

A phenomenological investigation of spirituality in outdoor recreation experiences

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners. I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

There exists a rich history of people describing meaningful moments during outdoor recreation as spiritual experiences. These involve connecting to something bigger than yourself, and recognizing your place in a larger universal system (Ashley, 2007; Fischer, 2011; Huss, 2014; Jirasek et al., 2017; Naor & Mayseless, 2019; Taylor & Egeto-Szabo, 2017). Although many different disciplines are beginning to explore this relationship, challenges exist in defining these moments, appropriate methodologies for studying them, and with illuminating a holistic understanding of experience. This study drew on Ingold's (2000) *Dwelling* and hermeneutic phenomenology to explore spiritual outdoor recreation experiences and proposed the use of an emplacement nexus to highlight the converging of histories, social and cultural understanding, and embodied experience within this phenomenon (Grimwood, 2015a; Pink, 2011). This theoretical orientation allowed for the essences of rhythms, the power of nature, and elements of purpose in life to emerge as tenants of spiritual experiences. It illuminated the importance of intentionality, balanced course design, and opportunities for reflection as vital to the facilitation of spiritual outdoor recreation experiences. This study hopes to move the outdoor recreation field towards an understanding of the ways humans exist as part of a larger universal system, and to extend empathy and caring towards the human and non-human elements that influence our lives.

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I acknowledge that the Outward Bound Mindfulness course, which is the focus of this study, took place on the traditional lands of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nation including the Ahousaht,

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* * *

I acknowledge that the University of Waterloo is situated on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee Peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of

the Grand River.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Meaningful Moments Outdoors

There exists a rich history of people experiencing meaningful or memorable moments during outdoor recreation experiences. People often describe a feeling of awe or insignificance as they stand at the base of a mountain they are about to climb, dwarfed by the sheer size and magnitude of the rock face standing before them. Or a feeling of connection and purpose as they watch a plant grow from the seed that they have watered and cared for. A growing body of knowledge is beginning to highlight the spiritual nature of these experiences and is exploring the implications of this perspective (Esfahani, Musa, & Khoo, 2017; Heintzman, 2010; Jirasek, Veselsky, & Poslt, 2017). These experiences vary from person to person, but the most memorable, transformative and powerful experiences are often characterized by intense emotions, heightened consciousness, feelings of oneness with the universe, and moments of transcendence (Fischer, 2011; Humberstone, 2013; Taylor & Egeto-Szabo, 2017). These experiences have the power to transform, shift perspective, realign values, enhance feelings of wellbeing, and even provide a feeling that people can spend their lives trying to recreate (Heintzman, 2002, 2010, 2020; Naor & Mayselless, 2019; Taylor & Egeto-Szabo, 2017).

The influential nature of these spiritual outdoor recreation experiences has led to a diverse array of disciplines investigating the causes, characteristics, and effects of these. They have been explored from the perspective of outdoor recreation, both eco and transpersonal psychology, and within the health and wellbeing literature. They have been looked at from a diverse body of knowledge and it is certain that there is much to be learned about human-nature relationships from exploring the spiritual dimension of these outdoor recreation experiences.

Although they are often recognized as spiritual, they have been explored under many different names and slightly different perspectives within the literature. They have been called psychologically deep, characterized by special, out-of-the-ordinary experiences with altered perceptions of time, self and surroundings (Fenton & Walker, 2016), moments of intense embodiment (Allen-Collinson & Leledaki, 2015), experiences of heightened consciousness (Humberstone, 2011), transcendent or ineffable experiences in the context of extreme outdoor sport participation (Brymer & Schweitzer, 2017), and awakening experiences characterized by expansion and intensification of awareness, and a sense of clarity revelation and wellbeing (Taylor & Egeto-Szabo, 2017). Although they have been discussed under many different names these experiences share many of the same characteristics. Taylor and Egeto Szabo (2017) propose the term awakening experiences over spiritual experiences, emphasizing the tendency for them to happen outside the context of spiritual traditions, the challenges with multiple interpretations of the word spirituality, and the ways in which the term awakening specifically depicts the expansive nature of these types of experiences. The current study argues that leaning into the tensions found within the complexities of the word spirituality will help to clarify a contemporary understanding of the word, emphasize a holistic understanding of experience, and aid in exploring the connection between spiritual outdoor recreation and holistic health and wellbeing.

Spiritual outdoor recreation has been explored through many different perspectives. Transcendentalist philosophers such as Muir and Thoreau often spoke of moments of heightened consciousness and spiritual connection in outdoor landscapes, attaching “profound spiritual and moral meaning to such experiences” that often evoked “feelings of connection to nature and perceptions of its sacredness” (Taylor, B., 2010, p. 67). Specific outdoor recreation activities,

such as climbing (Pond, 2013), gardening (Unruh & Hutchinson, 2011), and backcountry backpacking (Marsh & Bobilya, 2013) are among the many activities that have been explored as facilitators of spiritual experience. Authors have explored the antecedent conditions, triggers, characteristics, and outcomes of experiences as well as the manifold influences on experience such as setting (Foster, 2012; Schmidt & Little, 2007) and activity components such as movement and embodiment (Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Jirasek et al., 2017). Although emerging, many gaps and challenges still exist within this field.

1.2 Defining and Encompassing Experience

Many challenges emerge when studying spiritual outdoor recreation experiences. Along with the challenges of a multitude of different interpretations of spirituality, specifically defining spirituality or spiritual outdoor recreation in a research context presents challenges. Spirituality can be a fuzzy term, one plagued by discourse shifts in recent years, and is a term that has many different meanings that are often left unexplored (Huss, 2014). Some studies avoid defining all together, and advocate for leaving the meaning of spirituality up to participant interpretation (Heintzman, 2010; Jirasek et al., 2017). Although difficult to specifically define the term and include all important components, Ingman (2011) provides a general definition of the term. He understands spirituality as “the vehicle by which individuals connect with that which is beyond the self; providing the medium for personal connections with a much larger reality” (p. 144). The idea of connection to something bigger than yourself can facilitate a basic understanding of a very complex and multi-dimensional topic that will be explored further in subsequent sections.

Within the spiritual outdoor recreation literature there is a lack of a holistic understanding of experience. Understanding the essence of a spiritual outdoor recreation experience requires an exploration of the comingling of an array of different flows of energy; different people, past

experiences, interactions, elements, animals and thoughts coming together to exist within a meaningful moment in a particular outdoor landscape (Grimwood, 2015a; Pink, 2011). There is a tendency to compartmentalize components of the lived experience as opposed to exploring the converging of an array of different elements within a spiritual outdoor recreation experience. Studies will make connections between spirituality and the lived experience of outdoor recreation participants (Jirasek et al., 2017), focus specifically on embodied experience and heightened consciousness (Humberstone, 2010), or look at experience outcomes (Moal-Ulvoas, 2017). There is a lack of studies that consider the social context and histories of individuals, elements of the experience, and course outcomes together, even though it is the comingling of these many different elements that converge within this phenomenon.

Another challenge is choosing and utilizing a methodology that considers this holistic understanding of experience. Phenomenology is increasingly being recognized as a methodology to study this phenomenon (Jirasek et al., 2017; Foster, 2012; Pond, 2013; Unruh and Hutchinson, 2011), but these studies also struggle to encompass the entirety of a spiritual outdoor recreation experience.

1.3 Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the lived experience of participation in a Canadian Outward Bound mindfulness course, and its relationship to spiritual outdoor recreation. This study sought to address four interrelated questions: 1) What is the essence of experience during an 8-day Outward Bound Mindfulness course? 2) How does this essence relate to broader notions of spirituality? 3) What meanings of spirituality are experienced during the course? 4) How do meanings of spirituality influence the outcome of holistic health and wellbeing. This study drew on Ingold's (2000) *Dwelling and Hermeneutic Phenomenology*

taking a holistic perspective on the essence of experience, proposing an emplacement nexus to highlight the converging of histories, social and cultural understanding, and embodied experience within a place-event. It used reflexive journaling from the researcher perspective to study embodied experiences, and two separate semi-structured photo-elicitation interviews with study participants post-trip. This study explored the outcome of holistic health and wellbeing, looking at influences on participants overall and spiritual wellbeing. It proposes a contemporary understanding of spirituality, emphasizing the ways that activities traditionally not associated with spirituality, such as outdoor recreation, can elicit spiritual experiences.

1.4 Outward Bound and Mindfulness

The Outward Bound Mindfulness course was chosen as the context for this study due to the mindfulness focus and its connections to spirituality along with Outward Bound's focus on personal development, and enhancing connection with the natural world. Outward Bound is an outdoor educational organization that offers expeditions and programs for middle-school, high school, college students and adults (OBC, 2018). It began in 1941 in Aberdovey, Wales and has grown to include 42 centers around the world (OBC, 2018). Outward Bound Canada began in 1969 and is a not for profit outdoor educational organization that offers outdoor wilderness courses for Canadians (OBC, 2018). Studying spirituality in the context of an Outward Bound Mindfulness course naturally blends the worlds of outdoor recreation and spirituality in practice.

Mindfulness is an eastern spiritual practice that involves keeping one's consciousness in the present moment (Fischer, 2011). This course looked to blend traditional OBC practices with mindfulness practices such as yoga, meditation, and self-reflection (OBC, 2018). Brani, Hefferon, Lomas, Ivtzan, and Painter (2013) define mindfulness as "The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally to the

unfolding of experience moment by moment” (p. 98). Components of mindfulness include awareness, deep connection through listening, the ability to regulate emotions through breathing and stillness, and reaching enlightenment or feeling unity to a mysterious force (Trammel, 2017). Mindfulness has roots in Buddhism; it is spiritual in nature and can be an experience of transcendence (Trammel, 2017). Studying outdoor recreation experiences in the context of a mindfulness course allowed for an exploration of a specific situation where participants could feel open to spiritual outdoor recreation experiences. Course programming, group discussions, activity type, and the setting of this course all contributed to an atmosphere are all conducive to spiritual outdoor recreation experiences.

Outward Bound Canada’s mission statement is “to cultivate resilience, leadership, connection and compassion through inspiring and challenging journeys of self-discovery in the natural world” (OBC, 2018). A particular theme of spirituality involves deep connection to self, others, and the environment (Jirasek et al., 2017; Loeffler, 2004). This study aligns with OBC’s mission statement as it looks to understand these deeply connected, or potentially spiritual, outdoor recreation experiences holistically, and how they can influence holistic health outcomes. Overcoming challenging or risky situations in nature have also been found to enhance feelings of connectedness, and facilitate spiritual experiences (Allen-Collinson & Leledaki, 2015; Jirasek et al., 2017; Loeffler, 2004). The motto “there is more in you than you think” is the idea that informs OBC’s philosophical beliefs. This emphasis on challenge and inspiration aligns with the facilitation of spiritual outdoor recreation experiences in this study (OBC, 2018).

1.5 Academic and Social Contribution

This study looks to add to a growing body of literature that problematizes the nature culture divide within the field of outdoor recreation, by emphasizing a holistic approach to

exploring the essence of experience and in understanding spirituality. Increasingly studies are problematizing the dichotomous understanding of nature and culture within outdoor recreation, and the ways that it reproduces unsustainable human-environment relations (Grimwood, 2011, 2015a; Mullins, 2013). This binary has a tendency to present natural landscapes as static and singular, ignoring the influence of humans, culture, and multiplicity of many dynamic flows of energy (Grimwood, 2011, 2015a; Mullins, 2013). This study looked to move away from this perspective through methodological decision making and design to emphasize the wider ecology influencing spiritual outdoor recreation experiences. It also took this approach to defining spirituality, encompassing a postmodern perspective with many different interpretations and connections to outcomes such as holistic health and wellbeing (Huss, 2014). This perspective will continue to challenge current nature culture discourses found within outdoor recreation and help to provide an exploration of spiritual outdoor recreation that can be a part of a more sustainable approach.

This holistic approach will illuminate what spirituality can mean in a postmodern world as well as better understanding outcomes of spirituality such as health and wellbeing. Huss (2014) states within the latter half of the twentieth century, there have been significant changes in the understanding of spirituality and religion. He argues “contemporary spirituality challenges the division created in the modern era between the religious and the secular realms of life and enables the formation of new lifestyles, social practices, and cultural artifacts that cannot be defined as either religious or secular” (p. 47). Today, there are significant connections between the physical world, the body, and spiritual practices. Spirituality is also increasingly recognized as being separate from religion (Huss, 2013). Much of the literature on spirituality and outdoor recreation recognizes this distinction, and discusses a large number of people who are spiritual,

but not religious (Fischer, 2011; Huss, 2014; Jirasek et al., 2017, Pond, 2013). Today's spiritual practices more so focus on the self as opposed to grand narratives or theories, emphasizing a competitive individualism reflective of a postmodern capitalist society (Huss, 2014). This opens the door to a diverse array of spiritual beliefs, that reflect self-spirituality and individualism in the postmodern world. Understanding outdoor recreation as a possible spiritual experience can affect societies view on spirituality, and the way that people define their spiritual practices alone or in group settings.

There is also a growing body of academic knowledge that demonstrates the potential for outdoor recreation to enhance the holistic wellbeing of individuals (Clearly, Fielding, Bell, Murray, & Roiko, 2017; Fabjanski & Brymer, 2017; Korpela, Broudulin, Neuvonen, Paronen, & Tyrvaainen, 2014; Louv, 2008; McCurdy, Winterbottom, Mehta, & Roberts, 2010; White, Pahl, Wheeler, Depledge, & Fleming, 2017). Holistic wellbeing can be defined as a fluid process that emphasizes the interconnectedness of physical, mental, social, and spiritual domains of health and wellbeing (Chan, C. et al., 2014). There is a gap within this literature when understanding how outdoor recreation can enhance spiritual wellbeing, as well as a lack of understanding on the relationship between spirituality and outdoor recreation (Heintzman, 2002, 2010).

Heintzman (2002) defines spiritual wellbeing based on six different aspects; sense of purpose and meaning, oneness with nature and connectedness with others, deep concern for a commitment to something larger than the self, sense of wholeness, strong spiritual beliefs/values/ethics, and love, peace, joy, and fulfilment. Capaldi, Passmore, Nisbet, Zelenski, and Dopko (2015) place spiritual wellbeing within eudemonic wellbeing. Eudemonic wellbeing includes the constructs "meaning, autonomy, validity, and feelings of transcendence" (p. 6), and transcendent components include feelings of awe, inspiration, connection to a greater whole, and

spiritual exaltation (Capaldi et al., 2015). Heintzman’s review of the literature found that one-time outdoor recreation experiences influenced spiritual wellbeing in homogeneous groups, but not necessarily in groups with different backgrounds (2010). His review did identify positive relationships to be found between frequency of outdoor recreation participation and spiritual wellbeing (Heintzman, 2010).

