender and socialisation literature, marriage and relationship literature, marriage and career literature, and literature on power in heterosexual relationships. This helped me to obtain a clearer picture of how socialised behaviours are often taken for granted and, therefore, invisible, and how socialised behaviours almost always disadvantage women.

Assessment of memory-work

Although memory-work is an excellent method for uncovering socialised practices, it also has its limitations. It only worked well in my group with the participants who could follow rules, and who were able to deconstruct individual experiences and to generalise them to social practices. They needed to be able to look for clichés and for commonalities in the stories, and explain these in terms of men and women's socialisation processes. The one woman who had not been educated beyond fourth form was the woman who had generally not followed all the rules. This was especially sad because this woman had endured 28 years of sustained overt degrading abuse. I could not always use her memories because she had often written in the general and abstract rather than writing about a specific event in concrete terms. If memories are written in an abstract way, so that no individual behaviour is described and no individual voice is heard, one

only hears an interpretation of general behaviour and not of specific behaviour in the context of a specific event. I presume that limited education might have had a bearing on this woman's failure to follow the rules. However, I cannot really make such an assumption, based on one participant.

Another limitation of the method, from the point of view of sole researcher analysing data is, that I had questions at times that I would have liked to have answered by certain group members, but that the group had not discussed. Interviewing gives more scope for satisfying a researcher's curiosity about particular experiences, but would not have discovered socialised practices to the extent that memory-work has. Every method has its strengths and weaknesses.

I also believe that it was necessary for participants to have distanced themselves from their experiences, as the emotional arousal of experiences that had not yet been integrated tended to stand in the way of objectively writing the experiences in the third person, and of following other memory-work rules. I had already had as my criteria that participants needed to have been out of their relationships for at least one year, and to have received counselling or another consciousness-raising experience. This had largely prevented participants from being aroused to the point where it affected their ability to follow the rules. Kirkwood had also set the same criteria for similar reasons (Kirkwood, 1993), although she used interviews instead of memory-work.

Participants' benefits from the research process

For research to be feminist it must, in some way, contribute to women's empowerment. This may take the form of a contribution to knowledge about the ways in which women are controlled in a male-dominated culture, the ways in which women experience such control, the ways that they cope with it, or simply the nature of women's experiences in cultures that place primary importance on the needs and experiences of men (Kirkwood, 1993). I believe that this study has made a contribution to knowledge about the ways in which women are controlled in a male-dominated society and the ways in which they experience such control.

Feminist research must also benefit participants so that a researcher gives to, as well as takes from, participants.

Clearly, the participants have given me a great deal in allowing me a glimpse of their private and intimate lives. It was important to me that the research would also enrich their lives in some way. The research was not designed to be therapeutic, but the research process was, in fact, therapeutic. I think that it was very important for the participants to finally be able to tell their stories, to have their stories heard and validated, and to realise that they had not been alone in their experiences. Moreover, the research has also given them an awareness that they had not always been passive in the face of abuse but had resisted, if only secretly at times. It allowed them to see themselves no longer as a victim, but as a person who had not had the resources to openly resist, and who had therefore resisted in a way that had kept them safe.

Another new awareness for some women was that some men had used feeling words at times, such as 'love', in order to get what they wanted, rather than to express what they felt, and the participants' view of intimacy took on a new perspective through this analysis. A man saying that he loved a woman, because it made her behave in a certain way that was advantageous to him when he said that, but not being concerned about her emotional state or her needs, was one example of how feeling words were used to serve a man's ends. For some, the research group became the start to making sense of the confusing thoughts and feelings they had experienced. The realisation that men's seemingly kind and supportive behaviour had actually been very destructive to them had surprised the younger women, as well as giving them relief in knowing that there had been a reason for their confusion and feelings of inadequacy. It was a powerful experience for them. Several of the older women had been comforted by the realisation that socialised practices of women's subordination in a marriage had been a common experience to them all. It had changed their feelings of isolation in their negative experiences, and they were able to stop internalising the causes for these negative feelings by realising that it had not been a personal problem but a social problem.

Women's increased awareness of how men's behaviour had negatively affected them was an important part of honouring the feminist principle that research should not only take, but also give, to participants, empowering women in the research process (Crawford et al., 1992). When women talked about the painful experiences, they were able to convert the tragedies into comedies by laughing about what had happened. Every time someone mentioned a subtle process of abuse they had not recognised while in the relationship, someone else would start laughing because that person would realise the same thing had happened to her and had never realised it. We then wondered what it meant that we could laugh about painful experiences that had brought one person to the point of suicide and had left several other participants with severe and frequent bouts of depressions.

We found that we laughed because we were so relieved not to be in that situation any more, and we laughed that we had been so naïve. Beth was in fits of laughter because Colin used to affectionately call her his little 'crackpot', and referred to himself as the glue that held the 'crackpot' together, and she thought at the time that he was so sweet to want to take that role. Now she could see that he was trying to make her dependent on him and was highly amused at how naïve she had been. She was the woman who had attempted suicide, and her amusement at his comment shows how far she had come since her separation from him. We laughed because some of us had been labelled manic-depressive and only the 'mania' had survived, in that every one had a sense of humour and could poke fun at their personal situation. Laughter was, therefore, about recognition and about relief that we had survived our experiences.

After the last research session we processed our shared experience and evaluated if we, as participants, had gained from the research process. Here are some of the comments the women made about what the group participation had given them.

Beth: The main thing I got from the group is the legitimating of my story [I can remember thinking] "Well its obvious everyone else has been in an emotionally abusive relationships, I just haven't". And I can remember thinking that I had a lot of trouble with my counsellor telling me that what Colin was doing was abusive. And it wasn't until I came here that those stories added some weight to that. Now I'm at the point [that I accept that I was abused]. So that was really really good, and it has really helped to make sense of it. (Beth knew that her emotional health had been adversely affected in the

relationship although she did not know how. On those grounds she became a research participant.)

Grace: I think the main thing for me has been, at a really personal level, it's affirmed a lot of my own thinking and made me feel a lot stronger about, you know, I knew that it was bad, but nobody else could see it, and I couldn't come up with any nicely rational ways of explaining what was happening. So the fact that I know women have experienced it, and by sitting here and talking about it, and having you all affirm what was going on for me. I remember the very first time we came together, and it was before we even started doing the memory work, and I talked about that Christmas where he decided he didn't want to give me a present because he didn't feel in a giving mood. I'd done something wrong, and he didn't feel like giving, so he wasn't going to give it to me. And I remember at the time, I thought that that wasn't really that bad. I thought that I was being just overly sensitive about this whole issue. And just looking, like, the look on all your faces! I thought, Oh my goodness, maybe it really was as bad as I felt it was. It was that real affirmation of my own instincts, and my own processes that I'd gone through, and I feel so much stronger because of it. I feel much firmer in my own belief about what happened, and what goes on, and that kind of thing. So that's been really important for me. It has a name now [emotional abuse], which makes it real. Instead of before where it was just this un-named horrible thing that I knew happened, but no one else could see, so that's been really important for me.

Kate: Okay, I think I can go back to that. I just think it reminded me how free I feel, and helped me get to rationalise why more quickly. But I'm not actually rationalising things, its no longer important to me.

Maria: I've rediscovered some of my personal resistance to what was actually happening, and I think that's been important in not feeling done to.

Natalie: For me the biggest thing was that, really I thought that at times I thought, perhaps I was emotionally abused, and at other times I thought, oh don't be stupid, others go through this sort of stuff, that's marriage. And again, some of you said that you were validated by what people said when you told stories. When I've said something that I didn't think was a big deal, and all of you were really reactive, sort of 'My God!' and that sort of actually validated the pain that I had at the time when things like that were happening. I had the right to have a lot of pain from those things. It's not that the pain is still there, it's too long ago and I've let it all go; but sometimes I think I minimised what was happening. This group has actually made me realise that, no it was not okay what was happening.

The main themes that came through were that most women had not recognised that they were emotionally abused while still in the relationship, and that most women had not recognised the extent of the emotional abuse when they came to the group. They just knew that they had been in a great deal of emotional pain. The research group had legitimised and affirmed their feelings of emotional pain. When I thanked the group at the last meeting as they left, Maria said that she should thank me for providing many hours of laughter therapy. Beth and Lee had been willing to travel from neighbouring towns to be part of the group, because it had helped them so much to be able to reflect on past experiences with a group of women who had been through something similar. The research had enriched

participants' lives, and in that way it had fulfilled one of the central tenets of feminist research.

