

BREAKING THE MIND-FORG'D MANACLES:

a study of adolescent transformation

Submitted by

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SUMMARY

This study has adopted the metaphor of ‘mind-forged manacles’ to explore adolescent transformation within an educational context. It does this by examining the experiences of two groups of people who participated in an intensive, one-off personal development program for adolescents, known as *Discovery*. The first study involves secondary school students for whom the program was part of the school curriculum. The second study consists of an older group of people who did the program during their adolescence and outside the formal education system. The third study is a contemplation of transformation derived from my experience as researcher during the course of completing this thesis.

In an attempt to reflect the aperspectival worldview from within which the study is created I have drawn on a range of theorists. To integrate their ideas I created three different ‘lenses’ or ways of viewing the data. The first lens is developed from consciousness theory, the second from process philosophy and complex self-organising systems theory, and the third from individual humanistic psychology. The educational pedagogy is holistic and embraces developmental models of thinking and learning. The study uses participant reflection to argue that a program of intentionally focussed challenges, combined with the support that enables these challenges to be successfully met, can be transformational for many young people. It suggests that the complex postmodern world requires teachers to be aware of their own and their students’ consciousness, and demands learning experiences that are deliberately focussed on helping the process of consciousness transformation rather than only on achieving predetermined outcomes. Transformation is understood as a shift to a different order of consciousness in which it is how one sees rather than what one sees that changes. With each shift towards a new order of consciousness the mind-forged manacles are loosed and individuals accept increasing responsibility for their lives and how they live them. Educational programs can be developed to assist this process.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis or any other degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures reported in the thesis were approved by the relevant Ethics Committee.

Signed:

Peta Heywood

Date:

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