Many studies lack a long-term focus on the effects of spiritual outdoor recreation experiences on holistic health and wellbeing (Capaldi et al., 2015; Heintzman, 2010). There is a need to understand how, or if, meanings of spirituality in outdoor recreation can influence the holistic health and wellbeing of participants. Exploring this relationship can potentially enhance individual wellness and illuminate different ways groups of people can achieve a sense of holistic health and wellbeing.

1.6 Subjectivity Statement

Staying consistent with the hermeneutic phenomenology used in this study, I will include my own perspective and experience of outdoor recreation in many different aspects of this study. Hermeneutic phenomenology values the researchers perspective in understanding experience. Fendt, Wilson, Jenkins, Dimmock, and Weeks (2014) state Heidegger’s method “values the researcher’s own understandings and experiences, viewing them as a crucial tool for interpretations of the experiential descriptions” (p. 402). This highlights the importance of recognizing my own subjectivity within this study. Johnson and Parry (2016) state “subjectivity is the personal view of an individual and, more broadly, the lived experience of that individual in historical, physical, and political contexts” (p. 45). As a recreation and leisure studies graduate and former Canadian University varsity volleyball athlete, I have always been passionate about recreation, holistic health and wellbeing, and issues of movement and embodiment. More

recently, opportunities for immersive outdoor recreation and tourism experiences have led to an interest in the exploration of meaningful and spiritual experiences during outdoor recreation. My own meaningful, spiritual outdoor recreation experiences became the catalyst for a shift in my perspective, values, and beliefs regarding my relationship with outdoor landscapes. Taylor (2010) states that spiritual growth depends on “a reorientation of observations and loyalties concerning the nature to which a person has access, namely to the local bioregion” (p. 53). These experiences for me were powerful enough to influence the spiritual growth and deeper connection to my local environment, as well as facilitated the discovery of outdoor recreation as a tool for my own holistic health and wellbeing.

Although this is my own experience, within this study it will be important that I remain open to the multiplicity and fluidity of others subjective outdoor recreation experiences. I am interested in understanding the differences as well as the overlap of my own experiences with others, highlighting the importance of my reflexive journaling and in-depth, collaborative photo-elicitation interviews. The reflexive journaling I used as a method in this study helped to continually reflect on my subjectivity as it influenced research decisions while critically reflecting on differences in experience. It also helped me to reflect on my own privileged position within this study. I am a white Canadian female who grew up in a privileged home, who could afford organized sport, travel, and graduate studies. I am comfortable in outdoor settings and participating in outdoor recreation activities partly because of the historically white nature and locations of outdoor recreation, a relative lack of structural inequalities affecting my existence, and my exposure to these types of activities (Rose & Paisley, 2012). Ultimately, understanding my own subjectivity will provide space to critique and reflect on how it will influence this thesis.

Transcendentalist philosopher John Muir famously stated, “when we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe” (Muir, 1988, p. 110). Transcendentalists such as Emerson, Thoreau, and Muir often found in outdoor landscapes the promise of becoming more purely connected to the universe. Ingman (2011) states “the universal value of spirituality was perhaps the cornerstone of the American transcendental philosophy; the human has a spirit, and this spirit has the ability to connect with that which is beyond the self” (p. 149). Muir spoke of “dramatic, ecstatic experiences in nature, that like much mysticism, erased his perception of individuality and intensified his feeling of being a part of a greater cosmic whole” (Taylor, 2010, p. 63). This understanding of spirituality emphasizes a recognition of one’s place with a much larger universal system; a recognition of the multiple interdependent flows of energy that we exist within as humans. This study’s holistic methodological approach attempts to weave the manifold elements of life together, illuminating this meshwork of existence in both theory and practice. It looks to explore the essence of a spiritual outdoor recreation experience through a methodology reflective of the spiritual experiences it looks to uncover.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The relationship between outdoor experiences and spirituality is a complicated, multifaceted, and interconnected relationship, that has intrigued academics, philosophers, and humanity for centuries. The following section will begin to explore this relationship by defining spirituality and conceptualizing important perspectives of this study. It will discuss the terms spirituality and religion together and outline the perspectives on nature, wilderness, the outdoors and outdoor recreation that will act as the foundation of this study. It will highlight the ways this phenomenon has been studied in the past and move to a discussion of the elements of experience such as antecedent conditions, triggers, characteristics, embodied experiences and outcomes. It will conclude with a discussion of outdoor recreation and holistic health and wellbeing.

2.1 Spirituality and Outdoor Recreation

2.1.1 Spirituality

As mentioned previously there are many challenges in defining spirituality. Allowing participants to self-define spirituality (Heintzman, 2010), using multiple terms to discuss spiritual topics (i.e. heightened consciousness, meaningful experience, intense embodiment) (Allen-Collinson & Leledaki, 2016), and multiple interpretations with a tendency to liken spirituality to religion (Taylor & Pond, 2013) are all challenges faced when defining this term. Often studies define spirituality based on themes instead of a singular definition. Huss (2014) defined spirituality based on the themes of “a source of value and meaning beyond oneself, a way of understanding, inner awareness...[and] a journey which is intimately linked with the pursuit of personal growth and development” (p. 49). When defining spirituality in the context of outdoor recreation, a review of the literature identified inner and outer connection, value and meaning beyond oneself, a heightened state of consciousness, and an element of awe or wonder

as the most frequently recognized themes (Ashley, 2007; Fischer, 2011; Huss, 2014; Jirasek et al., 2017). Jirasek et al. (2017) also “perceived spirituality as a common aspect of shared humanness and at the same time as something that is highly individual and personal in the sense of being a specific human approach to interpreting and showing what brings the experience and the context” (p. 4). The literature also puts a large emphasis on spirituality as a search for meaning that guides an individual’s values and beliefs, emphasizing the process of growth and learning within this search (Naor & Mayseless, 2019). These themes will be used to define and inform the meaning of spirituality throughout this study.

2.1.2 Religion

Spirituality can also be defined here as distinct from religion and is distinguished as the broader reality that involves a search for purpose and meaning (Fischer, 2011). Huss (2014) states “many people today, mostly those in the West, declare themselves to be spiritual, but not religious” (p. 47). This phrase is echoed by Fischer (2011) who highlights how those who identify as spiritual but not religious can still seek a deeper dimension of their lives even if disillusioned with conventional religion. Spirituality transcends religion and does not necessarily have to be pursued in a religious institution (Chan, C. et al., 2014; Fischer, 2011; Huss, 2014).

In the past, within the academic literature and public opinion, religion has been seen as parallel to spirituality, and the two have been used interchangeably (Pond, 2013). Increasingly people are beginning to recognize and emphasize the difference between the two. Pond (2013) separates the two by identifying spirituality as more individual, and religion as the more social dimension of the two. With religion “there is an organization, prescribed actions (e.g. rituals, rites, prayers etc.), other individuals, and non-sacred feelings and emotions that are involved with the search of spirituality” (Pond, 2013, p. 31). It is also important to recognize the diversity

and fluidity within spiritual practices in the post-modern world. Spirituality can involve structured, institutionalized practices within a church setting, meditation or yoga influenced by a certain religious doctrine, or it can involve practices that are unique and personal to each individual such as surfing or climbing.

2.1.3 Nature, Wilderness, and the Outdoors

When discussing outdoor landscapes as part of the context of this study, the literature often refers to nature-based or wilderness experiences. Scholarship in this field is beginning to critically analyze the implications of such a discourse that suggests a landscape separate from human influence with a tendency to reproduce a nature vs culture dualism (Mullins, 2009, 2013; Grimwood 2011, 2015a). Allen-Collinson and Leledaki (2015) defined nature as “environments in which the influence of humans is minimal or non-obvious, to living components of that environment (such as trees...), and to non-animate natural environmental features” (p. 458). Marsh and Bobilya (2013) define backcountry as an area of wilderness that is challenging to access and requires effort and skill to navigate it successfully. Here wilderness has been defined as equivalent to backcountry. Ashley (2007) defines wilderness based on the 1964 US Wilderness act; “where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain...an area of undeveloped...land retaining its primitive and unconfined type of recreation” (Ashley, 2007, p. 59).

Both of these definitions are problematic in perpetuating dichotomous understandings and “hiding influences that human discourses have upon and within spaces of nature, thereby rewriting misplaced modern assumptions” (Grimwood, 2011, p. 50). Definitions that refer to a ‘pristine’ wilderness where humans are simply visitors also erases the “historical and contemporary presence of aboriginal inhabitants” (Grimwood, 2015a, p. 5). As the definition of

spirituality in this study looks to emphasize the interconnectedness of all beings and things, this conceptualization of nature and wilderness spirituality reveals a contradiction within the literature. This study will use the term spiritual outdoor recreation as an attempt to move away from these dichotomous understandings, recognizing the social, cultural and historical influences within these human-nature understandings.

Although it will recognize these tensions, it will also remain open to individuals perspectives on nature, wilderness and outdoors as well as what constitutes outdoor recreation. In a study exploring the spiritual benefits of nature through climbing, Pond (2013) found “each participants perspective was nuanced and individualized, with several aspects in the relationship between nature and spirituality” (p. 64). Outdoor landscapes can be better understood in terms of the subjectivity of the individual experiencing them. Heintzman (2010) states that although the reasons vary, “being in nature, whether in the backyard or a remote wilderness setting, [is] an important component that influences the spiritual outcomes of outdoor recreation” (p. 78). The following literature review will discuss studies on spiritual outdoor recreation using the discourses used by each author, while recognizing some of the tensions within this field. It will also emphasize the discourses used and lived experiences of course participants in their own words and understanding.

2.1.4 Spiritual Outdoor Recreation

Within the literature many studies exist that explore the relationship between outdoor recreation and spirituality. The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (2015) defines recreation as “the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing” (p. 8). Emphasized within much of the literature is the inherent satisfaction and perception of free

choice of recreation. Post-modern spirituality explained by Huss (2013) emphasizes a cultural shift from grand narratives and institutionalized practices to a much more individualized practice. Spirituality and spiritual practices no longer include only church services, but include meditation, yoga, mindfulness and outdoor experiences. In this sense, post-modern spiritual practices can be thought of as recreation due to participation in one's free time and an intrinsic individual motivation. Spirituality does not always overlap with recreation, as it is not always a practice that is freely chosen. This study will look to emphasize the connections between recreation and spirituality following the post-modern definition of Huss (2013) but will remain open to individuals subjective experiences and understandings of spirituality that may not align with this understanding.

Outdoor recreation is characterized by recreation that occurs outdoors in a diverse array of environments such as urban, rural, marine and terrestrial with a central feature of some type of interaction between recreationists and 'an element of nature', also emphasizing the subjective and personal nature of these experiences (Jenkins & Pigram, 2006). A diverse array of outdoor recreation activities have been studied in the context of spiritual outdoor recreation such as surfing (Taylor, 2010), trekking or hiking (Jirasek et al., 2017), backcountry adventure (Marsh & Bobilya, 2013), climbing (Pond, 2013), windsurfing (Humberstone, 2011) and gardening (Fischer, 2011; Unruh & Hutchinson, 2011). Heintzman (2010) also synthesized much of the literature on outdoor recreation and spirituality, creating a framework identifying key themes of empirical findings on this relationship that will be explained below.

In his book *Dark Green Religion; Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future*, Bron Taylor dedicates a full chapter to discussing the spiritual nature of surfing, and those that identify as soul surfers (2010). Taylor (2010) states the surfing experience "connects the surfer to nature,

its energies, and its wild creatures, expressing the spirituality of belonging and connection that typifies dark green religion” (p. 104). Dark-green religion is described in this book as a “deep sense of belonging to and connectedness in nature, while perceiving the earth and its living systems to be sacred and interconnected” (Taylor, 2010, p. 13). Taylor’s idea of dark green religion is defined based on many of the themes found within spirituality related to the outdoors. The differences lie within the structure, customs, and practices of activities such as surfing that make it a religious activity. Taylor (2010) identifies the idea of soul surfers, or those who consider surfing a religious or spiritual activity. These individuals can see surfing as “the pure act of riding on a pulse of nature’s energy...[bringing a] magic that only comes from spending time on the moving canvas” (p. 105).

Jirasek et al. (2017) studied the spiritual aspects of a two-week long outdoor winter-trekking course, focusing on the nature component of the experience. The authors used a mixed methods approach, and found that many participants experienced strong connections, heightened consciousness, were affectively moved to deeper understanding, and experienced awe and wonder from the course (Jirasek et al., 2017). The course experience “had the power to make them reflect on their lives from a new perspective and thus find deeper meaning” (Jirasek et al., 2017). Marsh and Bobilya (2013) studied backcountry adventure as a spiritual experience and found similar themes of transcendence, increase in self-awareness, and connection with self, others and nature, aligning with much of the spirituality and outdoor recreation literature. Adventure was defined here as a type of outdoor recreation; “an outdoor experience requiring effort, including risk and uncertainty, and providing excitement and interaction with nature” (Marsh & Bobilya, 2013, p. 75). Backcountry was defined as “an area of wilderness that requires skill and effort to access, and the study emphasized the wilderness setting as important in

facilitating spiritual experiences (Marsh & Bobilya, 2013, p. 75). This study looked at many different types of outdoor recreation including skiing, snowboarding, backpacking, and climbing.

Climbing was explored specifically by Pond (2013), who used grounded theory influenced by phenomenology to study the role that climbing plays in the spirituality of climbers. This study found “most participants reported that climbing was the exclusive or most powerful means in their lives for yielding spiritual outcomes” (Pond, 2013, p. 52). Pond (2013) identified spiritual or transcendent experience, the importance of the natural environment, connecting with others or spiritual fellowship, spirituality independent from religion influenced by climbing, and experience i.e. climbing and life experience as the 5 major themes in the relationship between spirituality and climbing.

Humberstone (2011) discussed the affective embodiment of physical activity in the natural environment, focusing on windsurfing. She highlighted how strong connections with the environment through sensory interactions and the sentient nature of embodiment, often result in spiritual experiences. She identifies that often in the outdoor recreation literature moments of heightened consciousness have been associated with flow, but argues that flow hides the sensory nature of experience, affective embodiment, and practice in-nature of such experiences (Humberstone, 2011). “By unpacking flow in the here and now and grounding it in the affective of the practitioner, the notion of a spiritual experience emerges” (Humberstone, 2011, p. 505).

Unruh and Hutchinson (2011) found that gardening had a deep spiritual dimension for participants, through the connectedness between humans and the plants they were growing as well as gardening expressed as a dimension of inner being, and gardening as a spiritual journey. Participants of this study stated, “for me personally it’s just I think probably spiritual more than anything else” and “there is something spiritual about gardening, but I am not sure what it is—if

it's the new growth. Maybe it's just the tranquility of it" (Unruh & Hutchinson, 2011, p. 57). Fischer (2011) also identified gardening as a source of spiritual inspiration for older adults, emphasizing how gardening illuminates "a spirituality of aging that underscores the role of nature in the lives of older adults [that] empowers them to respond to global environmental concerns in positive ways" (Fischer, 2011, p. 172). Gardens can act as a diary of the passing seasons; providing a place to meditate, connect with nature, remember, and imagine (Fischer, 2011).