Implications for future research

A limitation of this study was that the small group sample made it inappropriate to extrapolate findings to larger or to other populations. This was an exploratory study in an area that has been largely unexplored up to now. Findings have been interesting and important, but can only be put forward as tentative questions that need to be proven in order to stand up to scrutiny with larger and with differing populations. However, even in my small sample, differences had shown up between the few participants I had collected data from. Specific differences were shown to exist, in terms of how men control and how this impacts on women, and it may now be possible to quantify these differences in future if they are found in research with large or different samples.

An important question this research raised was, does the erosion of a woman's self-esteem, which generally occurs in the face of continual subordination (Douglas, 1994; Kirkwood, 1993; Loring, 1994), get moderated when a woman has not internalised the gendered role? This was the case with the only participant in my research group who did not accept the validity of gendered roles and challenged the imposition of these roles by her husband. She was passively controlled and had not internalised the critique about not behaving like a 'good' woman should. She had become depressed about being constrained, but her self-esteem had not diminished, as it had with the other six women. It seems that one can be depressed and still have high self-esteem, as there are different issues that one can be depressed about. It may be that if a woman does not internalise criticisms of non-conformance to traditional norms her self-esteem does not get eroded. That awareness of unequal and abusive practices may cushion the impact of the abuse is an important finding, because it may mean that when women are educated about the unequal power between the genders in relationships, severity of impact of the abuse may be cushioned. Moreover, educating men about the effects of unequal power in relationships on women may mean that men who value a close and intimate relationship where care and emotional connection are

present, will want to work towards eliminating the inequalities between the genders.

Another question that needs to be further investigated is if subtle and undermining behaviour of a partner always results in severe reduction of self-esteem, to the point where women voluntarily give up all those aspects of themselves that give them their identity in order to please a partner. This study found that in emotional abuse where no overt and dominating behaviour had forced women to give up some of their identity, their identity was only negatively affected after self-esteem had been almost destroyed through undermining behaviour. It may be that, when women get to a point where their self-esteem has been so severely diminished through believing their partners' messages that they are not good enough, they are then willing to give up everything that gives them their identity in the hope of becoming acceptable to their partners.

The subtle abuse that resulted in diminished identity was only found in the younger age group in this study. Does being of a tender age make one more vulnerable to manipulative control, or do younger women experience the more subtle types of abuse, as compared with women of the older generation, because changing norms and expectations of men and women in our society make it less likely that young women will submit to more overt control? I think it likely that we could see more of the insidious subtle type of abuse in future, as fewer women may accept overt control from men. This is an important issue that needs to be investigated, because it may become more important to not only educate women about the unacceptability of overt abuse, but also about the subtle ways in which some men may abuse women, so that women may recognise such practices and guard themselves against them.

To what extent do women's personality characteristics mediate the impact of emotional abuse? This study raised questions with regard to how strong the two young women's selves had been at the onset of their relationships. Age, childhood experiences, and large age differentials between partners may all affect how vulnerable a woman will be to manipulation. A strong sense of self may protect a woman, to a certain extent, from manipulating forms of emotional abuse.

On the other hand, a woman's strong sense of self seemed to exacerbate a man's passive abuse. Is there a relationship between the degree of a woman's independence and her non-conformity to traditional gendered roles, and the degree of covert emotional abuse she is subjected to from a traditional partner who does not feel that he can exercise overt control? There might be a relationship between the degrees of loneliness and isolation a woman experiences in her relationship and the frequency of her non-conformance to traditional social norms of women. Men who passively controlled seemed to treat their partners in ways that promoted women's loneliness and isolation, such as ignoring them or refusing to help them, or treating them with icy disdain whenever women did not conform to expectations of traditional gendered behaviour. Researchers need to further explore this area in order to produce a more comprehensive account of emotional abuse and its impacts.

The finding that six of the seven women pursued an academic career post separation also poses some interesting questions. Do women further their education post separation to gain financial independence because they do not want to be dependent on a man again for this, or do they further their education because they have been constrained from developing themselves in the relationship, which had left them bored and starved for intellectual stimulation? Or are there other reasons for this?

This study failed to find a reason why some women were able, and others unable, to leave a relationship that was clearly emotionally destructive to them. Three women had been unable to leave the relationship. The one thing these women did have in common was that, no matter how hard they tried to behave in a way that would not elicit a partner's criticism, they were never able to achieve that. The partners of these women criticised them incessantly; some did this overtly, while others did this in a covert and subtle way, and all these women behaved submissively. However, one woman who was also continually and overtly criticised and had also been submissive had been able to marshal her resources in the end so that she was able to leave, as did the three women who were passively controlled and who had resisted male privilege. Clearly there are some other

variables that have a bearing on why women are not able to leave relationships that are emotionally destructive to them, and some of these may be their internal or external resources, as is the case with battered women (Loring, 1994; Robertson, 1999). This is an area that needs more investigation.

Another question that I attempted to explore was to discover if men feel emotionally abused in relationships and why. I abandoned the men's research because half of the group revealed that they, as well as their partners, had been abused in childhood. The reactive behaviour that these couples displayed towards one another seemed to have little to do with wanting to have power and control over another, as they seemed to be mainly trying to protect their own vulnerable feelings or to regain the power that they had lost during childhood trauma. The other half of the men had mainly been transiently hurt but had not been negatively affected in the long term by their relationship experiences. More work needs to be done in this area to find out why men feel emotionally abused in relationships. Is it only men who have previously been abused as children and who, therefore, find it difficult to assert themselves, who feel emotionally abused in heterosexual relationships?

There is also the question of ethnicity, as my participants were Pakeha. Would there have been a difference in the findings if I my participants had been Maori or of other ethnicities, because of the different norms and expectations of men and women in their communities? If my participants had come from vastly different socio-economic and educational groups than my sample of lower middle-class women, would that have made a difference in terms of differing constraints and resources? All these questions need to be explored in order to obtain a clearer picture of how gendered behaviour contributes to women feeling emotionally abused.

Finally, my biases as a woman, and, moreover, as a woman who has experienced emotional abuse in a relationship, may have shown at times in the way I analysed the data, even though I have taken great care to try to understand men's position in relation to socialised practices. I encourage men, as well as women, to research

this area, so that we may develop a greater understanding of the consequences of unequal gender practices in heterosexual relationships.

The significance of the study has been that it has exposed the abusiveness of gendered practices, as well as showing that different abusive practices can produce different impacts on women. This research has shown that it is not only having one's role prescribed by a man that subordinates a woman, but that men who behave in traditional masculine ways also degrade women with their selfish behaviour by not valuing and considering women. The study exposed the negative consequences of certain social practices. It has also considered that education about the negative consequences of men's abuse of their power may help reduce their abusive social practices. Education about gendered power may also protect women from the impact of emotional abuse by them becoming conscious of how gendered social practices have a negative impact on their emotional health.

A country's laws of gender equality are not enough to protect women against unequal practices, as society still largely condones these inequalities, even though recent research has shown progress in the reduction of unequal practices in heterosexual committed couple relations (Ritchie, 2001). We need to consider how we can teach men that there are positive consequences to treating women as their equal, and that one of the positive consequences, for them as well as for women, is that both may enjoy a richer relationship.

Appendix 1.1

15 September 1997

Emotional abuse in heterosexual couple relationships as viewed by two groups of NZ participants

Information for participants

I invite you to participate in a study looking at experiences of emotional abuse in your relationship. The study will make a contribution to the understanding of the dynamics of emotional abuse in couple relationships and the effects of that on the individuals and the relationship. This will provide invaluable information towards the designing of a future intervention for couples who experience emotional abuse in their relationship.

It is necessary that you have been out of your relationship for a minimum of one year. This will give you time to reflect on your self and your relationship. Just to explain your role as a participant in this project, the technique of Memory work being used uses quite brief memories of particular events written on a number of themes. We will read and discuss these memories as a group, looking at what experiences were similar and what experiences were different. The important part of the discussion will be what you observe and what sense you make of the memories.

The group involves group discussion. Therefore, before agreeing to take part, you need to feel OK about being a part of the group and sharing your memories with the group. There will be separate groups for women and men, so you will only be in a group with your own gender. I will be arranging a meeting so that you can meet the other participants before you make up your mind to participate. Afterwards I will contact you to seek your written consent.

If you change your mind at any stage after the consent, that's fine. Just let me know. Alternatively, during the group, feel free to stay out of any conversation you do not feel comfortable with. Because of the personal nature of the topic shared, it is important that we all agree to keep any information disclosed by others confidential. This way your name will not be known to anyone outside of the group.

Given the topic, it is possible that during the course of the discussion personal issues may arise for you or any one of the participants. We can talk about these as they come up, and memory work may help make sense of difficult memories. We will spend time processing our own feelings and thoughts at the beginning and end of each meeting. I will also be available if you wish to call me at home.

I would like the group to meet once a month for 2-3 hours, over approximately six to eight months, beginning in February 1998. We will arrange a time that will suit all people who choose to participate. I know this is asking quite a lot of your time, but I hope that we will all learn a lot from our discussions. I hope that this study will interest you and that you will consent to participate. Get in touch with me if you want further information by phoning me at the university on 07- 8562889 ext. 6730 or at home on 07- 8549899. We can then arrange a time for a discussion before you come to the first meeting. If at any stage you have any concern regarding the research, you may contact Professor Jane Ritchie or Dr. Hilary Lapsley at Waikato University, who are supervising the research.

Kind regards

Marianne Lammers

Appendix 1.2

Consent Form

Researcher: Marianne Lammers

Would you please read and reflect upon the following considerations.

The purpose of this research is to get a better understanding of the dynamics of emotional abuse in couple relationships and the effects of that on the individuals and the relationship.

The method of gathering the data will be in the form of group discussions around the written memories to chosen 'triggers' or 'cues'.

I have ethical approval of the Psychology Department at the University of Waikato, to conduct this research.

If at any stage you have any concern regarding the research, you may contact Professor Jane Ritchie or Dr. Hilary Lapsley at Waikato University (07-8562889), who are supervising this project.

I am willing to participate in this group research project and give the researcher permission to use the information I share in the research group.

Due to the group nature of the research, I consent to keep confidentiality outside of the group meetings, in order to protect the other participants and myself. This means that I will not share any personal information with any other person outside of the group

I understand that any information that I give will be treated as confidential. This means that it will only be seen by the researcher and the supervisors. A nom-de-plume will be used so that I won't be identifiable in the final analysis.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this research at any time simply by informing the researcher.

NAME

Participant:
(print name) (signature)

Researcher: Marianne Lammers

Date: 19 February 1998

Appendix 1.3

Preliminary Questions

For Research on Emotional Abuse in Heterosexual Couple Relationships

Participant's name:

Age:

Country of birth:

Ethnicity:

Number of years in the relationship where emotional abuse occurred:

Number of years out of that relationship

Number of children from that relationship:

Currently in a relationship?:

Highest level of education:

Occupation:

Appendix 2

NUD.IST Index System

Q.S.R. NUD.IST Power version, revision 4.0.

Licensee: Heather Hamerton.

PROJECT: PHD, User Marianne Lammers, 3:20 pm, Nov 30, 2000.

(1 4) dimensions of abuse

(1 4 1) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect

(1 4 1 1) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct

(1 4 1 1 1) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/criticise, humiliate

(1 4 1 1 2) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/obstruction of personal goals

(1 4 1 1 3) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/insult, sarcasm,

(1 4 1 1 4) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/threats

(1 4 1 1 5) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/possessive

(1 4 1 1 6) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/accuse

(1 4 1 1 7) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/demand

(1 4 1 1 8) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/controlled social life

(1 4 1 1 9) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/double bind

(1 4 1 1 10) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/being superior

(1 4 1 1 11) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/mind games

(1 4 1 1 12) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/intimate knowledge, misuse of

(1 4 1 1 13) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/betrayal

- (1 4 1 1 14) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/double standards
- (1 4 1 1 15) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/hurtful honesty
- (1 4 1 1 16) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/subtle set up
- (1 4 1 1 17) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/disregard
- (1 4 1 1 18) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/mistrust
- (1 4 1 1 19) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/verbal assault
- (1 4 1 1 20) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/provoking, needling
- (1 4 1 1 21) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/calculating
- (1 4 1 1 22) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/economic control
- (1 4 1 1 23) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/destroy things
- (1 4 1 1 24) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/punishment, retaliation
- (1 4 1 1 25) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/blame
- (1 4 1 1 26) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/direct/rationalise
- (1 4 1 2) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/indirect
- (1 4 1 2 1) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/indirect/emotional appeal
- (1 4 1 2 2) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/indirect/denying
- (1 4 1 2 3) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/indirect/selfish, self-centred
- (1 4 1 2 4) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/indirect/misusing verbal abilities
- (1 4 1 2 5) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/indirect/subtle manipulation
- (1 4 1 2 6) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/indirect/made invisible

- (1 4 1 2 7) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/indirect/keeping off balance
- (1 4 1 2 8) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/indirect/needy
- (1 4 1 2 9) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/indirect/mood matching expectation
- (1 4 1 2 10) dimensions of abuse/direct vs indirect/indirect/sadism
- (1 4 2) dimensions of abuse/active vs passive
- (1 4 2 1) dimensions of abuse/active vs passive/active
- (1 4 2 2) dimensions of abuse/active vs passive/passive
- (1 4 2 2 1) dimensions of abuse/active vs passive/passive/leaving the scene
- (1 4 2 2 2) dimensions of abuse/active vs passive/passive/unexpressiveness
- (1 4 2 2 3) dimensions of abuse/active vs passive/passive/resistance
- (1 4 2 2 4) dimensions of abuse/active vs passive/passive/silent treatment
- (1 4 2 2 5) dimensions of abuse/active vs passive/passive/not valuing
- (1 4 2 2 6) dimensions of abuse/active vs passive/passive/withholding the truth
- (1 4 2 2 7) dimensions of abuse/active vs passive/passive/exclude the other
- (1 4 2 2 8) dimensions of abuse/active vs passive/passive/lack of empathy
- (1 4 2 2 9) dimensions of abuse/active vs passive/passive/lip-service
- (1 4 2 2 10) dimensions of abuse/active vs passive/passive/not supportive
- (1 4 2 2 11) dimensions of abuse/active vs passive/passive/insincere
- (1 4 2 2 12) dimensions of abuse/active vs passive/passive/depersonalisation
- (1 4 3) dimensions of abuse/power
- (1 4 3 1) dimensions of abuse/power/powerful

- (1 4 3 1 1) dimensions of abuse/power/powerful/verbal abilities
- (1 4 3 1 2) dimensions of abuse/power/powerful/controlled social life
- (1 4 3 1 3) dimensions of abuse/power/powerful/something of value
- (1 4 3 1 4) dimensions of abuse/power/powerful/male privilege
- (1 4 3 1 5) dimensions of abuse/power/powerful/agentive
- (1 4 3 1 6) dimensions of abuse/power/powerful/abusive
- (1 4 3 1 7) dimensions of abuse/power/powerful/deceitful
- (1 4 3 1 8) dimensions of abuse/power/powerful/economic control
- (1 4 3 1 9) dimensions of abuse/power/powerful/less in love
- (1 4 3 2) dimensions of abuse/power/powerless
- (1 4 3 2 1) dimensions of abuse/power/powerless/more in love
- (1 4 3 2 2) dimensions of abuse/power/powerless/constrained in goals
- (1 4 3 2 3) dimensions of abuse/power/powerless/put down
- (1 4 3 2 4) dimensions of abuse/power/powerless/let down
- (1 4 3 2 5) dimensions of abuse/power/powerless/constrained in personal values
- (1 4 3 2 6) dimensions of abuse/power/powerless/not appreciated
- (1 4 3 2 7) dimensions of abuse/power/powerless/problem internalised
- (1 4 3 2 8) dimensions of abuse/power/powerless/feeling trapped
- (1 4 3 2 9) dimensions of abuse/power/powerless/no consideration for me
- (1 4 3 2 10) dimensions of abuse/power/powerless/not trusted
- (1 4 3 2 11) dimensions of abuse/power/powerless/constrained in social life