Much of the literature on spirituality and outdoor recreation has been synthesized into a framework identifying components that influence spiritual outcomes. The framework is organized into antecedent conditions, setting, and recreation components that lead to spiritual outcomes including short term outcomes, long term outcomes, and leisure spiritual coping (Heintzman, 2010). Antecedent conditions are peoples characteristics prior to participation and include personal history and circumstance, attitude and motivation, socio-demographics, and spiritual tradition. Setting components include nature, being away, and place processes. Finally recreation components include activity, time alone, solitude, group experiences, and facilitation (Heintzman, 2010). Heintzman (2010) emphasizes short-term outcomes such as spiritual experiences, long-term outcomes such as spiritual wellbeing, deeply connected relationships, and meaning in life. Leisure-spiritual coping is also identified as a long-term spiritual outcome, which Heintzman (2010) defined as the coping strategies people develop related to spirituality, through leisure practices, that can be used in times of life stress. The relationship between outdoor recreation and spirituality is increasingly being explored in an academic context and the components of said relationship are emerging within the field.

2.2 Elements of Experience

Spiritual outdoor recreation experiences are influenced by a multitude of diverse components, that can be unique to each individual person. The following section will explore some of the antecedent conditions, triggers, characteristics, and outcomes of a spiritual outdoor recreation experience. A discussion of triggers will refer to Taylor and Egeto-Szabo's (2017) research on awakening experiences highlighting triggers in both spiritual and non-spiritual contexts. Characteristics of a spiritual outdoor recreation experience will draw on different elements of the larger body of knowledge and outcomes will focus on holistic health and wellbeing as well as spiritual leisure coping.

2.2.1 Antecedent Conditions

Individuals move into an outdoor recreation experience influenced by the social structures that surround them; language, spiritual traditions, life events, and subjective experience all influence how people experience outdoor recreation. Fendt et al. (2014) discuss the idea of 'situated freedom' found within hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenological inquiry. "Humans are free to make choices, yet there is no absolute freedom because their choices are inhibited by specific circumstances of their lives" (p. 404). This idea emphasizes the importance of understanding the circumstances that inhibit or enable certain experiences. Heintzman (2010) identified history and circumstance, motivations and attitude, demographics and spiritual tradition as antecedent conditions that influence the ability of people to have a spiritual experience. History and circumstance refer to the intentions or baggage people bring into experience such as feelings of fear and anxiety about outdoor recreation (Fox, 1999; Heintzman, 2010). Heintzman (2010) identifies the ability of motivations and attitude to influence the ability of a person to experience a spiritual outcome and are closely related to an individual's intention behind participation. Spiritual tradition or previous exposure to different

spiritualties or religions were also found to influence individuals ability to verbalize or have a spiritual outdoor recreation experience (Heintzman, 2010).

Fredrickson and Anderson (1999) studied participants of an outdoor recreation trip in both the Grand Canyon and the Boundary Waters Canoe area. They found “participants viewed this trip experience within the larger context of their lives, lived elsewhere, making occasional comparisons between what had occurred on the trip vs that at home” (Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999, p. 27). Participants of this study consistently journaled about their experience in relation to things that were going on at home. Bartos (2013) states “the relationships we have with an object is largely dependent on the histories we have with the object and the relational histories of that object with other objects” (p. 90).

Histories of marginalization and privilege are social contexts that must be discussed when attempting to understand spirituality and outdoor recreation. Outdoor spaces are often associated with a history of marginalization for minority populations. Martin (2004) states “for both blacks and native Americans, wilderness places may be tied more to the history of domination, enslavement, and lynching at the hands of whites than to any romanticized idea about back to nature” (p. 517). There are structural barriers in place for minority populations to access or experience comfort within outdoor recreation contexts. Traditional outdoor recreation activities such as backpacking, ropes, and orienteering are resource reliant in terms of equipment, time, and money (Rose & Paisley, 2012). They have also been socially understood as ‘white activities’ due to racial inequalities. Historical patterns of discrimination leading to limited economic resources, differing norms and values, and perceived current discrimination are just a few factors that will influence minority populations outdoor recreation experience (Rose & Paisley, 2012). Individuals do not enter an outdoor recreation experience as a blank slate, and their ability to be

open to experiencing spirituality during outdoor recreation is greatly influenced by such antecedent conditions. These subjectivities and underlying social structures must be considered to reach a holistic understanding of an outdoor recreation experience.

2.2.2 Triggers

In a study looking at awakening experiences, Taylor and Egeto-Szabo (2017) found psychological turmoil, nature, spiritual practice, and spiritual literature as the main triggers to these types of experiences. Psychological turmoil included stress, depression, bereavement, or loss, and spiritual practice is defined as activities such as meditation, prayer or yoga. This study found 32% of these types of experiences to happen in tradition spiritual contexts (meditation, prayer, yoga) with 65% happening within non-spiritual context (psychological turmoil, nature, relaxation, and love). The post-modern definition of spirituality included in this study emphasizes the ways that non-traditional activities and practices such as those experienced in an outdoor setting can be deemed spiritual (Huss, 2013). These triggers also demonstrate the close link between spiritual outdoor recreation experiences and holistic health and wellbeing through the emphasis on psychological turmoil as a trigger to spiritual experiences.

Many studies have explored the ‘nature’ setting as a trigger to spiritual outdoor recreation experiences (Foster, 2012; Heintzman, 2010; Kaplan, 1996; Pond, 2013; Schmdit & Little, 2007). This can be attributed to the ability of these spaces to evoke awe, provide opportunities for peaceful reflection and challenge participants both mentally and physically providing an opportunity for growth. Schmidt and Little (2007) found “nature influenced the respondents in different ways but was a commonly shared context that sparked leisure experiences that were spiritual” (p. 235). Outdoor settings are conducive to spiritual experiences as they can evoke

awe, provide opportunities for deep connection, allow for solitude and deep reflection, and facilitate challenges for participants. It is through direct sensory engagement with the natural environment that these outcomes come to be. Fischer (2011) states “attending to nature evokes awe, and awe is the root of all spirituality” (p. 174). Schmidt & Little (2007) found that participants who experienced outdoor leisure “were inspired by the majesty of their environment, gained a greater sense of their place in the world, and experienced peace and wholeness” (p. 236). Foster (2012) found that viewing the beauty of wilderness settings were often awe-inspiring influencing feelings of intense emotions.

Closely related to a sense of awe is the ability for these landscapes to provide opportunities for meaningful connection to the natural world. The awe-inspiring nature of these landscapes can inspire people to connect with a higher power, or connect with something greater than themselves (Loeffler, 2004; Jirasek et al., 2017). Activities such as caring for an outdoor garden can also provide the opportunity to find connection beyond the self. Unruh and Hutchinson (2011) state “the gardener contributes to the welfare of the garden, and the garden responds in the way it grows and develops” (Unruh & Hutchinson, 2011, p. 569). This activity is very interactive and connected; gardeners are faced with the life and death of plants are reminded of the fragility of their own human life (Unruh & Hutchinson, 2011).

The literature also highlights the ways in which spending time in these landscapes can provide an opportunity for peaceful solitude and reflection. Foster (2012) states that vastness and size of the landscape, as well as the opportunity to leave civilization behind was among the most cited examples that influenced spiritual experiences. Being away from day to day life allowed people the space to reflect on life’s questions, values, and gain a sense of peace and tranquility (Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Foster, 2012; Heintzman, 2010). Heintzman (2010) states “time

spent alone in nature also enhanced the opportunity to listen, watch, explore and reflect upon nature” (p. 80). The opportunities for solitude in wilderness settings away from day to day environments and the provided “mental space needed to think and reflect” (Foster, 2012, p. 95) are important components of the outdoor recreation and spirituality relationship. Although helpful in highlighting the importance of peaceful solitude and reflection, it is important to note how an emphasis on ‘getting away’ from everyday life is another example of the separation between nature and culture found within much of the outdoor recreation literature.

The trigger of challenge that wilderness settings often provide can also facilitate spiritual experiences. In a study that looked at wilderness canoe trips, participants who identified as having spiritual leisure experiences “spoke of the role of challenge in altering their perceptions of self, enhancing their awareness, pushing their boundaries of knowledge and perceptions and triggering leisure experiences that were spiritual” (Schmidt & Little, 2007, p. 238). Marsh and Bobilya (2013) identified how “attributes of backcountry and adventure are linked to the consequence of challenge, which is in turn linked to some value set termed as a spiritual experience” (p. 86).

Often risk and inclement weather are associated with this type of challenge, illuminating the power of nature, and influencing intense embodied experiences (Allen-Collinson & Leledaki, 2015). The discomfort brought about by inclement weather was a challenge for participants in a winter outdoor trekking course and offered the possibility to overcome and confront challenges in nature (Jirasek et al., 2017). Overcoming challenge is associated with risk and being confronted with risk has often been associated with spiritual outcomes. Schmidt and Little (2007) found that for some of their participants who experienced spiritual outdoor recreation “there was a vision of growth and new possibilities as they overcame challenges or saw the world from a

different light” (p. 239). Through challenge, individuals can learn more about themselves, their abilities, overcome fear, and connect with spiritual beliefs (Schmidt & Little, 2007). North American Philosopher Edmund Burke identified how “the sacred is experienced especially in wild, untamed nature, for example, in powerful oceans, dangerous dark forests, and encounters with fierce wild animals” (Taylor, 2010, p. 45). The triggers of these experiences vary from person to person but spending time in these landscapes are one of the most commonly mentioned triggers.

2.2.3 Characteristics

Characteristics of these experiences often center around intense emotional affect (often positive), and different elements of transcendence. Taylor and Egeto-Szabo (2017) highlight positive affect, intensified perception (aliveness/light/brightness), and connection or oneness as the most common characteristics of spiritual or awakening experiences. Spiritual experiences are cited as being emotionally intense, and in many cases involve positive emotions such as joy, harmony, or appreciation (Heintzman, 2010; Stringer & McAvoy, 1992; Taylor & Egeto-Szabo, 2017). Spiritual experiences also contain feelings of enhanced connection to others, self-awareness, and a transcendent understanding of a universal whole (Marsh & Bobilya, 2013). It is common with these experiences to feel a sense of “absorption in something greater than [the] self, a feeling as if all things were alive, [and] a revelation of ultimate reality (Taylor & Egeto-Szabo, 2017, p. 47). When discussing the characteristics of these experiences many studies draw on James’ (1902/1985) emphasis on ineffability, a noetic quality (revelation or illumination), transiency, and passivity (involuntary).

These experiences can also be characterized by different intensities. Taylor and Egeto-Szabo (2017) explored low, medium and high intensity awakening experiences. Low intensities

involve heightened awareness, where ones surroundings feel more real and alive, a clarity of vision and heightened physical perception. Medium become more powerful and influential where “things are pervaded with—or manifestations of—a benevolent and radiant spirit force...the individual may feel a part of this oneness, realizing that he or she is not a separate ego” (Taylor & Egeto-Szabo, 2017, p. 47). Medium and low intensity experiences are found to be quite common and include “a strong sense of compassion and love for others, recognizing that other individuals are part of the same spiritual ground as them” (Taylor & Egeto-Szabo, 2017, p. 47). High intensity spiritual experiences are much less common, and can involve a dissolving of the material world and a sense of I’ “with expanded consciousness beyond normal self-awareness, where individuals “may feel that they are the universe” (Taylor & Egeto-Szabo, 2017, p. 47).

2.2.4 Embodied Experience and the Senses

Spiritual outdoor recreation experiences are also often characterized as intensely embodied experience and direct sensory engagement with outdoor landscapes. Transcendentalist such as Thoreau emphasize direct sensory contact with outdoor spaces; “Thoreau made his deepest spiritual connections with nature through cognizance of his own sensuous experience; spirituality was couched within the aesthetic experience of nature” (Ingman, 2011, p. 153). Brani et al., (2013) define embodiment as “the felt experience of our own bodies” (p. 95).

Embodiment is the illumination of human experience from the inside out, paying close attention to bodily details and “acknowledging human life as embedded in and of the world in which we live” (Dufrechou, 2004, p. 359). Affective embodiment looks to understand the emotions and feelings associated with physical sensory practice, as outdoor recreation activities are interconnected with the feeling, emotional, and sensing body. The emotions, senses, and unique bodily connections within outdoor recreation are associated with spiritual experiences.

In the moment of experience there is a complex interaction between the mind, the body, and the world. The natural environment with its plethora of fascinating stimuli naturally engages sensory interactions (Kaplan, 1995). Abram (1996) states:

the breathing, sensing body draws its sustenance and its very substance from the soils, plants, and elements that surround it; it continually contributes itself, in turn, to the air, to the composting earth... ceaselessly spreading out of itself as well as breathing the world into itself, so that it is very difficult to discern at any moment precisely where this living body begins and where it ends (p. 46).

Human experience is grounded in sensory interactions and the fluidity between the body and the world around it. The body is “continually improvising its relation to things in the world” (Abram, 1996, p. 47). It is through the senses that individuals develop relationships with places, and how they develop a meaningful connection to the environment around them. Bartos (2013) found that through the senses children develop a sense of place in the natural world; defining sense of place as “an affective bond that develops between people and locations over time” (Bartos, 2013, p. 89). The senses are a vital component of our direct experience in the natural world, mediating relationships and exploring human-nature connection.

Allen-Collinson and Leledaki (2015) studied the lived experience of organized physical activity in outdoor leisure environments and emphasized the visual and haptic sensory experience as major contributors to ‘intense embodiment’ experiences. “The senses mediate the relationship between self and society, mind and body, idea and object” (Allen-Collinson & Leledaki, 2015, p. 460). Fredrickson and Anderson (1999) state “wilderness experience itself creates a unique combination of extreme states of consciousness and increased sensory acuity which can lead to the more meaningful aspects of outdoor experiences” (p. 23). The outdoor recreation field has begun to call for an enhanced engagement with the body and the senses, as

few activities are so deeply connected with the perceiving, thinking, moving, and feeling body (Allen-Collinson & Leledaki, 2015; Fendt et al., 2014, Humberstone, 2011).

The spiritual dimension of movement has also been emphasized within the literature as many physical activities are often associated with spirituality (Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Huss, 2013; Jirasek et al., 2017). Outdoor recreational activities such as hiking, canoeing, kayaking, windsurfing, and climbing involve movement through the natural environment and constant change of perceptions and awareness; the body and the equipment used for recreation must anticipate and react to movement through the environment (Humberstone, 2011). Using the example of windsurfing, Humberstone (2011) states that within outdoor recreation “It is the body anticipating and reacting to the randomness, chaos, or spatial patterning created by the elements that constitutes the embodied practices and body pedagogies in nature-based habitus” (p. 506). Fendt et al. (2014) highlight how surfing brings people to the essence of existing and that “ones physical clutter must be dropped so only the surfboard and the body are in immediate presence and the surfer must allow his or her mind and spirit to be subservient to nature’s forces” (p. 404). This movement requires a unique and meaningful connection to the landscapes one inhabits, to the equipment of the activity, and an attuning to activity of inner consciousness that are often associated with spirituality.