(1 4 3 2 12) dimensions of
abuse/power/powerless/fearful, anxious

(1 4 3 2 13) dimensions of abuse/power/powerless/defeat

(1 4 3 2 14) dimensions of
abuse/power/powerless/lowered resilience

(1 4 3 2 15) dimensions of
abuse/power/powerless/helpless

(1 4 3 2 16) dimensions of
abuse/power/powerless/burdened

(1 4 3 2 17) dimensions of
abuse/power/powerless/PRESSURED

(1 4 3 2 18) dimensions of abuse/power/powerless/made
invisible

(1 4 3 2 19) dimensions of
abuse/power/powerless/economically

(1 4 3 2 20) dimensions of abuse/power/powerless/not
valued

(1 4 3 2 21) dimensions of abuse/power/powerless/status

(1 5) impact of abuse

(1 5 1) impact of abuse/on behaviour

(1 5 1 1) impact of abuse/on behaviour/compliance

(1 5 1 2) impact of abuse/on behaviour/reciprocate
with abuse

(1 5 1 3) impact of abuse/on behaviour/avoidance

(1 5 1 4) impact of abuse/on behaviour/become
emotionallystrong

(1 5 1 5) impact of abuse/on behaviour/setting
boundaries

(1 5 1 6) impact of abuse/on behaviour/defeat

(1 5 1 7) impact of abuse/on behaviour/withdrawing

(1 5 1 8) impact of abuse/on behaviour/become
flippant

(1 5 1 9) impact of abuse/on behaviour/compensating
behaviour

(1 5 1 10) impact of abuse/on behaviour/retaliation

(1 5 1 11) impact of abuse/on behaviour/change
behaviour

(1 5 1 12) impact of abuse/on behaviour/deceit

(1 5 1 13) impact of abuse/on behaviour/appease

(1 5 1 14) impact of abuse/on behaviour/blocking
emotions

(1 5 1 14 1)	impact of abuse/on behaviour/blocking
emotions/using work	
(1 5 1 14 2)	impact of abuse/on behaviour/blocking
emotions/rationalise	
(1 5 1 15)	impact of abuse/on behaviour/inaction
(1 5 1 16)	impact of abuse/on behaviour/forgiveness
(1 5 1 17)	impact of abuse/on behaviour/damage goods
(1 5 1 18)	impact of abuse/on behaviour/striving
(1 5 1 19)	impact of abuse/on behaviour/pleading
(1 5 1 20)	impact of abuse/on behaviour/cover up
abuse	
(1 5 1 21)	impact of abuse/on behaviour/grumpy,
irritable	
(1 5 2)	impact of abuse/on emotions
(1 5 2 1)	impact of abuse/on emotions/resentment
(1 5 2 2)	impact of abuse/on emotions/despair
(1 5 2 3)	impact of abuse/on emotions/hurt
(1 5 2 4)	impact of abuse/on emotions/anger
(1 5 2 5)	impact of abuse/on emotions/ambivalent
feelings	
(1 5 2 6)	impact of abuse/on emotions/disbelief
(1 5 2 7)	impact of abuse/on emotions/denial
(1 5 2 8)	impact of abuse/on emotions/exasperation
(1 5 2 9)	impact of abuse/on emotions/humiliation,
shame	
(1 5 2 10)	impact of abuse/on emotions/emotional
disconnection	
(1 5 2 11)	impact of abuse/on emotions/anxiety, fear
(1 5 2 12)	impact of abuse/on emotions/lonely,
uncared for	
(1 5 2 13)	impact of abuse/on emotions/frustrated
(1 5 2 14)	impact of abuse/on emotions/distrust
(1 5 2 15)	impact of abuse/on emotions/destroy
(1 5 2 16)	impact of abuse/on emotions/isolation
(1 5 2 17)	impact of abuse/on emotions/sadness
(1 5 2 18)	impact of abuse/on emotions/guilt
(1 5 2 19)	impact of abuse/on emotions/not valued
(1 5 2 20)	impact of abuse/on emotions/fester
(1 5 2 21)	impact of abuse/on emotions/confusion
(1 5 2 22)	impact of abuse/on emotions/disillusioned
(1 5 2 23)	impact of abuse/on emotions/revulsion

(1 5 3)	impact of abuse/on health
(1 5 3 1)	impact of abuse/on health/loss of enjoyment
(1 5 3 2)	impact of abuse/on health/loss of concentration
(1 5 3 3)	impact of abuse/on health/physical illness
(1 5 3 4)	impact of abuse/on health/depression
(1 5 3 5)	impact of abuse/on health/exhaustion
(1 5 3 6)	impact of abuse/on health/destroy mental health
(1 5 3 7)	impact of abuse/on health/suffocated
(1 5 4)	impact of abuse/on identity
(1 5 4 1)	impact of abuse/on identity/self doubt
(1 5 4 2)	impact of abuse/on identity/suppression of values
(1 5 4 3)	impact of abuse/on identity/lowered self-esteem
(1 5 4 4)	impact of abuse/on identity/helpless
(1 5 4 5)	impact of abuse/on identity/integrity loss
(1 5 4 6)	impact of abuse/on identity/identity loss
(1 5 4 7)	impact of abuse/on identity/confusion
(1 5 4 8)	impact of abuse/on identity/going crazy

Appendix 3.1

Memories of Beth

Fairness

There was a nice clean house, cream carpet, the skirting boards are dust free, and the lino is spotless and shining. A policeman calls home for lunch; he opens the transparent ranch slider and walks on the nice cream carpet. There's a woman lying on the floor-not much of a woman- a crumpled drunk lying in the middle of her own bile vomit. She hasn't eaten for days; she's fat and undesirable. The policeman wants someone else and he's told her so in a letter, a lustful letter, pornographic and honest. He looks at the woman. She wishes he wasn't there. "Come on then, let's get you cleaned up". He undresses her and puts her in the shower. Doesn't want to wet his uniform, he's only got 10 minutes. Half unconscious from the bottle of rum the woman finds comfort on the shower floor. A naked wretch curled up in the foetal position lies there; the only thing she can think of is the sound of the water droplets dancing on her back. The policeman goes back to work and he does her chores as well, he is a good bloke. He returns at 3.30 pm, she moved from the cold shower floor and is lying naked on the bed, the letter that will never leave the house crumpled in her hand. Everyone saw the big strong policeman coping wonderfully with his drunken depressed partner - but no one ever saw the letter.

Support

Beth was lying in bed, barely conscious. She could hardly see through her tears. The doctors had been in at least a thousand times that day already, asking her meaningless questions. It wasn't supposed to be like this, she wasn't meant to still be here. The nurse always prodding her, checking her oxygen levels, her blood pressure. Her drip and the arrangement of other various machinery attached to her limbs. Her mum had visited her, stroked her head. She felt a bit sorry for her mum, but most of all she did not want to be there. She cried mostly and desperately wanted to escape. She could not walk still, her head was fuzzy and she had no legs. The nurses wouldn't give her any peace any way. There was no escape now; she was trapped. Trapped inside a hospital ward full of doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, all watching her every move. She was trapped inside her life with no escape. One doctor said she was depressed; she had smiled and laughed. She was not depressed, she wanted out; an escape and no one in the world understood. "Colin will be here soon", her mummy said. That was supposed to make her feel better. She opened her eyes to that one and looked down at her long pale arms. "Horror, no, not him" she screamed inside her head. The minutes seemed like dread filled days. He would be here soon and stay for years- dutiful Colin, supporting the woman he loved. The woman who two days previously had concocted her own delightful cocktail of poisonous remedy- to escape her pitiful existence. He walks in, just finished work, then driven four hours and now to face this. "Have we been a bit of a silly girl then", he said.