Multiple participants in Fredrickson and Anderson’s (1999) study expressed deep connection as the body moved through nature, and emphasized the ways nature moved through the participant. When staring at the stars and Orion’s belt during a trip through the Grand Canyon, one participant stated “I felt a complete merging with the surrounding environment. Instead of sitting back and observing it, it’s like I was moving into it in some way, or rather it was moving into me” (Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999, p. 31). Another participant in this study

felt the same interconnected merging with the surrounding environment; “instead of sitting back and observing it in the landscape, it’s like I was moving into it in some way, or it was moving into me” (Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999, p. 34). This notion is echoed by Abram (1996) as he discusses the fluidity of the human body; instead of finite boundaries the human body acts as a membrane “defining a surface of metamorphosis and exchange” (p. 46). During outdoor recreation experience humans move through the natural world, using their senses to engage with a continuously changing landscape, influencing deep conscious connections with the activity.

Studies also discuss the haptic sense involved in outdoor recreation activities. Allen-Collinson and Leledaki (2015) define haptic as referring to a “Kinesthesia (a sense of movement), proprioception (one’s felt-body position in space) and the vestibular system (sense of balance)” (p. 464). They further define proprioception as “the perception of one’s body in space, and also our inward perception, for example, of deep muscles and tissues” (Allen-Collinson & Leledaki, 2015). Humberstone (2011) discusses the importance of haptic knowledge and interaction between the body and the kit while windsurfing. “The two hands, the two feet, and the hips or torso all need to make fine adjustments that alter the relationship between the rig and the board” (p. 501). The equipment becomes an extension of the body, both reacting to the wind and the water (Humberstone, 2011). Heightened consciousness and affective embodiment found within haptic experiences are both elements of spiritual outdoor recreation experiences.

2.3 Outcomes; Holistic Health and Wellbeing

There is a lack of exploration of many of the outcomes of these experiences, which is especially true when looking to understanding long term outcomes of experience (Heintzman, 2010). Taylor and Egeto-Szabo (2017) discuss primary and secondary shifts as outcomes of these experiences. Primary shifts are associated with high intensity awakening experiences and deeply

rooted fundamental life shifts. They can involve a feeling or awakening, spiritual transformation, a new sense of identity, or a feeling of being reborn. Secondary shifts are less of a transformation of identity but a shift in perspective and values, often associated with low to medium intensity experiences (Taylor & Egeto-Szabo, 2017). Secondary shifts are associated with spiritual outdoor recreation experiences, yet often this shift of perception and values can be short lived and it is also unclear on the long term stay-ability of these shifts. A component of this potential shift is the outcome of holistic health and wellbeing. The next section will begin to explore the relationship between spiritual outdoor recreation experiences and holistic health and wellbeing.

2.3.1 Holistic Health and Wellbeing

Holistic health and wellbeing has been identified within the literature as an outcome of spiritual outdoor recreation experiences. Taylor (2010) identified how many transcendentalists such as John Muir, believed in the healing powers of nature. “Muir found a divine harmony in nature that was absent in human civilization and articulated many now famous and often quoted aphorisms of metaphysical and ecological interdependence” (p. 63). Taylor (2010) also highlights Thoreau’s emphasis on direct sensory connection with nature as an important component of human health. “Life consists with wildness. The most alive is the wildest. Not yet subdued to man, its presence refreshes him” (p. 229). ‘Soul Surfers’ are familiar with the healing powers of spiritual outdoor recreation experiences (Taylor, 2010). Taylor (2010) discusses how deep connections to mother ocean provide opportunity for transformation, strength, serenity, and physical and physiological healing.

2.3.2 Outdoor Recreation and Holistic Health and Wellbeing

Outdoor recreation experiences have been identified to influence many elements of holistic wellbeing, but in the past there has been a lack of understanding on the relationship

between outdoor recreation and spiritual wellbeing. The following section will review the relationship between outdoor recreation and components of holistic wellbeing. It will look to emphasize the spiritual wellbeing and outdoor recreation relationship, illuminating this potential outcomes of spiritual outdoor recreation

The current research explores the ways outdoor recreation can enhance the elements of physical, mental, emotional, and social wellbeing. Physical health can be defined here as “the ability of all body systems to function efficiently and effectively” (Heintzman, 2002, p. 150). McCurdy, Winterbottom, Mehta, and Roberts (2010) found a strong correlation with outdoor activity and increased physical health in children. Children who played outside and had access to parks, hiking trails, and recreation infrastructure were found to be increasingly active, mitigating many negative effects of sedentary behavior (McCurdy et al., 2010). They also found that physical activity increased by twenty-seven minutes a week and the prevalence of being overweight dropped from forty-one percent, to twenty-seven percent for every additional hour children spent outdoors (McCurdy et al., 2010). The findings are similar for adults as Coombes, Jones, and Hillsdon (2010) found that having adequate access to high quality green space leads to more frequent time spent being active outdoors, lowering the likelihood of being overweight or obese.

Mental health involves the “ability to learn and function intellectually” and emotional health involves the “ability to deal comfortably and appropriately with emotions” (Heintzman, 2002, p. 150). McCurdy et al. (2010) found that exposure to natural environments can reduce stress, improve attention, improve cognitive functioning, and increase overall emotional and mental wellbeing. Reduced stress, depression, and anxiety in children have all been found to be outcomes of natural outdoor activity (McCurdy et al., 2010). In his book *Last Child in the Woods*

Richard Louv found “exposure to nature may reduce the symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, as well as improve children’s cognitive abilities and resistance to negative stresses and depression (Louv, 2008). These findings show how outdoor recreation can be used as an alternative therapy for mental and emotional disorders. Fischer (2011) highlights how nature can enhance mental and emotional wellbeing in the elderly by illuminating the beauty of such a transitional period in ones’ life. The fluidity of outdoor landscapes often reflects constant transformation, metamorphosis, and the importance of interdependence, all topics prevalent later in life. Mental and emotional health can be enhanced across age demographics and Korpela et al. (2014) associate the restorative nature of these experiences with enhancing ones mental and emotional wellbeing.

Outdoor recreation can also enhance a sense of social wellbeing, which Heintzman (2002) defines as “the ability to enjoy meaningful relationships with other people in one’s environment” (p. 150). Wolf, Stricker, and Hagenloh (2015) found “social ties were especially developed and strengthened through regular and longer visits to local parks” (p. 369). Wolf et al. (2015) studied a tour series of national parks in New South Wales, Australia and found the park tour series allowed participants to establish relationships with like-minded people, feel a sense of belongingness among the group, opportunity to hone in on interpersonal skills, and develop group responsibility. These outcomes greatly influenced social wellbeing and contributed to an overall increase in holistic health and wellbeing (Wolf et al., 2015).

Attention Restoration Theory (ART) is a theory that looks to explain the restorative nature of spending time in outdoor landscapes. ART focuses on two models of attention, directed and involuntary; directed requires effort to pay attention to a task at hand and has a finite capacity as attention will fatigue with time while involuntary attention involves the ability to

engage effortlessly with fascinating elements in the surrounding world (Kaplan, 1996). Outdoor environments have the ability to engage involuntary attention through the large amount of fascinating stimuli present in these settings (Kaplan, 1996). These fascinating stimuli engage the senses and restore the individual, providing an opportunity to reflect on spiritual experiences (Heintzman, 2010).

Restoration Theory is comprised of being away, extent, fascination, and compatibility (Kaplan, 1996). Outdoor environments can provide a sense of getting away from busy every-day life by removing individuals from fatiguing situations, reflecting the above discussion on solitude and reflection. Extent also reflects this discussion as it refers to an environment that is rich enough to feel as though a person is getting away from their every-day life. Being away from every-day life, in a natural environment that provides enough fascinating stimuli to engage involuntary attention can lead to restorative as well as spiritual outdoor experiences. Fascination involves a form of attention that requires no effort and can be engaged by components of the natural world such as water, foliage or animals. Compatibility is the final component of Attention Restoration Theory, and although not mentioned above it highlights the importance of considering the social structures that influence how one experiences outdoor recreation, as well as the intention or purpose one brings into a outdoor recreation experience. Attention Restoration explains how nature settings can lead to restoration and open individuals up to the possibility of a spiritual outdoor recreation experience.

Outdoor landscapes contain all four elements of Attention Restoration Theory (extent, being away, fascination, and compatibility) allowing participants to experience the benefits of such restoration. Heintzman (2002) identified clearing the mind, recovery of fatigued directed attention, the opportunity to think about one's immediate unresolved problems, and the

opportunity to reflect on life's larger questions as four benefits of restorative experiences.

Outdoor recreation has the ability to enhance all elements of holistic wellbeing, yet there is a gap when discussing the relationship with spiritual wellbeing.

2.3.3 Spiritual Outdoor Recreation and Holistic Health and Wellbeing

Much less understood than the above, is the relationship between spirituality, outdoor recreation, and spiritual wellbeing. Studies are beginning to recognize this gap and explore the ways in which outdoor recreation experiences can enhance spiritual wellbeing. Outdoor recreation experiences can enhance spiritual wellbeing through the restorative properties of outdoor landscapes (Kaplan, 1996), opportunities for reflection away from daily life (Foster, 2012; Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Heintzman, 2010), enhance eudemonic wellbeing or sense of purpose in life (Cleary, Fielding, Bell, Murray, & Roiko, 2017), and provide opportunities for direct sensory connections with landscapes (Taylor, 2010). Heintzman (2010) also identifies leisure-spiritual coping as an outcome of spiritual outdoor recreation experiences. In times of life stress, those who have experienced outdoor recreation, and have benefited from enhanced holistic wellbeing can use leisure spiritual resources to cope. Gardening, visiting nature spaces such as cottages or walks in the woods, and participating in wilderness or backcountry excursions have all been used by participants as ways to cope with difficult life stressors (Heintzman, 2010). Heintzman (2010) states that frequent outdoor activity participation influences spiritual wellbeing. Spiritual wellbeing can potentially be attained through spiritual outdoor recreation experiences, enhancing the understanding between outdoor recreation and holistic health and wellbeing.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Orientation

3.1 Dwelling and Emplacement

Embodiment is often used within the outdoor recreation literature to help illuminate the complex mind-body-world interactions that happen during experiences (Allen-Collinson & Leledaki, 2015; Humberstone, 2013; Pink, 2011). Although there have been calls to ‘bring the body back’ into outdoor recreation research, embodiment fails to consider the broader social and historical influences on experience. I argue that the theory of emplacement can be used as a way to go beyond embodiment and towards an all-encompassing understanding of the “sensuous interrelationship between body-mind-environment” (Pink, 2011, p. 7). I propose the use of an emplacement nexus as a theoretical and visual tool to apply this theory in practice to data collection and analysis.

This chapter will look to explore the theoretical orientation that grounds this study and the emplacement nexus. It will begin with a discussion of Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology and Ingold’s (2000) notion of dwelling to ontologically situate Pink’s (2011) application of emplacement. It will then discuss my constructivist epistemology, and introduce the emplacement nexus as a theoretical tool that will be applied to the methodology of this study.

3.1.1 Being-in-the-world and Dwelling

To understand emplacement, we turn to Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology and his notion of “understanding through social, cultural, and historical neighbourhoods” (Pernecky, 2016, p. 99). Heidegger emphasized how being-in-the-world is inescapable; humans are not separate from the world, but rather they dwell amidst their surroundings. Mullins (2011) states that being-in-the-world highlights how “meaning is born out of the interplay between humans in their environment and is understood as an interpretation from a particular perspective of an

object or phenomena that limits possible interpretations” (p. 42). Heidegger uses a hermeneutic circle of understanding to emphasize that interpretation is based on pre-understandings (Pernecky & Jamal, 2010). The hermeneutic circle highlights that to understand the whole, one must understand the parts, and to understand the parts, one must understand the whole (Pernecky, 2016). You cannot truly understand the essence of experience without taking into account the social, cultural and historical influences.

Ingold (2000) built upon this understanding pointing out the problematic notion of the dichotomy between nature and culture, looking to reconcile “a phenomenology of the body with an ecology of the mind” (Ingold, 2000, p. 154). Ingold argues that nobody has, or ever will penetrate the boundary between nature and culture because it doesn’t exist. To illustrate this Ingold builds on Heidegger’s work emphasizing the importance of moving from a building perspective, towards a dwelling perspective that challenges these distinctions. The building perspective emphasizes the perspective “that worlds are made before they are lived in” (Ingold, 2000, p. 179); humans impose cultural construction upon a world or reality that precedes this construction. This view reinforces the nature-culture dichotomy, stating that the world is simply a ‘container’ in which humans can occupy (Ingold, 2000, p. 185). A dwelling perspective goes beyond this saying that dwelling comes before building, or any act of building exists in relation to the lived experiences and practical engagements of people in their environments. Ingold states “we do not dwell because we have built, but we build and have built because we dwell...to build is in itself already to dwell” (2000, p. 186). This perspective allows us to see the complex interwoven relationship between people, their realities and the world in which they inhabit. To summarize, Cloke and Jones (2001) state:

Dwelling is about the rich intimate ongoing togetherness of beings and things which make up landscapes and places, and which bind together nature and culture

over time. It thus offers conceptual characteristics which blur the nature—culture divide, emphasize the temporal nature of landscape, and highlight performativity and nonrepresentation, and as such it is attractive to those trying to (re)theorise the nature of nature, and the nature of landscape and place (p. 651).

3.1.2 Constructivism

Ontologically my research will be situated within this dwelling perspective. By emphasizing the interwoven relationship between nature and culture, Dwelling offers a way of understanding ‘being’ as both social and ecological, where social existence is a subset of ecological. Ecological refers to Mullins (2014) discussion of ecology as the “patterns of relationships between organisms and their environment” (p. 321). Existence is grounded in practical engagements with the environment, which is both social and ecological. With this in mind, constructivism is the epistemology that can help to understand these social relationships and how they influence knowing and understanding further. Constructivism falls under general constructionism, which argues that human beings construct knowledge as opposed to finding it (Pernecky, 2016). Constructivism specifically focuses more on individual perspective and argues that “meaning comes into existence only through the engagement of knowers with the world” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 257). Human knowledge does not exist independently from the knower’s experiences and interactions with the world, where the world is both social and ecological under a dwelling perspective.

Constructivism explores how we cannot accurately represent an external reality because an understanding of this reality will always be influenced by the wider ecology of life; social, historical, and environmental factors. Meaning then, is not objective and does not have independent existence (Schwandt, 2007). The effects, meanings, ideas, or impressions of those external objects are constructed by the subject based on experiences of shared understanding, practices, and language (Schwandt, 2007) and although meaning is constructed, it does not mean

there isn't real consequences. Constructivism focuses on the individual knower, the acts of cognition and looks to understand (Schwandt, 2007). It highlights how knowledge is redefined based on experiences as "an unending series of processes of inner construction" (Schwandt, 2007, p. 38). This epistemology aligns with my dwelling ontology to show that humans exist as ecological beings and knowing is based on practical engagements with one's surroundings, emphasizing understanding based on social and cultural neighbourhoods.

3.1.3 Emplacement

Drawing on the ontological foundations of Heidegger and Ingold, and a constructivism epistemology, this study now turns its focus to the theory of emplacement. Pink (2011) suggests a theory of emplacement as a way to move past theories of embodiment and understand more fully the complexities of the lived experience. Embodiment has been used across the social sciences as a way to highlight individual experiences and connections of mind and body, emphasizing how "knowledge [is] not simply something of the mind, but that 'knowing' is embedded in embodied practices" (Pink, 2011, p. 345). Although embodiment is a good start in understanding the lived experience in the moment of experience, it fails to acknowledge this ongoing togetherness of beings and things or consider the wider ecology in which social context and histories influence the moment of experience. Pink's (2011) theory of emplacement provides an all-encompassing understanding of "both the specificity and intensity of the place event and its contingencies, but also the historicity of processes and their entanglements" (p. 354). This sentiment is echoed in Grimwood's discussion of emplacement in the context of a canoe trip down the Thelon River. Grimwood (2015a) states:

emplacement occurred as an event of 'throwntogetherness' where distinct, multiple and performative trajectories were encountered and negotiated in the 'here-and-now'. People, things, ideas, meanings, histories and landscapes converged to enact place via strategically planned and/or spontaneous encounters. Participants prepared for the course,

experienced the trip through embodied practices in the ‘here and now’, prepared for return, all while the emplacement of the course was understood as a derivative of bygone events (p. 15).

The next section will explain this application of emplacement, beginning by emphasizing practices of imagination and representation and practices of the body and how people and environments shape each other. It will then move to a discussion of knowing through movement, and an understanding of the place-event. Incorporating this wider ecology can help facilitate a more holistic understanding of the essence of experience.

Grimwood (2015a) emphasizes how on site experiences of nature-based tourism and recreation extend into everyday life during the pre-experience phase; “emplacement transpires in persistent practices of imagination and representation” (p. 14). Experiences are envisioned pre-trip, and participants prepare by purchasing equipment, learning about natural history, or packing up canoes the day before a departure. The imagining and understanding of how to prepare is influenced by past experiences as well as specific social and cultural understandings embedded within different practices (Grimwood, 2015a). Representational practices such as taking pictures or journaling are also emphasized as a way experiences extend into everyday life within a theory of emplacement (Grimwood, 2015a).

Emplacement is also represented in terms of embodied practices through “sensuous corporeal acts” (Grimwood, 2015a, p. 14). The body changes biologically in relation to the unique components of the environment; it is physically transformed in the process of embodied knowing (Pink, 2011). Pink (2011) highlights this through the act of bullfighting; the bullfighters body develops scars, bruises, and certain musculature when one participates in bullfighting. Mullins (2013) takes this further by highlighting how both the human body *and* the environment are transformed through the example of rock climbing. Climbers develop callouses, scrapes, and

muscles through the skilled embodied act of rock climbing, but they also transform the environment by bolting routes into the rock, eroding the rock, and pulling out vegetation (Mullins, 2013). This ‘comingling’ through skilled embodied performance takes place through hands-on experience with the fluid, dynamic elements of the landscape. People and places are transformed, and these transformations are taken into future skilled embodied performance. A climber will take what they learned from one climb into the next, he can never go back to the same place or event because the “place-event with all its components will be reconstituted each time and he will come to know it again in new ways” (Pink, 2011, p. 349).

The ‘comingling’ between people and landscapes leads to a discussion of knowing and place. People do not learn, or transform, by staying in one place, rather they learn as they move through the landscape. Ingold (2000) points out that “we know as we go, not before we go” (p. 230). Grimwood’s (2015) discussion of practices of return highlight the expertise canoe trip guides bring into experiences based on their manifold past experiences moving through the Thelon in a canoe. Knowing, learning, and transformation happens as people move from place to place; as people climb up a rock face, enter into a bullfighting arena, or as they kayak through Clayoquot Sound. “A person does not leave their environment to know...neither does she stop in order to know; she continues” (Pink, 2011, p. 347). This illuminates the ways in which humans move from place to place and how places can be understood as events; they are fluid and open, changing at different paces all the time. Although some elements of place are more fixed than others (buildings, mountains, trees) everything is moving and changing in relation to that which surrounds it. Weather, erosion, animals, human socialites all influence the place event, thus rendering places as a ‘constellation of process rather than a thing’ (Pink, 2011, p. 348).

This discussion of emplacement highlights four conclusions...one, recreation extends beyond on-site experiences to include imagination and representation, two, humans and the environment transform each other through skilled embodied practice, three, this transformation or knowing happens along entangled lines of movement between places, and four, places can be understood as place-events or a constantly evolving network of interactions. We can apply this here to an understanding of a spiritual outdoor recreation experiences. People move into an outdoor recreation experience bringing with them their histories as people, understandings of nature, of recreation, and past experience in these types of activities. These histories will then be brought into the current experiences where peoples perspectives and physicality will change and they will in turn, shape and change the places that they visit. They may get callouses or sore arms from paddling and also transform the places they visit, setting up camp every night, and interacting with the landscape. They may also have meaningful moments while ‘comingling’ within these nature spaces, experiencing heightened sensory awareness, affective embodiment, and potentially spiritual experiences. These transformative moments will be taken into future outdoor recreation experiences (i.e. the skills of paddling, camping on beaches, meaningful learning moments, spiritual experiences, etc.) and again influence the way they enter their next experience.

Returning to Pink’s (2011) bullfighting example, she highlights the interrelationship between processes; “on the one hand that of the moving, perceiving, learning, knowing, body of the bullfighter, and on the other the constantly evolving cultural narratives (representations) that give moral meanings to the performance” (p. 352). Drawing on emplacement allows for a more holistic understanding of the different components of a spiritual outdoor recreation experience, and how they come together to form an entangled experience nexus.

3.1.4 Emplacement Nexus

To apply these theories in practice, I suggest an emplacement nexus as a visual and methodological tool to guide the data collection and analysis process. Nexus thinking, influenced by a hermeneutic circle of understanding can help to illuminate embodied experiences and visually guide a more holistic approach to studying spiritual outdoor recreation. Nexus thinking is popular within environmental sustainability and management literature, especially when discussing the water-energy-food nexus (Al-Saidi & Elagib, 2017). Nexus thinking involves considering the interlinks, and interconnections between components of a certain area of study or experience. It offers a more balanced view of resources that avoids focusing on one problem or sector (Al-Saidi & Elagib, 2017). Al-Saidi and Elagib (2017) state “the innovative part of the nexus is that it shifts attention from the one-sector view to a more balanced view of issues linking the three resources” (p. 1133). Drawing on nexus thinking allows for emplacement to manifest in practice, illuminating the interlinks and interconnections of the wider ecology of a place-event.

I propose a nexus that includes three interrelated components; social context and history, the embodied experience that includes the mind-body-world interaction, and finally the outcomes of the experience such as enhanced holistic health and wellbeing. The nexus idea draws from a multidisciplinary understanding of the sustainability, health and wellbeing, recreation and emplacement literature to create a holistic understanding of experience. It also draws on the hermeneutic circle of understanding to demonstrate the importance of understanding how different beings, materials, and histories come together to create understanding. This type of thinking is important within the current context, as spiritual outdoor recreation experiences are multi-phase experiences, as per Clawson and Knetchs’ (1966) five stages of an outdoor recreation

experience, with many complex interrelated elements. The emplacement nexus, influenced by a hermeneutic circle of understanding (Pernecky, 2016) and the outdoor recreation lifecycle (Clawson & Knetch, 1966) can help understand the ongoing learning that occurs as people move through the landscape. It also can help us visualize how the how the body is transformed, and how the landscape can be transformed as a result of the entangled outdoor recreation experience.

The idea of the nexus has been mentioned within the recreation and outdoor recreation literature (Jirasek et al., 2017; Schmidt & Little, 2007; Thorpe & Rhinehart, 2010), yet it has rarely been explored or applied as a theoretical or methodological tool. Humberstone (2011) uses the idea of a nexus to discuss the sensory embodiment, and haptic knowledge of windsurfing in the moment of experience. “The body, senses, elements nexus is fluid and continually changing whilst windsurfing as in many water-based sports. Heightened consciousness or pleasure may be experienced when this nexus becomes in tune” (Humberstone, 2011, p. 501). Humberstone (2011) states that many previous research studies have associated this feeling with flow, yet this notion covers up “the embodiment, senses, and practice-in-nature nexus” (p. 505). She states, “by unpicking flow in the here and now, and grounding it in the embodied affective of the practitioner, the notion of spiritual experience emerges” (Humberstone, 2011, p. 505). Moving this argument one step further, I argue that drawing on emplacement within the context of this nexus will highlight the wider ecology to include cultural, social, and environmental influences on the moment of experience and the potential transformative results of the experience.

This following section will explore how the nexus will be used as a methodological and theoretical tool through the data collection and data analysis process to aid in the inclusion of the wider ecology and entangled meshwork of people’s lives and experiences. Figure 1 depicts the emplacement nexus that has been used to structure interview format and guide the analysis

process in illuminating the manifold components that come together to create the lived experience.

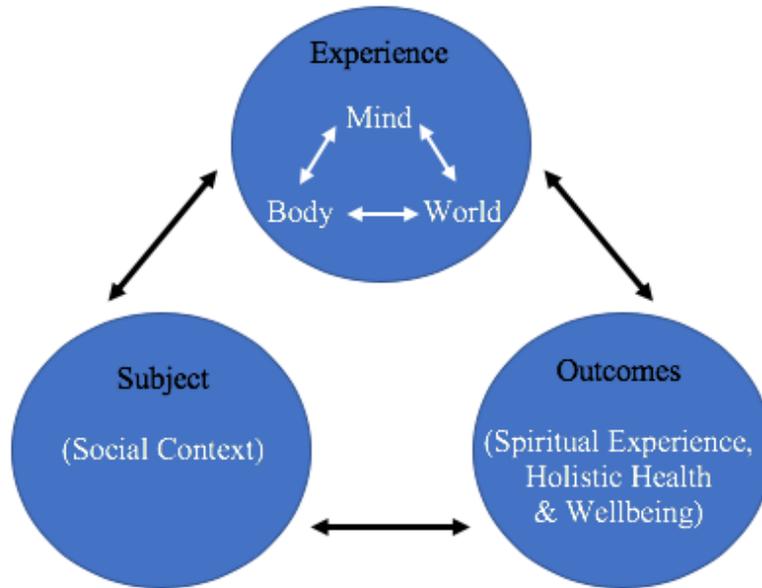


Figure 1: Emplacement Nexus

3.1.5 Applying the Emplacement Nexus in Practice

To illustrate applying this theoretical orientation in practice, I will draw on Ingold (2000) and Mullins (2015) to demonstrate how this ontology, epistemology, and theory of emplacement is useful within the current context. Mullins (2015) highlights a discussion of environment, landscape, place and space, and skill as important to understanding a dwelling ontology. For Ingold, as argued by Mullins (2015) the environment is a “dynamic set of interlocking and entangled cycles, patterns, lines and flows of energy and matter, including human activity, that sustain life and which humans inhabit” (p. 43). The emplacement nexus of an individual can be likened to the environment of a participant. Individuals exist within it, among the changing flows and cycles of life, social relationships, and different substances like concrete, water, and air

(Mullins, 2015). The environment is not a surface to occupy or attach too, and it is not nature because often nature is thought of as separate from humans (Mullins, 2015). The landscape is what people see as they move through their lives, constantly changing and embodying human and non-human forces (natural disasters, city buildings, beaches etc.). In the case of the nexus, this involves people moving through their lives within different landscapes, such as moving from their place of residence, through the airport, into their cars, making their way to Clayoquot Sound to experience the different landscapes of coastal Vancouver Island.

Moving through different landscapes reflects a constructivist epistemological perspective knowing and meanings of place “emerge through the ways in which humans live with and build in their world through the activity and processes of their lives” (Mullins, 2015, p. 44). Meanings of place are gathered from the landscape, and places become meaningful centers of activity, or place-events (Pink, 2011) that involve complex interactions between the mind, the body, and the world (humans, animals, weather, elements). In terms of the emplacement nexus example, this is the outdoor recreation experience, where meaning of the different places visited during the course emerge through different people’s direct interaction with them. Skills are also important in this perspective as they mediate the relationship between people and their environments; “they involve care, judgement, and dexterity in attuning abilities to perceive and cultivating abilities to act relative to elements within ever-changing environmental conditions so as to accomplish something” (Mullins, 2015, p. 45). How people directly interact with their environment through skills develops meaning of place-events, that change as they move across the landscape. Skilled embodied practice within landscapes create meaningful nodes of activity, or places, across the network of entangled flows of energy and matter that is the environment.

This understanding of environment, landscape, place, and skills helps to illuminate the complexity of experiences, and the importance of considering the entangled meshwork of interactions between people, cultures, histories, animals, elements, and landscapes that make up place-events and experiences. It is not enough to simply consider the embodied moment of experience, but the larger ecology of the lived experience. Moving into a discussion of methodology, this theoretical orientation will help ground the ways that knowing is influenced by social, cultural, and historical context.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Ongoing Togetherness

This study looked to respect the complexity of spiritual outdoor recreation experiences through its methodological design and methods. The theoretical orientation explored the holistic interconnected nature of experiences through hermeneutic phenomenology, Ingold's (2000) dwelling ontology, a constructivist epistemology, and an emplacement nexus that illuminated the social context, the moment of experience, and the outcomes of experience in practice. The following section will review how this phenomenon has been studied within the literature, followed by the use of phenomenology as a theoretical perspective and methodology. It will then discuss the context of the study, the data collection/methods, ethical considerations, trustworthiness, and data analysis process.

Although this study is influenced by multiple complex theoretical and philosophical ideas, they all work together to emphasize one underlying principle; essence of experience must be understood in terms of the ongoing togetherness and interconnections between many diverse lines of energy and facets of life (Pink, 2011). This study looked to follow this premise, respecting a holistic understanding of a spiritual outdoor recreation experience.

4.2 Studying Spirituality

Many different methodologies have been used to study spiritual outdoor recreation experiences and the relationship between spirituality and outdoor landscapes. Quantitative studies include, but are not limited to, Fenton and Walker (2016) who used a 6-point unipolar scale to study psychologically deep experiences, Heintzman and Mannell (2003) who used structural equation modelling to develop a model of leisure style and spiritual wellbeing relationships, Heintzman (2012) who used secondary data analysis to understand the spiritual

dimension of park experiences, Moore (2011) who adopted a quantitative survey methodology to study surfing spirituality, and Davis, Rice, Hook, Tongeren, DeBlaere, Choe and Worthington (2015) who developed the sources of spirituality scale, focusing on connections with nature. Theoretical and meta-analysis studies include Humberstone (2011) who proposed autoethnography to study embodied nature-based sport experiences and spirituality, Fischer (2011) who explored the nature spirituality of aging in terms of environmental actions, Heintzman (2010) who synthesized the literature on outdoor recreation and spirituality creating a summary framework, Ashley (2007) who summarized the literature to develop an understanding of a definition of wilderness spirituality, and Taylor (2010) who provided a detailed summary on the relationship between surfing and spirituality.