Expectations

She felt like a stressed out young thing, balancing her full time tertiary studies with five different part-time jobs. She never had time to relax and he resented her for that. Why could she never take a break and just come and lie with him on the

couch. After all, he had a very stressful job too and he could still relax. Colin was very good at distinguishing between work and free time. If only she could be more like him, learn from his example. But Beth could never sit still, she could never relax, why did she need to spend so much time in the study when he was home? Why couldn't she study during the day or when he was at work? Beth looked at Colin lying on the couch and resented him; she despised his laziness. She reflected on her day as she cooked tea and mentally prepared for work later that evening. In the morning she had been cleaning for the [a woman], then she'd had a 1 PM lecture. She had not done her readings, as she had not had time. The lecture finished at 3 PM, which meant she was already late for picking Fiona up from school. Beth had spoiled herself and Fiona that day. They went to the [student café] for a coke and chips – like old times- prior to Colin days. The she dropped Fiona off at ballet and went to the supermarket to restock. Just in time to pick Fiona up, then home, get the washing in, help Fiona with her homework, cook tea, bath Fiona and then go to work. “Colin, can you do the dishes tonight, I won't have time”. “Huh, yeah”. Hopefully I can get some reading done tonight at work, thought Beth, as she served tea.

Responsibilities

She was tired, and it was Saturday. It was to be the same Saturday as it was last week, the week before and all the weeks before that and all the weeks to follow. She had to be at work at 11 am. That gave her time to do the washing, the dishes, and a quick vacuum before she raced to the shops to pick up some groceries. Colin was home on Saturdays and she was lucky that he would look after Fiona while she was at work. She was tired but could not afford to lie in bed. She got up, started the washing and made hers and Fiona's breakfast, took Colin a coffee and made a start on the dishes; her mind went into mute as she scurried through the remaining chores and drove to work. She hated working in the bar; fat overpaid, overstuffed, white, middle aged men making sleazy suggestive remarks all day as she poured them a beer. She had taken varsity work with her so that she could take notes in between rounds coming off the golf course. She pondered about the remaining Saturday. After work she would have to race home, cook tea, bath Fiona and go to work at the movies. Although she liked working at the movies, she felt quite guilty that she never got to spend time with Fiona. Oh, well, we needed the money and this is what being a student is all about.

Love

They were lying by the log fire in a small cottage tucked away in the hills. Fiona was in bed asleep. Colin had organised all of Beth's favourite things: red wine, olives, cheeses, crackers, and pate. She was lying on the large soft cushions on the floor. Her heart was broken and she wanted to leave. Her thoughts were all in a jumble. At one moment in time she felt nothing but contempt for him, and dependent love all in the same breath. She was trapped. Stuck. What was wrong with her? He was sorry. Why couldn't she just forgive him? After all she did know he loved her. "I love you Beth. I'm so sorry. I'll never do anything to hurt you", he said. She knew that he was about to break into the speech that he had well rehearsed and was so practiced at. “The [pornographic] photos didn't mean anything to me.” “Colin!” she wanted to scream. “You know what they meant to me, and if they didn't matter to you, and you knew how much they hurt me, why did you sit there after work and down load them, sneak them into our house, lie

about why you were late. Do I mean even less than they do?" But instead, she just lay there and said nothing, just looked into the fire, tears rolling down her cheeks. She knew Colin loved her, but she couldn't help feeling this way.

Appendix 3.2

Memories of Bridget

Fairness

Bridget was at home caring for their two adopted children. The younger one was about 8 months old. Bridget was bored. “Was this all there was to life?” she asked herself. She thought about contacting the local hospital again where she had worked as a nurse since coming to Napier three years before. “Yes, it’s time I went back to work” she thought. That night, after Frank had come home, tea, bathing etc over, she broached the subject. “I want to go back to work, two or three afternoons a week, 6-11pms”. “You are a mother. That’s what women do. You should be happy. I won’t support you if you do that”, he said. Shattered, totally shattered she asked herself, “what about my abilities?” she asked herself.

Support

Bridget’s mother was being discharged from hospital. She had been diagnosed with bowel cancer and had decided that she did not want to continue with chemotherapy. The thing was-who would look after her, as she was unable to keep on living on her own. Bridget knew that her mother felt uncomfortable in the home of one of her sons and his wife. The next son lived in Taupo and despite his wife being a nurse, like Bridget herself, was it really Peggy’s role? Didn’t daughters do this? So Bridget’s mother came to be cared for by Bridget-along with Bridget’s three children aged 4, 2 and two months. Her husband did not object. He was a good man. He bought a dishwasher to ease her load. He rigged a bell system so that Mum could summon Bridget at any time of the day or night, especially when her dressings needed changing, which took three hours each time at least. He never asked her what it was like for her. He went off to work each day, same as usual. He said he did not want to talk about how her dying mother affected Bridget. He could not cope with such things, he said. He just needed to return to normal. The question was, when would this be?

Expectations

Their friends were getting married in Zambia and they had been invited to the wedding, hopefully to be part of the official wedding party. Great, thought Bridget. We have been married for four years and finally we’ll be able to travel overseas, enjoy adventures in foreign parts, share an important time with friends, and experience other cultures, great! “Well, we could take in parts of Europe, Rome, etc. on our way, to make the trip worthwhile” said Frank. Bridget was really excited about travel prospects. She had always thought she would do this, but had waited until she had married, because she thought travel was something they could do together. She had turned down a few pre-marriage opportunities with mates. She never forgot the day when Frank said: “There’s a civil war on in the neighbouring country. It wouldn’t be safe”. Their friends in Zambia assured them that the neighbouring war was not impacting on their country, or on travels to or from that country. Frank stood firm. After all, it was his money involved.

No, they were not going. That was that. Again Bridget felt robbed, cheated. Was this why she had married: Companionship, fun, adventures. Where was that in this marriage? Taking the bus into town on a Friday night and going to after work drinks sessions?

Caring

Easter. He wanted to go to the bach, she didn't. He went. However, after he phoned her to say he'd arrived etc. and was lonely, she felt sorry for him being all alone. So she packed up the car and the kids and went the next evening. She didn't want to but she felt sorry for him. So, giving up her 'space' she'd gone anyway. He was ecstatic. She felt cold – again, remote. Whenever he was away he'd phone, mostly to say something about how he missed her. She simply felt the burden, the demands. She did care about him as a person, but it was always read as something else – strings, expectations, like being put in a box.

Responsibility

He was outside clearing gorse from around their home, which he had bought without her seeing it first. She was inside, snuggled up in front of a heater, reading yet another book. It was a Saturday, mid afternoon. After a while he appeared at the ranch slider. "When is afternoon tea?" he asked. She did not respond but felt a tight knot of resentment flare in the pit of her stomach. "If he chooses to work outside, doing the house proud bit", she thought, "that's up to him. What is wrong with me choosing to read a book?" Again his voice, "You've always got your nose in a book, you don't care about anything else. What about me? I'm working hard!" She felt guilt mix with resentment and also felt chastened. Again she had not carried out her wifely responsibility, to physically look after her husband, to produce food and drink at the appointed times.

Love

She had recently returned from a retreat in the Hawkes Bay. She had gone on this because she needed space after her mother had died. "Do I love him?" she'd asked in the quiet times, undisturbed by the participants. "Well, what is love" she philosophised, "physical feeling, chemistry?" Yes, that had been there at times. Soul mates, understanding, and being understood, accepted and accepting for who and what you are. Well, that was okay as long as every day routine, monotonous life didn't intervene, and you're in a romantic frame. Delve into real feelings, opinions, worldviews, and shaky ground was very much in the forefront. But you're his wife, the mother of his children. You're the only one who can be these things for this man. Conclusions come to her on a retreat. But we don't exist on similar terms. You can do it. "God, make me love him, whatever that means." "Care for him as a human being? Yes, I can do that. Relate to him as an intimate? Only when sex results. What is this?" [God] "You can love him; you only have to give up yourself, that part of you that resists, that is love." "Oh, my God!"

Appendix 3.3

Memories of Grace

Fairness

The phone rang; it was for her. She took the phone and sat in the lounge. It was sunny and warm but not humid. Grace was happy to hear his voice. His voice softened when he greeted her. It made her feel warm. They discussed hiring a trailer and moving the majority of her belongings in over the coming weekend in between their exams to his flat as she needed to move out of her own and he was going to be away for the summer. They got onto the topic of the second person. Grace had a girlfriend, Jo, who wanted to move in. It was Jo's first time flatting. The rent was reduced over summer. It would be \$50 per week. He said not to tell Jo, but let her think it was \$100. She was speechless, shocked. Grace said 'we can't do that. Jo is a friend. He argued Jo would get the use of all their belongings so it was fair she pay. Grace said, "Jo is a friend". She argued that he was storing his belongings so that it was fair that he pay as well. Grace was crying and trying to hide it. The conversation went on for some time. They ended up agreeing to tell Jo of the reduced rent and let her believe that Grace and Jo shared rent while in fact Jo would pay half and Grace and he would pay the other half. She ended up feeling very naive about matters of the world. She felt guilty for the whole summer and felt she had compromised her soul.