Because of the complex, interconnected, and subjective nature of the relationship between spirituality and outdoor recreation, many studies have used qualitative methods to explore this phenomenon. Grounded theory (Bobilya, Akey & Mitchell, 2011; Pond, 2013), means-end theory and ladder interviewing (Marsh & Bobilya, 2013), naturalistic inquiry (Stringer and McAvoy, 1992), general qualitative inquiry (Fredrickson and Anderson, 1999), and phenomenology (Schmidt & Little, 2007; Unruh & Hutchinson, 2011) have all been used to study spirituality and nature relationships.

4.3 Phenomenology

4.3.1 Phenomenology and Theoretical Orientation

Phenomenology has been underutilized within the field of outdoor recreation in the past due to its complexities; it is a multifaceted area of knowledge, as it is a philosophy that can influence ontology, epistemology, theoretical perspective, and methodology. The broader field of outdoor recreation is beginning to consider the benefits of using phenomenology in a variety of

different ways. As such, phenomenology has been woven into many fibers of the theoretical orientation of this study. The dwelling ontology and constructivist epistemology both draw on tenants of hermeneutic phenomenology, which in turn are the foundation to the emplacement nexus that is used as a theoretical and methodological tool to illuminate the lived experience of course participants. In this study hermeneutic phenomenology is also the theoretical perspective and methodology. Berbari and Boles (2014) state that theory is “the ideas with which to think about content, methodology, and analysis,” and methodology is “the rationale for methods” (p. 404). Hermeneutic phenomenology is used in this study as the foundation for thinking through these topics.

4.3.2 Phenomenology as Methodology

Phenomenology is the study of consciousness as it manifests in the internal world of the mind (Pernecky, 2016). It focuses on the structures of consciousness and “careful descriptions of ordinary conscious experience of everyday life: the lifeworld—a description of things (phenomena or the essential structures of consciousness) as one experiences them (Schwandt, 2007, p. 225). Phenomenology is used when researchers are interested in examining the depth of a phenomenon as opposed to breadth and when they are interested in issues of consciousness, meaning, essence, and phenomena (Johnson & Parry, 2015). The two main types of phenomenology are existential (or descriptive) and hermeneutic (or interpretive). Existential focuses on descriptions of everyday life, and how these descriptions are internalized in the consciousness of the individual (Schwandt, 2007). Hermeneutic looks at intersubjective social and political life and is concerned with social constructions such as language and communication (Schwandt, 2007). Phenomenology has strong philosophical foundations influenced by, but not

limited to, philosophers such as Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) (Fendt et al., 2014; Pernecky, 2016).

Husserl is known as the father of phenomenology, developing this philosophy in response to the positivist, objective scientific research that was privileged during his time (Johnson & Parry, 2015). He is responsible for creating existential (or descriptive) phenomenology looking to give voice to the “enigmatic and ever shifting patterns of subjective experience, focusing on experience in its felt immediacy (Abram, 1996, p. 35). Husserl’s phenomenology valued intentionality, which explains “that human consciousness is always directed toward someone or something, including an idea” (Allen-Collinson & Leledaki, 2015, p. 459). Merleau-Ponty rejected the disembodiment seen in Husserl’s phenomenology, and asks us to think about how the body, through its senses and sentient nature, is the subject of experience (Abram, 1996). This phenomenology “highlights the corporeal elements of existence, positing the importance of the lived body, a body that links mind-body-world in an indissoluble relationship” (Allen-Collinson & Leledaki, 2014, p. 459). Finally, Heidegger developed hermeneutic phenomenology highlighting understanding through social, cultural, and historical influences, and how meaning is prescribed to individual narratives influencing choices (Fendt et al., 2014, p. 404). Hermeneutic phenomenology allows participants to reflect on being and self-understanding and emphasizes the importance of situatedness for the development of understanding (Pernecky, 2016). This methodology also highlights the importance of researcher experience and understanding, regarding it as important for interpretations (Fendt et al., 2014).

4.3.3 Challenges with Phenomenology

There are many successful ways to use the different philosophical variations of phenomenology, but there are also challenges in using each of these variations. Existential

phenomenology has been critiqued of being solipsistic, meaning that it denies the existence of a physical world or beings outside the mind (Pernecky, 2016). Husserl's defense to this criticism is the idea of inter-subjectivity. He argued that there is an affinity between other bodies and one's own; expressions and gestures of others resonate with one's own, and through an associate empathy "the embodied subject comes to recognize these other bodies as centers of experience, other subjects" (Abram, 1996, p. 37). He began to recognize the importance of the body along with consciousness to create the lifeworld; "our immediate lived experience, as we live it, prior to all our thoughts about it" (Abram, 1996, p. 40).

Although Husserl began to recognize the body, his phenomena still existed solely in the world of the mind. Merleau-Ponty challenged this type of phenomenology arguing that perception is the representation of reciprocity between the body and the external world; the body is the subject of experience (Abram, 1996). Yet Merleau-Ponty has been critiqued for neglecting the social structures that influence one's sensory experience (Evink, 2013). Hermeneutic phenomenology has been critiqued for an absent body in meaning making, focusing on thoughts, beliefs, cognition, and overlooks how the body interacts with the world around it to make those meanings (Murray & Holmes, 2014).

Pernecky and Jamal (2010) discuss the use of hermeneutic phenomenology in tourism studies, emphasizing the importance of situating one's philosophical assumptions when using phenomenology. They address some of the critiques of hermeneutic phenomenology, discussing the ways in which "hermeneutic phenomenology situates the human body in a network of relationships and practices, thus facilitating an embodied view of experiences, rather than the disembodied, Cartesian dualities that the Husserlian phenomenology which preceded it tended towards" (Pernecky & Jamal, 2010, p. 1059). They state, "we exist in relation of concern to

others; for example, we are in everyday relations to our friends and family, and we also live in relations with equipment and tools (like cars, bicycles that we use for transportation and recreation)” (p. 1064). Hermeneutic phenomenology recognizes a more holistic perspective of experience, emphasizing pre-understandings and historicity that influence embodied experience in relation to many different flows of energy within the network of our experience.

Although the available research is beginning to make connections between spirituality and outdoor recreation, the gap in taking a holistic perspective of experience within theoretical orientation and methodology persists. Studies within outdoor recreation that use phenomenology tend to separate the experience into specific components, or moments, as opposed to looking at the experience in relation to the broader ecology of our lives. Many studies focus on either the descriptive components of experience (Heffron & Ollis, 2006) or interpretive components of experience (Brymer & Schweitzer, 2017; Fendt et al., 2014). The theoretical orientation discussed in chapter three of this study, combined with a hermeneutic phenomenological theoretical perspective and methodology was used in this study to overcome some of these challenges and respect the phenomenon of spiritual outdoor recreation.

4.4 Context

The 8-day immersive mindfulness course use as the context of this study featured sea kayaking in Clayoquot Sound, Vancouver Island, and hiking through Vancouver islands rainforests along with daily opportunities to practice mindfulness (OBC, 2018). Nine course participants met at the Comox Valley airport and were transported to Outward Bound’s base camp for a full day of preparing for the course with the two course guides. The group of eleven then drove to Tofino to begin the kayaking experience. Most days in Clayoquot Sound included kayaking during the day, and evenings setting up camp, making food as a group, and various

programming. Programming consisted of yoga, group discussions, charting lessons, shelter building, kayaking skills, and general free time to spend exploring the campsite. It also included a 24-hour solo experience where, although on the same island, participants spent 24-hours out of sight and with little to no interaction with other course participants. This course aimed to facilitate self-discovery, clarity, and deep connection among participants (OBC, 2018).

4.5 Methods/Data Collection Procedures

This study used the two complementary methods of reflexive journaling and semi-structured photo-elicitation interviews to study the lived experience of an 8-day Outward Bound Mindfulness course. These methods have been carefully selected to maintain the integrity and authenticity of the mindfulness course experience, and to minimize the influence of the research process on participant experience. Reflexive journaling focused on researcher perspective during the trip, and post-trip semi-structured photo-elicitation interviews suspended contact with the research process until after the course.

This study emphasizes the individual contribution of each study participant to this thesis through the use of the term ‘co-researchers’. Although they did not assist in the design or analysis, they contributed through the knowledge production process. This includes contributing to the creation of photographs used in photo-elicitation interviews and their role in the co-constituted meaning during the kayaking journey as well as post-course interviews. This perspective is common in phenomenological methods which highlight the essence of co-researchers experience (Dionne & Nixon, 2013; Moustakas, 2011).

4.5.1 Reflexive Journaling

Johnson and Parry (2015) state “reflexivity documents the personal experiences, ideas, mistakes, dilemmas, epiphanies, reactions, and thinking connected with a qualitative study” (p.

46). Reflexivity involves an open position, where researchers can challenge their positions of power, ways of knowing, and explore methodological tensions and decisions (Genoe & Liechty, 2016; Johnson & Parry, 2015). Genoe & Liechty (2016) outline many different types of reflexivity including the epistemological reflexivity that informed this study. Epistemological reflexivity emphasizes self-critique and openness from the researcher and reflections about the effect of the research process on world and knowledge (Genoe & Liechty, 2016). This type of reflexivity also highlights how the researcher must first understand themselves before understanding the other, which is consistent with much of the outdoor recreation literature that states to talk about, or do research on outdoor recreation, one must experience it reflexively (Fendt et al., 2014; Humberstone, 2011; Taylor, 2010). This is also consistent with my onto-epistemology as it challenged me to consider the many entangled materials that influence my own perspectives, such as my past experience and relationship with outdoor recreation, the social structures that influence the way I see the world, and the many natural elements that afford connections with the landscapes of my life.

Genoe and Liechty (2016) state that reflexivity exists on a continuum; “on one end of the continuum, reflexivity is simply a consideration...on the other end, reflexivity is a methodological instrument” similar to autoethnography (p. 472). This study exists closer to the autoethnography end, as reflexive journals are used as a primary methodological instrument, yet it is different in that it is not being used to solely unpack engagements with other people or culture (Humberstone, 2011). It is also distinct from the subjectivity discussed in chapter one as subjectivity focuses on the personal view of an individual, is engaged with prior to the research and involves “the lived experience of that individual in historical, physical, and political contexts” (Johnson & Parry, 2015). Reflexivity departed from this as it continued throughout the

study and it documented changes in my subjectivity along with critical thinking related to the study.

I engaged in the study as a researcher and participant which included attending the course as a participant and reflexively journaling about my own experience (as opposed to interactions with others and their experiences). In this way, it departed from those forms of participant observation common to ethnography where the researcher's object of study is the experience, meanings, and practices of others (Johnson & Parry, 2015). The importance of understanding outdoor recreation experiences directly as a researcher, has been highlighted on many occasions in the literature (Fendt et al., 2014; Humberstone, 2011). During the course, my role was that of a participant, who was researching my own experience. Participants were made aware of my desire to do research on this experience for my master's thesis, but any interactions during the trip were as a participant with other participants of the course.

To begin the reflexive journaling process, I created a journal guide which can be found in Appendix A. This guide highlighted the timeframe I planned to journal, the journal format, topics, and the literature that supported these decisions. Journals followed the emplacement nexus format, first reflecting on my own lived experiences with outdoor recreation before I went on the trip. Genoe & Liechty (2016) suggest starting "by writing about your research position and your knowledge about and experience with the topic, both personal and academic, prior to beginning data collection" (p. 490). Writing about and reflecting on this history allowed me to begin to explore how I am influenced, and how I influence the research process. Dowling (2006) highlights how this method is consistent with hermeneutics and the hermeneutic circle of understanding. "Understanding is derived from personal involvement by the researcher in

reciprocal processes on interpretation that are inextricably related to one's being in the world” (Dowling, 2006, p. 12).

Initially the journals looked to focus solely on embodied experiences during the trip and journaling was done as close to different place-events as possible. During the trip, I adapted this process to maximize efficiency while still focusing on the emplacement nexus. I began each daily journal with a recollection of memorable experiences as this would eventually mirror the semi-structured photo-elicitation interviews that my participants took part in during the data collection process. When interviewing others, the literature states that focusing on memorable experiences allows for potential spiritual experiences to emerge without researcher influence (Fenton & Walker, 2016; Jirasek et al., 2017). By using the same technique with myself, it allowed me the space to naturally reflect on important moments of the day and highlight what made those moments important. This created content that could be analyzed for spirituality as opposed to being explicitly about spirituality. I then created a timeline of each day to help me recall important points as well as sensory embodied experiences, and finished with a section attempting to critically reflect on my day. Topics of critical reflection included thoughts on holistic health and wellbeing, privilege, and spirituality.

This type of reflexive journal was useful in maintaining methodological and theoretical consistency. Phenomenology is used to study the lifeworld emphasizing experiences as they are lived, yet often times studies focus on experiences or structures of consciousness after the experience has happened (Abram, 1996; Fendt et al., 2014; Pernecky, 2016). These experiences are grounded in deeply sensuous and affective exchanges within mind-body-world interactions (Allen-Collinson & Leledaki, 2015; Humberstone, 2011). Researchers must experience reflexively the outdoor recreation activity before the ability to know or write about it (Fendt et

al., 2014; Humberstone, 2011). Using reflexive journaling to produce “data” about myself and my experience allowed for a greater understanding of the lived experience of spiritual outdoor recreation as it happens. This is consistent with hermeneutic phenomenology as it “values the researcher’s own understandings and experiences, viewing them as a crucial tool for interpretations of the experiential description” (Fendt et al., 2014, p. 402). Finally, reflexive journaling helped facilitate an understanding of the inter-subjectivity (subjective experiences intermingling with one another) of the lived experience during post-trip interviews. This was done by comparing my own experience, others experiences, and the overlap or connections between experiences during post-trip photo-elicitation interviews (Evnik, 2013).

4.5.2 Semi-Structured Photo-Elicitation Interviews

Essence of co-researcher’s experiences were explored through the method of photo-elicitation interviews. Loeffler (2004) defines photo-elicitation as a collaborative process which “introduces photographs into a research interview thereby bringing images into the center of the research agenda” (p. 539). Both researcher photographs and co-researcher photographs were integrated into interviews to explore lived outdoor recreation experiences, spiritual components, and how people make meaning of those experiences.

This aspect of the study employed a purposeful sampling approach. Recruitment of participants focused on those who participated in the Outward Bound Mindfulness course that took place from July 21-28, 2018. As phenomenology looks to explore depth not breadth, Singh (2015) discourages researchers from relying on traditional sampling and saturation methods. This study worked with five co-researchers to remain close to a focus on depth of experience (Singh, 2015). Sampling was open to those who took pictures on the trip and those who did not. Loeffler (2004) argued that using photographs taken before being influenced by the research process

allows for the fundamental nature of the experience to remain authentic. By waiting until after the course to recruit participants, I was able to minimize the ethical problem of impacting the participants experience (Loeffler, 2004).

Each participant was invited to take part in two semi-structured in-depth interviews, lasting from 60-90 minutes. The interview guide was created based on the structure of the emplacement nexus. The first interview focused on participant history with outdoor recreation, previous outdoor recreation experiences, meaningful moments, and direct embodied experiences during the Outward Bound Mindfulness course. This reflects the social context and embodied moment of experience in the emplacement nexus. Focusing on meaningful experiences aimed to allow elements of spirituality to emerge without researcher influence, as demonstrated by Jirasek et al. (2017). This technique has been used in other studies looking at spiritual outdoor recreation experiences and has been shown to facilitate discussions of spirituality in participants (Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Jirasek et al., 2017; Fendt & Walker, 2014). The second interview focused on the topic of spirituality, health and wellbeing, how participants ascribe meaning to their experience, as well as general course outcomes.

Using structure influenced by Grimwood (2015b), participants were asked to bring four to twelve pictures (up to six pictures per interview) that represent each of these themes, including pictures from past outdoor recreation experiences and the 8-day mindfulness course. Loeffler (2004) found photography aided in identifying and speaking to the sensory nature of outdoor adventure experiences in detail. Photo-elicitation interviews “can mine deeper shafts into a different part of human consciousness than words-alone interviews” (Harper, 2002, p. 23). Many phenomenological studies highlight the difficulty of using language to study the lived experience (Allan-Collinson & Leledaki, 2015; Fendt et al., 2014) and studies on spirituality and

outdoor recreation also highlight the difficulty in putting a spiritual experience into words (Heintzman, 2012; Jirasek et al., 2017). Using photographs helped to minimize the phenomenological problem of representing the lived experience in words and attempted to enhance participants ability to speak towards ineffable or transcendent experiences. Using photo-elicitation interviews allowed participants to guide a portion of the interview process staying close to their experience and the moments they wanted to discuss. The structure of the interviews allowed for an exploration of the meaning co-researchers ascribe to the course and if those were related to broader notions of spirituality, and how meanings of spirituality influenced health and wellbeing.

Upon returning from the course, I compiled my personal photos into five separate Dropbox files which included folders labelled ‘digital camera photos’, ‘disposable camera photos’, and a file titled ‘Jordana’ that consisted of photos that represented my meaningful moments on the course. Recruitment emails were sent out to course participants and once they agreed to participate, they were sent a link to the Dropbox folder, as well as encouraged to bring their own pictures to interviews. At the conclusion of the sea kayaking course, the first two co-researchers recruited for this study had sent out links to two different photo banks for the personal use of all participants. They agreed to the use of these pictures in this study, which expanded the study photo bank greatly. Between the Dropbox folders and the two photobanks, co-researchers had over two hundred and thirteen pictures plus other personal pictures to choose from.

The folder labelled ‘Jordana’ contained ten photographs of my personal memorable moments taken during the 8-day Mindfulness course and was used to discuss the phenomenological intersubjectivity of experience. These photographs were discussed at the end

of each interview, to avoid influencing or distracting from personal experiences (Matteucci, 2013). Participants selected two to six of these images and discussed how they overlap or are different from their own images or experiences. Harper (2002) states “elicitation interviews connect core definitions of the self to society, culture, and history” (p. 13). The aim of using both researcher and participants photographs was to facilitate a discussion on how individual experiences connected to others on the trip, highlighting intersubjectivity. With participant informed consent, photographs were saved and analyzed along with interview transcripts.

Photo-elicitation looked to create an increased collaborative experience, decrease the power dynamics during the interviews allowing co-researchers to guide the discussion using photos, to aid in co-researchers detailed recollection of memorable experiences, and keep methodological consistency. The literature shows how photo-elicitation interviews can raise the voice of participants, enhancing collaboration and flow of the interviews (Clark-Ibanez, 2004; Loeffler, 2004; Packard, 2008). Packard (2008) states that photo-interviewing can reduce “the authority of the researcher at least to some degree and raises the voices of the research participants through the process” (p. 63). As phenomenology looks to illuminate the lived experience of participants, using this method gives voice to the experience of participants in the study.

4.5.3 Challenges

Although both reflexive journaling and photo-elicitation interview methods assisted in illuminating the lived experience of co-researchers and helped them to speak about ineffable or memorable experiences, there were challenges in applying them. As a novice researcher I found it challenging to be critical of myself within the reflexive journals. “I find it hard to be critical of myself in the moment of experience...thinking critically about my positions of

power/privilege/ways of knowing is challenging in the moment” (reflexive journal, July 23, 2018). Questions such as what to write about, if I was being critical enough, or if I truly understood what it meant to be reflexive arose, which is consistent with many of the challenges other researchers faced when using reflexive journals (Genoe & Dupuis 2013; Genoe & Liechty, 2016). Genoe & Liechty (2016) highlight the ways in which being unsure on what to write about often leads to procrastination in writing reflexively. This was something that I looked to avoid through the use of my journal writing guide. Although this guide helped during the course, I found myself challenged to write once the course was over and I began the analysis process. This included continuing to be critical about my position in the study as a researcher.

I was also challenged with keeping up with the journals during the course and found myself writing a day after things had happened. Although this was concerning at first I soon realized “just like I want to minimize the effect on experience this research can have on participants, there is a component of that in my experience too...if I force my journal writing then I am missing important parts of the experience such as meaningful tent conversations or fire side moments” (reflexive journal, July 25, 2018). It took a few days to find flow in writing critically and as close to the moment as possible, while avoiding disrupting my experience or forcing myself to be critical when I hadn’t had adequate time to reflect on certain experiences.

Photo-elicitation interviews also presented a unique set of challenges to work through when compared to words only interviews including issues of consent, ownership of photos, and challenges of remembering context of certain photos (Genoe & Dupuis, 2013). I had to ensure to blank out the faces of any course participants who were included in co-researchers’ pictures that did not consent to being in the study. There were also a few instances where participants spoke of meaningful moments or spiritual experiences that they didn’t have the chance to get a picture

of, especially those moments while kayaking. Genoe and Dupuis (2013) found similar issues when using photographs to explore the leisure experiences of participants with dementia where one of their participants forgot to take a picture of her favorite leisure activity, despite the fact that it was a main topic of conversation. This further emphasizes the challenges in trying to capture the complicated, multi-faceted, embodied nature of people's lived experience (Fendt et al., 2013).

Attempting to address all pictures participants brought to the interview while respecting the agreed upon interview length was another practical challenge of photo-elicitation interviews. In the interviews, we often skipped over particular photographs due to a lack of time or expressed interest by the participant. Although these photographs could have potentially brought additional information to the study, participants were given the chance to guide the discussion and deeply reflect on meaningful and spiritual experiences. Despite these few challenges, reflexive journaling and semi-structured photo-elicitation interviews provided meaningful ways of exploring the entangled components of the emplacement nexus and helped to facilitate a focus on staying as close to co-researchers experience as possible.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

This study remained ethically sound through consideration of researcher/participant relationships, ensuring co-researchers gained benefits from participating, incentives to participation, and ethically sound photography practices. During the Outward Bound course, the relationship between myself and participants remained strictly as participant to participant. This component of the study focused on my own lived, sensory experience of the outdoor recreation experience. Co-researchers were not contacted for study participation until after the Outward Bound experience, allowing their experiences to remain relatively untouched by the research

process (Loeffler, 2004). By participating in this study co-researchers had the opportunity to deepen their experience of the trip through reflection. The Outward Bound Canada Mindfulness course is advertised to those “who need space to reflect on their lives or who want to learn or deepen a meditation practice (Outward Bound, 2018). Co-researchers were provided with the space to further reflect on their experience, how they make meaning of it, and the outcomes of the trip going forward. Each co-researcher was also sent a \$25 MEC gift card, and a 4Ocean bracelet package after their participation in the two interviews. 4Ocean bracelets are made of recycled ocean plastic, with the proceeds going to continued ocean cleanup. As multiple co-researchers discussed their interest in protecting the space that we were able to visit, as well as an interest in lowering their plastic consumption, this seemed like an appropriate incentive.

Maintaining ethical considerations for photograph collection was also imperative. Within the consent letters there were multiple options for photo-release within this study. Participants could consent to releasing any video or photographs that they *appeared in* for teaching/scientific presentations/publications, and/or to be used within the interview as well as the same for any photographs/videos *that they took*. All co-researchers agreed to all terms of the photo-release form, but any course participants that were not involved in the study were blurred out of pictures they were included in. This ensured all photographs were ethically obtained and were free to use within data collection, analysis, and representation.

4.7 Trustworthiness

This study used member checking and reflexive journals to ensure trustworthiness of the data. Interview transcripts were sent to participants to “agree with, refute, or revise the data” (Singh, 2015). This ensured consistent emphasis on the participants stories and lived experience. Within the reflexive journals there was also a component of bridling which documented and

explored my own values and assumptions when it comes to the research process (Singh, 2015). Singh (2015) states bracketing is a form of bracketing that not only details researcher assumptions, values, and biases about a topic, but also develops an attitude of availability” (p. 108). This type of bracketing will not involve noting bias, as hermeneutic phenomenology values the lens of the researcher (Fendt et al., 2014). It will however look to maintain a sense of openness with my own experience and the assumptions I have of what my involvement with the mindfulness course may look like (Singh, 2015, p. 108). Within the journals this often came up in the critical components of each entry, as well as post trip when I began the analysis process. These three strategies will ensure trustworthiness of this phenomenological data.

4.8 Data Analysis

Describing the steps of phenomenological analysis can be difficult as often there is a lack of clear guidelines within the literature on specific linear steps of analysis that align with the different strands of phenomenology (Fendt, 2015; Fendt et al., 2014; Singh, 2015). Thematic analysis (Mulcahy, 2015), horizontalization (Singh, 2015) and narrative analysis (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007) have all been used within phenomenological studies to analyze data. Fendt (2015) recognizes the reluctance of much of the literature to outline specific steps of analysis; quoting Keen (1975) she states “unlike other methodologies, phenomenology cannot be reduced to a ‘cookbook’ set of instructions. It is more an approach, an attitude, an investigative posture with a certain set of goals” (p. 64). Phenomenological analysis must take into consideration many different issues instead of focusing on specific steps or instructions. Interpretive phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is one such way of guiding analysis to consider multiple important issues and is consistent with the hermeneutic phenomenology used in this study.

IPA was used here and customized to include influence from the emplacement nexus, the research questions, and phenomenological literature. Fendt (2015) states that this customization is common within the IPA literature, as IPA does not allow for a pre-determined structure. IPA does however look to create an insider's perspective, or first-person account of the co-researcher's experiences, while recognizing that it is impossible to completely achieve this because interpretation occurs from the researchers pre-understandings (Fendt, 2015, p. 64). It also looks to put these experiences into context to produce meaning or make sense of the co-researchers trying to make sense of their life-worlds. Meanings are a product of interpretation by researcher and participant (Fendt, 2015).

Although often IPA does not follow a pre-determined structure, this project aligned very much with Fendt's (2015) IPA analysis of the experience of surfer girls and was influenced by these steps of analysis. It also drew on Moustakas (1994) and Creswell (1998) in terms of providing a skeleton for organizational guidelines and to help get the analysis started. Moustakas (1994) and Creswell (1998) offer analysis methods that are generally used for descriptive phenomenology (Husserl and Merleau-Ponty) so they were not completely appropriate for this study that draws on Hermeneutic phenomenology (Phillips-Pula et al., 2011). Although they did help influence the initial multiple read-throughs of the data, some of the validation guidelines, as well as the phrasing 'textural' and 'structural' descriptions. Fendt (2015) influenced the remainder of the process as her method stayed true to an interpretive/hermeneutic method. Keeping in mind "respecting the principles of the hermeneutic circle, contexts were considered at all times through moving between parts and the whole" (Fendt, 2015, p. 66). This was done by summarizing each individual transcript after every step of analysis and comparing the individual summary to the experience of the group.

This process followed eight steps that can be seen in Table 1. The first step in analysis after transcription began with an initial read through of the data, and then a second read through of the data making pencil notes in the margins. These notes focused on emerging themes, initial thoughts and questions that arose (Fendt, 2015; Moustakas, 1994). After each co-researchers transcript was read, a summary was written on the last page in pencil depicting potential themes, and ideas that were beginning to emerge. My own reflexive journals from the course were also included in data analysis and were analyzed in the same way as participant data.

During the third read through, significant statements were manually highlighted within the transcript in different colors and copied into the preliminary grouping document. Following Fendt (2015) I was careful to eliminate any passages that were not relevant to the topic including interruptions or small talk. The highlighted statements were organized into preliminary groupings following the initial read through summaries and placed within a preliminary groupings document based on these emerging themes.

After the complete preliminary grouping, I again summarized each co-researchers preliminary themes on a separate page so I could begin to see how each co-researchers experience was emerging in relation to each other. Fendt (2015) states “interpretation arises from pre-understanding and a dialectical movement between the parts and the whole of the texts of those involved” (p. 66). Similar to a hermeneutic circle, I looked to illuminate each individual experience but also take note of how the data was emerging as a whole. I initially followed the process of reduction, clustering, and validation to determine the invariant constituents, or the “significant, relevant, and invariant meanings that provide living descriptions or highlights of the experience” that would be used to create textural descriptions of the data (Moustakas, 1994, p. 130). When reducing the initial groupings, Moustakas (1994) suggests testing for two

Table 1

Data Analysis

<u>Step</u>	<u>Description</u>
Multiple Initial Read Throughs	Familiarization with data, pencil notes in margin, notes on pictures
Summary 1	Summaries written on the last page of each transcript, includes emerging themes & notes
Preliminary Grouping, Elimination & Photo Bank	Transcripts color coded & highlighted based on emerging themes, highlighted statements copied into <i>Preliminary Grouping Document</i> - Photo Bank created
Summary 2	Written in separate word document, basic themes copied into <i>Preliminary Grouping Document</i> Summary - Checking in to see how data is emerging as a whole
Reduction	Eliminate any overlapping or vague statements to determine invariant constituents Left with invariant constituents or essential structures
Cluster	Cluster invariant constituents into themes and sub-themes Rearrange and organize electronically in a copy of the <i>Preliminary Grouping Document</i> ; now becomes <i>invariant constituent & cluster document</i> ; photo numbers included in each summary
Summary 3	Written in separate document & copied into Invariant Constituent document
Validation	Ask the questions.... A. Are themes/invariant constituents expressed explicitly in the transcription? B. Are they compatible if not explicitly expressed? C. If they are not explicit or compatible, they are eliminated.
Textural Description	'What happened' including specific examples, The co-researchers story Guided by Emplacement Nexus—refers back to preliminary groupings, summaries, and invariant constituents Includes who the co-researchers are and their lifeworlds + photograph analysis
Structural Description	'How the phenomenon was experienced' Focuses on the themes for each individual
Intersubjective Analysis	
Summary 4	Themes clustered together across all transcripts (using summary 3 and textural)
Composite Vignette	Composite Vignette created based on themes, imaginative variation, and my own experience
Textural-Structural Description	Summary 4 clusters, textural descriptions, and composite textural used as the basis for descriptions of the essential structures of experience

(Creswell, 1998; Fendt, 2015; Moustakas, 2011)

requirements; if it contains a moment of experience necessary for understanding the phenomenon and if you can abstract and label it. Any repetitive or vague statements are also eliminated and the statements that remained were labelled as the invariant constituents (Moustakas, 1994). Following this instruction, I reduced the statements and copied them into an invariant constituent document which involved re-organizing and clustering the preliminary groupings into concrete themes and subthemes. I used the preliminary groupings summary, along with the invariant constituents to organize and summarize the themes and sub-themes for each participant in a separate document, again to see how the data was emerging as a whole.