Support

Grace sat in a friend's dormitory room at university. It was the middle of the day, so most of the students that lived there were out. Her friend was out as well but had left the room unlocked for her; a haven. It was quiet and cool, a complete contrast to the turmoil inside her. She sat quietly at the desk with her head bowed and her hands in her lap. The quieter the room seemed the louder the turmoil became, building and building until it was enormous. She desperately scabbled for pen and paper. It seemed her hand was possessed as she scribbled the same words over and over, in large unintelligible letters randomly across the sheet. An attempt to release the monster within her; ME ME ME ME ME ME. Tears welled in her eyes as she whispered "It's all me, it's all my fault".

Responsibility

"Responsible, that means you are able to respond," he calmly told her. "You really must learn to control your reactions. Adults have to take responsibility for what they do. I'm not responsible for your anger; you choose to respond that way. You have an anger management problem; I've seen it before. You respond like a child, all explosions and no sense." They had been doing the dishes, they had been arguing for some time. His calm declarations that she was wrong, and what was wrong with her to make her think that way. Yet, she knew she was right. He kept putting her down until they were standing at either end of the small narrow kitchen; it had a concrete floor. She felt the anger and helplessness, the frustration, the pain. She felt her muscles tighten until she was absolute rigid, she wanted to lash out. He kept pushing until she lifted the glass in her hand and threw it. At the last moment she threw it at the floor at his feet; she could not

throw it at him. The glass smashed into many pieces. Finally he was quiet for a moment. He walked past her, out of the kitchen. "I'll come back when you have cleaned it up, I can't do the dishes with glass on the floor". She started to cry. "Silly girl, you have to be responsible, that means able to respond"

Expectations

She had arranged a trip with her friend of 15 years. They would spend the day at the small town where they had met, and where her friend's parents still lived. By coincidence it was her friend's mother's birthday, so it would be quite special. Her friend would pick her up early in the morning and they would be back by mid afternoon. She reminded her partner at dinner. He was stunned. Grace asked if there was a problem and he replied that he had an assignment due on the Tuesday. Yes, she said, she knew that. Did he need her for some reason? Why yes, to type it up. If she weren't here on Monday it would take him ages, there was no way he would be able to spend any time with her now. She said she had not been aware that she was needed. Her heart ached, she wanted to go but felt that he needed her. She would miss out one way or another; either their visit or his company over the weekend. What he did not say, but she knew he was thinking, was their trade. He often told her how great he thought it was that they could trade skills. He could fix her car and she could type his assignments. She called her friend to cancel. Her friend asked her, was this OK, was she choosing this? She responded that yes, it was all above board. He gave ground in other ways. The friend was not convinced. Grace's partner was visibly relieved.

Caring

Overall Grace felt she was never quite good enough. She was almost there; she could be if she really tried. He didn't know quite what was wrong; he was trying to explain why he felt dissatisfied, like something was missing. He was having trouble finding the right words. Grace persevered with him, patiently waiting, helping him. She thought she was doing the best thing, allowing him to express himself. In her heart she knew that when he got there and found the words, it would hurt. She knew that something would be missing in her. Finally he started. He missed an ex girlfriend. He did not want to go back to her, that's not what he meant. He missed her vivaciousness, her style, the way she turned heads when she walked into a room, her glamour, always front and centre, always the limelight. He missed being envied for the tall leggy blond on his arm. Couldn't Grace put in a little more effort in, perhaps drying her hair like this – he shows her a photo of yet another ex. Looking glamorous was all a function of time and money, he said. She should work harder. Grace felt her heart sink, she wasn't glamorous, those kind of things just weren't important to her. The outside sparkly bits were almost irrelevant. She felt so inadequate. People often told her how smart or loving she was, never attractive. And here was the one person she thought, hoped, she could count on to find her attractive, and she hadn't quite made it yet.

Love

You are very familiar with this story. They were sitting in bed. It was early on a Saturday morning in summer. It was January 1996, and they'd been together for two and a half years. They were drinking tea and listening to the radio, the way they often did in a week-end, being peaceful before the day started in earnest. He

looked across at Grace. "Grace," he said, "there is something I need to tell you". Something in his tone made her sit very still. He looked down at his hands. "I don't love you. I don't think I've ever loved you. And the more I think about it the more I think I could never love you". She looked at him, eyes wide. What could you possibly say in response to that?

Appendix 3.4

Memories of Kate

Fairness

Kate wanted to find some structure to give her day more meaning. Kate wanted the chance to plan a day, which would give her some satisfaction. Her husband came in from the farm any old time for meals-including breakfast. No one-day was ever the same. Kate felt a strong expectation from herself, reinforced by her husband, that meals would not be reheated but freshly baked/cooked etc. Her husband talked frequently about his friend having this dreadfully domineering wife who demanded meals be at a set time. In amazement he would describe his friend's actions how he would be in at a set time for lunch. He also spoke frequently of his other friend whose mother demanded her home/kitchen run a certain way. Her mother-in-law and her husband would talk derisively about the lives of these two men and about how difficult this impossible situation was for those two. Kate would sit and listen. Kate carefully broached her plan several times to her husband who seemed grumpy, reluctant, or exasperating, and Kate was never sure. But she was a goer; a persistent goer and she kept trying. Her husband reluctantly came to this agreement that, OK, he came in once from the cowshed, not chatty but quietly shitty. He did it again the next day and categorically stated, "I have been sick all morning. Your demands are totally unreasonable. My guts are in knots. You must let me come in any old time". Kate's heart sank; she had no answer. She did not think she had the right. She stopped negotiating, thinking, "That's that".

Support

Kate looked at the calendar, noting "two weeks to Christmas". Her husband, the farmer, was eating his toast. Kate chatted about some of the plans for the family, consisting of a farmer and his wife, two boys, and a baby girl. Kate felt miserable. She left the farmer to eat his toast. She started to make pikelets and scones for the crowd that was coming mid morning to look at this year's crop of yearling bulls for sale. She remembered, while she shoved all the ingredients together, she could only remember happiness at Christmas with a mob of extended family. She knew it was really like this for the farmer too. May be she could think of some fun for Christmas. Sure, they had to stay home to milk the cows, but she had great ideas. She started to think. The farmer finished his toast. Then she remembered the farmer would be making hay. No plans could be made for anything. Well, she could make plans, but even at the last minute they would change or be cancelled. She felt her heart ache. She began to cry inside. Suddenly it seemed unbearable. Kate put the batch of scones in the oven.

Expectations

Kate enjoyed preparing the Sale Catalogue for publication. It involved about six weeks work in January and February and in those days before computers stored the data, meant there was much copying and looking up production records, show results, finding/taking photographs etc. Kate enjoyed it but it wasn't that easy and this particular year much harder than ever – just to get at the work was the trouble – endless other pressures and calls on time. Kate talked of her concerns about meeting the deadline for taking the copy to the publisher. She did not moan about

it, but she knew she brought the subject up in a chatty way. Kate and Don were excited about this sale. Their cattle were in demand and there was much interest. She took it for granted that there was a job to be done. She could do hers and she knew Don would somehow manage his too. The agent called and looked around the sale animals and came in for a cup of tea to look over the copy. Don brought him in, and sat down at the kitchen table. Kate felt good as she switched on the kettle. She heard the agent say: "How did it go, you've been busy Don, can't have been easy getting the copy ready." "No no, no trouble really" Kate heard him say. In amazement she turned the kettle on and thought "Am I here?" The two men talked about this and that. Kate started to pour the tea. The agent opened the stack of paper and said with a laugh in his voice: "This is Kate's hand writing! No wonder it didn't give you much trouble". Kate thought, "Caught out, serves you right". Don set his mouth – not pleased. The agent changed the subject. Kate knew her husband did not like being laughed at or caught out and so she did not say anything either; then or later.

Caring

Kate can only remember the emotions of that morning, emotions and three actions. Scene; farm kitchen/dining room. Characters; two boys about 6 and 4 (which means there was a baby girl in the house somewhere as well). Kate sitting at the kitchen table. Actions: Don had walked out even tho' Kate had made it clear over breakfast that she felt really low and wanted/needed company. "Let's plan a fun day" "let's plan a day together" type of conversation had taken place over breakfast. Don has a job that needs doing on the farm, no enthusiasm, and no energy, no caring for Kate's state of mind. Don puts on his boots, fobs off taking either of the boys with him and leaves through back gate. Kate sits at the table. She is not crying, she just sits. "Could a person feel worse than this?" she wonders. How bad would she have to be before he ever 'gave' her anything when she felt empty? Michael, 4 years old, comes and stands at her shoulder. He stands, not speaking, looking at her. Kate thinks, "Thank God, Michael is standing next to me". Little darts of warmth penetrate her heart. She feels an eruption of anger. She gets up, walks to the window and grabs the curtains, the whole 'caboodle' falls to the floor; tracks, pelmet, curtains etc. Kate sees fear and anxiety on son's face. She talks to both boys reassuringly. She quietly hangs up curtains, pelmet and tracks again. **THE ROOM LOOKS THE SAME.**

Responsibilities

Micheal (son) and Kate walked from the house to the cowshed. Warm sunny morning, farm work waiting. Stock to shift and hay to feed out. They chatted about this and that as they walked. At the cowshed they set off in different directions to set things up for their morning. Kate finished first and came back to the farm race and leaned her arms and shoulders over the gate with the sun warming her back. How was Don getting on? She climbed the gate, stood on top to peer over the hedges to the back of the farm. **WHAT THE HELL!!** What the hell was Don doing, riding the two-wheeler around the back paddock? Hadn't he promised the surgeon, who gave him an artificial hip; he wouldn't waste his skill as a surgeon. He would buy a 4 wheeler. "Yes, a fall off a 2 wheeler would and could have him in a wheelchair. Don't hassle him please. Don agreed." Hadn't he promised Kate that he would ride the four-wheeler – not just grab the two-wheeler because it was closest? Kate watched him circling on the wet grass in the

back paddock. She climbed down off the gate and waited for Don's return. "You're riding the two wheeler." "Mmm, yes, the 4 wheeler needed petrol," Don replied, as if all in the world was reasonable. "But you said you wouldn't ride the 2 wheeler" Don stiffened in rage. Made "you're being unreasonable" mutterings to Kate. Kate felt something 'clunk' satisfactorily into place inside her body. She walked off home across the paddock on a warm sunny morning, thinking to herself, "If you end up in a wheelchair through your own bloody stupidity, there is no way I need to be your wheelchair attendant". The birds sang; and Kate heard them in the gum trees.

Love

Kate had stopped talking about love by this time. She had it in the same box as trust, ideals both of them. She knew she felt loving from time to time, and she knew felt trusting from time to time; but not often. Her 16 year old daughter, these days she lied as quickly as her blue eyes flashed whenever she spoke to Kate. Kate grappled with these thoughts as she drove to a meeting with the counsellor. She felt so bloody confused, living in a thick peafog soup, so it was kind of comforting to dwell on a thought that had some clarity. Love and trust, cold words. Mmmm. Loving and trusting; actions that could be felt. At the counselling room she went inside, husband was already there, so was the counsellor. Kate sat down. She'd asked Don not to use the word love when he addressed her. "Let's sort out what it means between us before we call each other love," she had asked. Don had agreed. Then, as the session started, Don starting addressing Kate as love again. Kate raised objection to this, not expecting any back up from the counsellor. Surprisingly she did back up Kate. "Let's not use it, it's a very conflicting word between you two at the moment." Don looked repentant, and actually managed not to use the word for the next one hour. Kate felt some surprise, some relief, some resentment, that it took a third party to be present to get Don to actually make the change

Appendix 3.5

Memories of Lee

Fairness

Lee was out on the farm, working beside the wonderful man she was married to. She was happy and cheerful and did not see lots of people, but was always friendly. The trains went past about three times daily. Happy in her work and humming away, she stopped and watched the train going by. She waved, smiled, and shouted out “Hi” to the driver. Next thing she knew she was getting a great lecture about strangers, ignorance and doing the wrong things. Boy, it hurt. She walked slowly away, humiliated, hurt, sad, and lonely.

Support

The kids and I were often having to cope, while the man of the house was helping someone else building a bach, or scout den. Taking part in something that was always more important than the family. I had imagined the family would come first, but this was never quite so. I was also frightened of the dark because of horror stories told to her as a child by her brother. Scared was not a word I would ever own up to, so when these times took place, I could never let the children know how I felt, all the chores were done well before dark, animals fed and we would be inside with the radio on. Tea was organised, the children bathed and off to bed. A story was read and they were asleep, at the usual time. I would then lie huddled in bed, longing for comfort and support. This was twice as bad when rain and thunder was prevalent.

Caring

Brent always felt he was missing out on life. He had to work so hard he never had time to spend with his family. Lee used to try and do things around the home to give him the life he thought he was missing out on, such as dinner parties and gatherings. Brent always managed to arrive late. This time Lee had everything ready, all the guests had arrived and everyone was waiting for Brent. He came in dirty, still had to get bathed and changed. Then he came out into the group of people and he said “What are you worrying about Lee?” Lee felt so embarrassed. This spoilt the whole evening. From then on Brent stole the limelight and was the life of the party. Lee felt that he did not care for her, or he would have been more cooperative and considerate. She was first all excited but now felt flattened again by his attitude. She had done it for him and he seemed to enjoy it, but complained the next day that it had cost so much.

Responsibilities

The mother of the house had reached breaking point after 28 years of marriage. She felt she could go on no longer. The responsibility of everyone’s burdens and troubles was at long last going to end. Why in all this time did she not realise it should be a two way thing, instead of battling along and covering up for his lack of love and caring, or never taking responsibility for any wrongs?

Appendix 3.6

Memories of Maria

Fairness

Maria had wanted to go to work. However, he was in the services and often away from home. It was decided she'd be a 'stay at home' mum. He said they needed their mother at home. Often she felt lonely, years of evenings and weekends alone, always responsible for the boys. When they were sick in hospital, and when they missed him. She received lots of lovely mail, letters and cards from the Islands, Singapore, and Hawaii. Wasn't she lucky! Slowly the boys grew older, started school, but no, she was not allowed to go to work. Didn't he provide well enough for her? Didn't she have everything she needed? Ungrateful, that's what she was. She thought of another really good idea, she would go back to school and get her School Cert and UE. She made enquires at the local high schools and told him about it when she'd marshalled all her facts. Sounds good, he said, but who is going to pay for your books? All the other arguments she'd thought of before hand. She'd be home about the same time as the boys; she'd be home in the holidays etc. The cost of the books she hadn't thought about. Disappointment was uppermost. She felt deflated. It had seemed such a good idea at the time. Back to the drawing board; mid week tennis; Yuk!

Expectations

Maria: Small children crying. Where's their mother for God's sake? Why doesn't she shut them up? My child crying; my first born at 3 months inconsolable. "You are his mother, what's wrong with him? Why don't you know? If you don't know, why are you his mother caring for him? For goodness sake, do something, anything to shut him up." "Ear ache" the doctor said. "God, you are useless, imagine letting a kid get earache!" Our second son, not feeding, not attaining his milestones; croup, mumps, measles, chickenpox, tonsils and adenoids out, strangulated hernia twice; operated on 6 times before the age of 2 years 3 months, not walking, "No kid of mine is spending his life on his backside; make him walk". Six times in hospital and who was there with him, his mother. "Well", said his Dad, "Don't expect me to come to the hospital. I am uncomfortable and can't stand sickness; it gives me the creeps. Much better that I stay away. Really, I would not like to upset anyone. I know I can't cope with that. You don't really mind, do you."

Caring

His caring wasn't what Maria expected in a marriage. He said he cared but she often had to 'check it out', asking, "do you love me?" "I am here aren't I," would be the predictable response. For her his caring would have been apparent if he'd made an effort to attend plays or the ballet with her. Events he had no experience of or interest in. After all, she cared enough to show up and watch him play rugby or take part in a raft race or would go along when he went diving. He cared, or appeared to care when it was easy or convenient, when he did not have to put himself out. He cared enough to accompany her to family functions when he did not have anything else on. But not once in all their married life together did he care enough to take an interest in her interests, like go to a craft or quilt exhibition or watch a water ballet.. When he'd been overseas to Hawaii or Singapore and

came home, she often wanted to go away for a couple of days or a week. “You go” he’d say, knowing full well she would not go without him. To her, caring meant caring for, wanting to please her, putting her first sometimes. She felt there was precious little of that coming her way. Who she was, what she wanted to do, what she was interested in didn’t count.

Responsibility

Responsibility was very clearly defined. Paul went out to work, earned a reasonable income, and as soon as we started a family I was to stay at home and look after the children and the running of the household. At the time I agreed to that, I had no trouble with it, it was the way things were and what I expected. Traditional values and roles; even more than that, we weren’t to enjoy ourselves, have fun or pursue our individual interests unless all duty were taken care of – done – finished. This I did find very difficult; Paul was unbending, black and white. In our relationship responsibility was married to expectation and duty and eventually strangled our relationship. I wasn’t to waste time reading unless all chores were done, something that I never accomplished while at home with two growing boys. Slack of me – and my own fault- I couldn’t have worked hard enough. My assertions, that you could always find weeds in the garden or polish a window, clean a ceiling, mend clothes, knit a jumper or help a child with homework, fill the biscuit tins etc. etc. was met with derision. Only if you were disorganised or lazy was it possible that you couldn’t get those things under control. Responsibility meant that I was slack, lazy, disorganised or not good enough. By the same token Paul took his responsibility as seriously-if not more so. When I wanted to go back to work, after being dissuaded from pursuing an education, even part time, there was hell to pay. “Don’t I provide well for you?” “You have always had everything you need. Who will be there for me when I need you?” He was working a five-week rotating shift in the police force at that time, and he was referring to those times he would be at home for morning and afternoon tea or lunch; it was my responsibility to provide that. In the end, when I had been found out in my part time job, another act of resistance remembered, I really need to keep hold of those, it was made clear to me that I was not to have my earnings deposited into our joint account. Nor was I allowed to use the money for anything related to our home. Providing for us was his responsibility. This is the first time that I have realised that my wage, pathetically small as it was, was ‘tainted money’; ridden with guilt. I was unable to use it for goodies, even clothes for myself. Looking back now, it seems hard to believe how difficult it became for me to use the money I earned. It was spent on a swimming pool for the boys, from Santa, an Atari computer for the boys, from Santa, a holiday to Sydney for the boys to visit their Nanna. Slowly I started to use the money towards things for the house, and eventually helped pay the loan that financed the extensions on the house, so that the boys had separate bedrooms and a family room for play. It became THEIR responsibility to see that the lounge was always tidy and that their father had peace and quiet.

Love

Paul came home after three months at sea. We met him at Devonport Naval Base, like Maria and the two boys. They had been longing for Dad to get home. Blair, at three and a half, was overjoyed. Maria and Steve were also looking forward to

having Paul home. Steve, one now, had been in hospital once again, it would be great to have Paul home, an adult to talk to, extra hands to cope with the boys. Paul came down the gangplank, lifted Blair up and swung him around. He gave Maria a kiss, then Steve. They walked to the car. He drove home. That evening Maria was discussing their plans for a weekend away, just the two of them. "No" he said, "I'd rather stay here. I want to be at home". Maria was disappointed. "I've really been looking forward to some time by ourselves. It hasn't been easy looking after the boys this time". "Well" he said, "You go by yourself then, I don't mind". She had no answer to that. Later she asked him "Do you love me?" "I'm here aren't I?" he replied.

Appendix 3.7

Natalie

Fairness

Natalie was at her wit's end. This was the umpteenth time she was going to a counsellor because she was so sad and kept crying. The relationship had got her down over the years to the point where she regularly needed tranquillisers. She had begged her husband many times to go with her to counselling but he always said, "If you have a problem, go and have it sorted out. I have not got a problem, I am fine". But this time he could see things were really bad as she was crying uncontrollably. He came with her to the counsellor. There were two counsellors, as the one she used to go to had brought another one whom specialised in relationships. The counsellors said, after listening to him, that they could not help them as a couple because he did not want to make any changes, but that they could assist her if she wanted to separate. He walked out of the session, having barely been there for 10 minutes.

Support

Natalie was in the packing shed, working. The phone rang. It was her sister from Europe. She phoned to say their sister had been found dead in her flat. Natalie's legs gave way and she slumped on the floor of the shed. She was totally in shock. However, they were in the middle of the fruit-picking season and she could not be missed to go to her sister's funeral. The family had told Natalie when the funeral was and Natalie got a chair and put it outside, under the stars, to be with them in her mind. When Natalie's husband, who was watching a video inside, saw her he said she was 'crackers', sitting on her own in the dark outside. When two weeks later the work on the farm had slackened off and Natalie finally had time to reflect on her sister's death, she started to cry, because she realised she would never see her sister again. Her husband said, "What are you crying about? Your sister has been dead for two weeks and life goes on".

Responsibility

Natalie and her husband were going to go on a holiday to Europe for her husband to meet Natalie's family. They had a 20-month-old baby boy who was travelling with them. Natalie had been on birth control pills, but they wanted another baby as soon as they came back from Europe, so that the age gap between the two would not be too big. Natalie's doctor had said that it might take up to 6 months to conceive after having been on the pill. So she told her husband that she was going to stop taking them just before they left to go to Europe. Natalie however, must have conceived on the day that she stopped taking the pill, for no sooner did they start their holidays and she started to get morning sickness. Her husband was very annoyed with her and blamed her for spoiling the holiday. She was in tears. She wanted this baby, although it was coming at an inopportune time. Did he not want it? And why was this just her responsibility?

Expectations

Natalie. She had been in this country for four or five months. It was still very strange for her. No familiar people around her, not knowing the social rules. She had just got married to a man she had met here. He said he wanted to go hunting

for the weekend. That meant she would be on her own with no car. She felt very insecure and had wanted someone to be with her. If she had the car she could drive to a distant family member she had just met and she would not feel so lonely. When she said that she did not want to be alone he got short with her. “I need a weekend by myself” and he went. She cried her heart out, at him for not understanding and for not asking what he could do to make things easier for her.

Caring

Natalie liked to give and get affection, but her husband did not touch her generally, unless it was sexual. They were standing by the window and Natalie spontaneously put her arm around her husband as they were talking. But he pushed her away, saying, “Don’t do that, someone might see it.” Natalie was totally bewildered. Was showing you cared about your husband a bad thing? She felt deflated and sad, because she thought he did not care for her the way she cared for him.

Love

Natalie had finally decided that after 22 years she had to leave the marriage, because there was nothing to salvage any more. Her love had died. Many a time she had told her husband that her love for him was dying every time he’d hurt her again. He never answered to that. When she told him she was leaving he cried, “Don’t leave me! I love you very much!” She said, “You’ve a funny way of showing it”. Then he said “I’ve been punishing you for something you did 10 years ago, and it hurt me. I was hurting and I needed to do something, so you would hurt as well.” Natalie was stunned, he’d never told her it had hurt, and he had only laughed it off when she had talked about it. She now wondered if she had not left, if she would have had to pay for this event for the rest of her life without knowing it.

Appendix 4 - Thank you-letter

Marianne Lammers
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23 May 1998

Dear Maria

Thank you so much for participating in my research on emotional abuse. You gave so much of yourself. The memories you shared were often painful for you in that you came to some new realisations. However, awareness gives strength. I really loved hearing you say on the last evening that you thought you might have made the move to get out of your marriage eventually, even if Paul had not gone. We were all sure you would have but to hear you say it was wonderful!

I would still appreciate it if you could write a page with your history that will give some context for the memories you shared with us. And could you tell me how Lionel reacted when you threw that plate of weetbix at him? I am comparing the reactions of the men when we physically attacked them out of exasperation and frustration.

I would also like to get back to you at some stage to share some of my findings. Therefore I ask you to let me know if you change your address or phone number, so I can stay in touch. It may not be until much later in the year as I still have a lot of work to do.

If you ever feel the need to talk about some of the things we shared I will be happy to listen, so don't hesitate to contact me.

Thank you again.

Warm regards

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