These themes were then reduced one more time focusing on the process of validation. Moustakas (1994) describes this process as checking the themes and their constituents against the complete experience of each co-researcher. This is done by asking three questions: “1) Are [the themes and invariant constituents] expressed explicitly in the complete transcription? 2) Are they compatible if not explicitly expressed? 3) If they are not explicitly compatible, they are not relevant to the co-researchers experience and should be deleted” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). During the validation process, I re-read the transcripts again to ensure I was staying as close to the data as possible and to ensure the constituents were explicit or compatible with each person’s experience.

Once this stage was completed, I soon realized that process was more consistent with descriptive phenomenological analysis, moving away from IPA and the phenomenon as experienced by the co-researcher (Phillips-Pula et al., 2011). Although helpful in organizing and illuminating some of the main themes, in order to create a textural description that was true to the participants experience I took a step back and drew on the summaries, preliminary groupings, invariant constituents, and my own personal experience of the course to create vignettes and

descriptions of experiences from the perspective of the co-researchers. Each description included the vignette of a spiritual or meaningful experience from the course, co-researchers history with outdoor recreation, past meaningful experiences in nature, meaningful moments on the trip, potential spiritual experiences on the trip, and the outcomes of the course for each co-researcher. This allowed me to continue to organize the data based on this nexus, gaining a better perspective of the wider ecology and meshwork of experience where participants history, social context, entanglement with the landscape, other beings, and transformations could be visualized. These can be found in the results section.

After the textural descriptions, structural descriptions were created that focused on how the phenomenon was experienced. This includes a vivid account of the underlying dynamics of experience that highlights the themes and qualities of each co-researchers experience (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). This step was helpful in clarifying the underlying themes of each co-researchers experience. Structural descriptions led into the first stage of intersubjective analysis, which involved clustering each co-researchers themes from the structural description together and creating a composite textural description that used imaginative variation and my own experience to highlight the four main themes of the essence of experience through a vignette.

Photographs were also analyzed along with the transcripts and co-researchers experiences. After the preliminary grouping a photo bank was created that included every photograph discussed in the transcripts, or that was sent to me specifically from the co-researchers prior to their interview. Each photograph was numbered and then further organized in an analysis document based on each co-researcher. Each transcript was reviewed again focusing specifically on discussions raised by the photographs. Analysis included notes on themes of each picture, the context in which they were discussed, and challenges that came up

through analysis. The text produced from discussions of the photographs with co-researchers were analyzed along with the transcripts following Matteucci (2013). The intersubjective photographs and themes were used to create the composite textural and structural descriptions, highlighting the essence of experience.

Textural descriptions naturally emerged as vignettes, describing ‘what happened’ for each co-researcher during the course. The use of vignettes aimed to bring to life the stories of participants, staying close to their experiences using verbatim quotes and photographs co-researchers brought to each interview (Owten & Allen-Collinson, 2016). Using these quotes, participant narratives were presented as vignettes to give others a feel for what these experiences were like in their felt immediacy and illuminate the multidimensional nature of experience. The results section will include a composite description in the form of a vignette from my own perspective, followed by the textural and structural descriptions of each individual, and then finally the composite structural description that will lead into the discussion section.

Chapter Five: Course Experiences and Interpretations

The following section will look to illuminate the essence of experience, staying as close to the stories, memorable moments, and reflections of each co-researcher through vignettes, pictures, and experience descriptions. This study looked to present the experiences of co-researchers as they are lived, as opposed to how they can be reduced (Fendt, 2015). Experiences were reconstructed into vignettes and descriptions to allow for them to be re-lived by the reader, but also contextualized in the form of the emplacement nexus. Section 5.1 will include a composite description and vignette representing the groups experience, followed by a section for each co-researcher including a vignette depicting a meaningful or spiritual experience during the course and then move to a discussion of their social context, the course in detail, and then outcomes of the course. Section 5.2 will discuss the themes that emerged from each co-researchers experience. Quotes from the transcript will begin with the first letter of their pseudonym, followed by 1 or 2 representing the first or second interview, and then the page number that the quote was mentioned in the transcripts i.e. (F1, p.10).

5.1 Kayaking in Clayoquot Sound

Kayaking through Clayoquot sound is an experience that transcends language and pictures. It is a meshwork of feelings, people, elements, weather, animals, matter all meeting at these meaningful nodes of activity within the landscape of Clayoquot sound. Within these nodes of activity one constant was the element of fog. On this particular trip the fog was rather pervasive. It was there every day; not all day every day but every day. The fog felt charged with the energy of the ocean and with anticipation of what was to come. It wasn't something we could control, and it helped facilitate many unexpected experiences. It was a guiding rhythm on the trip, and it revealed a lot for each person about their purpose related to a diverse array of

elements in their life, while also providing moments for growth. It brought us closer together as a group, and afforded time for solo reflection. It was meaningful, some even said it was spiritual. It was the magic that made mountains appear and disappear right before our eyes. The groups intimate experience with fog during this trip inspired the creation of the following vignette from my own perspective, that drew on the themes that emerged throughout the analysis process.

It was day 2, a push day. We left our flat island home this morning and paddled through wide open waters. I was steering again today, but we had switched up the partners and I was kayaking with Betty. When we got closer to the Tofino harbour the flat ocean landscape began to change; mountainous islands with tall rocky forests began to pop up along the horizon. The salty sea air became more pungent, the green tree covered islands more lush, the mist and fog more dense around the base of the mountains. Continuing to paddle, I was lost in the rhythm of each stroke.

Right, left, right, left...Use your core, keep it tight. Right, left, right, left. We're turning right a bit, adjust the rudder. There we go, boats starting to come back straight. Right, left, right, left. Why is that song still in my head...Right, left, right, left.

Betty asked me a question about what she does for a living. Continuing to paddle, we talked about our jobs, leadership, working as a team, supporting each other. Although engaged in the conversation, I was distracted by the scene that was unfolding in front of me. We were paddling towards a little lighthouse, that was shadowed by the Catface Mountain range in the distance. Meares island was to our right, providing a lush green shoreline to paddle along. The fog had rolled in and was dense around the base of the mountain. I was in awe; the mountains peeking out from behind the fog seemed so big, the fog was so dense, the sun low on the horizon. It was cool and crisp, the salty ocean air heavy with moisture. The scene took my breath away. I took

out my disposable camera from my lifejacket pocket and snapped a few pictures. I felt energized in that moment as we continued to paddle towards the lighthouse.

We came to a stop together as a group, sheltered from the open water behind a lighthouse. The guides told us that once we paddled around the lighthouse we would be exposed to open ocean and the currents would be the strongest we had faced so far. We started off rounding the corner together and even though the guides had warned us, I was immediately struck with the power of the water crashing into the side of the boat. I had never experienced anything like this; the energy surging from the water was so unexpected and full of so much force. I paddled hard, communicating to Betty about steering the boat into the waves. My adrenaline rose, and the calm happy energy from before became more focused and intentional. Right, left, right left. The fog was still dense, but had begun to thin as we paddled towards the beach. The mountain no longer seemed big, it WAS big and we were right at the base, paddling through the shadow of this giant that had emerged before us.

We pulled up onto the beach and began to set up camp for the night. I helped get my tent ready and then found a warm rock on the right side of the beach to reflect on what had just happened. I was looking out towards the tree covered mountain side, surrounded by the white sand beach; the dark rock below me was absorbing the sun's rays feeling warm to the touch and I felt a sort of lightness in my body as I reflected in my journal. That whole experience of paddling today was memorable, I didn't expect to feel such a surge of energy from the ocean. I felt small and insignificant looking out at the shadow of the mountain, recalling the feeling of being immersed in the rhythm of the universe through the surging waves. I was also so entranced by the fog all along. It was a good representation of that experience and a good metaphor for life; you don't know what the fog is hiding, whatever it is, it's hidden beneath.

On the trip the fog greeted us every morning. We couldn't control it; it came and went as it pleased affording us a calm day of paddling or one with a little extra adrenaline. We often had to succumb to the rhythms of it, waiting for it to clear enough before we paddled out. These new rhythms brought us joy, we played ninja on the beach while waiting for the fog to clear. We laughed rolling around on the beach like kids, karate chopping each other in the sand. But with this joy came risk, came challenge. The fog hid the things that were right in front of us like the rocks in the rock field we had to pass through when kayaking off Chetarpe. It blurred the vessel that produced the loud thunderous horn behind us as we tried to pass through the rock field. We never did see that boat but continued to wonder where it was as the horns slowly faded into the distance.

There is an interesting phenomenon with fog where seeing it in the distance will cause people to overestimate their speed and slow down (Pretto, Bresciani, Rainer, Bülthoff, 2012). On this trip the fog slowed us down and changed our rhythms in more ways than one. Lines of energy and matter came together to create these serendipitous moments. A special nighttime moment for Betty with a headlamp illuminating millions of tiny water droplets suspended in the air at night or the fog and tides clearing to reveal important small details along the shore. The fog changed our plans and along with other elements of this trip it helped us to have time alone to reflect on our lives and our purpose. We slowed down, we played, we reflected, and we embraced the calm chaos of fog that influenced our trip.

This idea of fog encompasses the essence and themes of a meaningful or spiritual outdoor recreation experience during this trip for the co-researchers. The power of nature, unexpected experiences, stepping into different rhythms, growth/learning/purpose, and a combination of the group atmosphere and solo time for reflection are the themes that make up a spiritual outdoor

recreation experience for the co-researchers involved in this study. These themes will be explored through the first person vignettes and descriptions of each co-researchers experience that follows.



Figure 2. A photo of the fog that was prevalent throughout the trip
Taken with my personal disposable camera

5.1.1 Fletcher; Reclaiming a part of himself

It was the last night of the course. The group had finished eating dinner and everyone had sort of spread out for some free time. The sun was starting to set, and I found myself sitting on the rough uneven rocks of the shoreline with a few other people watching the beautiful scene unfold (see figure 3). It was the perfect representation of an interstitial space or “the space between two things” (F1, p. 17).

“I look at it and to me, what I see is actually rocks in the water and then I see that space between the rocks and the water and then in the distance I see the forest in the sky and just from the light I also see the dusk, like that line between day and night...for me that is like the most like perfect spiritual place to be, is in this moment between all of these different things that represent all of the different things that are beautiful about nature” (F1, p. 17).

This moment “is the sort of definition of that concept of just like being centered in nature and adding the opportunity to sort of have the optimal view of nature. You know you get the sound of

the waves on the rocks, the view obviously, the smell of the ocean and then to watch the sunset and sort of day turn to night like that for me is a very like meditative spiritual place to exist in that moment” (F2, p. 5/6). Although I identify as an atheist, I can connect the idea of interstitial spaces as a representation of my definition of spirituality, “that aspect of the human experience that reminds you that you are part of the greater whole of the natural world” (F2, p. 1).



Figure 3. Fletchers view from the last night of the course.

Fletcher grew up spending a lot of time hiking and camping with his parents and sister. “When I was a wee little kid, my families like big vacation every year was we would go down to Maine to Acadia National park” (F1, p. 1). As he got older, he was lucky enough to participate in multiple canoe and kayak trips through his school with a program called Outreach. It was on one of these trips to Temagami River Provincial Park, that was the most memorable for Fletcher. “It was...it was during the second half of the trips that we almost had multiple fatalities” (F1, p. 8). In his best deep foreshadowing voice, Fletcher introduces the story with a “but like let me tell you about my vacation...THAT TRIED TO KILL ME” (F1, P. 3). A deadly case of strep throat,

a diabetic attack, finding two individuals stuck under a canoe in quick sand, and a horrific tumble down a cliff for Fletcher sticks out in his mind as a memorable outdoor recreation moment. Fletcher took many lessons from this experience but the one that stands out is his lesson in resilience; “probably just the basic fact of like no matter what goes wrong... you just have to keep going... a lot of it just boils down to not giving up” (F1, p. 13).

Going into the 8-day Outward Bound Mindfulness course, Fletcher was looking to reconnect with an important part of himself that had been put on a shelf since going through a divorce: “going on that trip when I did, and meeting all you wonderful people and just having the opportunity to get back out there. For me it was about sort of reclaiming a part of my personality or part of my life that sort of been put on hold” (F2, p. 10). With this intention in mind, Fletcher experienced two meaningful or memorable moments with surprise animal encounters. Fletcher woke up in his bivvy sack on the last night of the trip to his foot inside the mouth of a coastal wolf (see Figure 4). “I like to think we were both equally surprised because I...I feel like the wolf thought it was stealing like a food bag” (F1, p. 20). We had been taught how to haze animals the night before, so Fletcher began yelling from his position on the ground. The wolf was “silhouetted against the clouds and the sky and I was staring directly at it and it disappeared without moving” (F1, p. 22).

Nobody was injured during this experience, as Fletcher describes the wolf as not in attack mode. But it was for sure a memorable experience for him.

You know just looking up at a wolf from below and having that experience of realizing that even though it's two or three meters away it can somehow disappear, while you are looking at it. Which is awesome in the sense of like, awe inspiring. In like the original like dictionary sense of that word, like not just cool or neat but like I felt awe at the power of that animal. And the...the sky was beautiful. It was a legitimately beautiful night. (F1, p. 24)

The yelling woke up our guides who immediately came rushing over to help Fletcher. Although the wolf surprised Fletcher and gave him “a huge adrenaline dump,” it woke the guides up long enough to realize that our kayaks hadn’t been tied up properly and had floated a distance away with the rising tide. Thankfully we found our kayaks and Fletcher now has another incredible story to add to his arsenal.



Figure 4. A wolf pawprint on the Chetarpe Beach

The second animal encounter connected very much with Fletcher's idea of a spiritual experience. On day three we experienced our most technical kayaking day of the trip. This day of paddling led us towards the beach where we would be completing our 24-hour solo experience. The guides let us know that we were going to try and kayak in short bursts of focused movement with breaks in between. It was on one of these breaks where Fletcher “wasn’t expecting to have a new observation in nature” but he did and it brought him joy (F2, p. 3). The guides led us through a meditation, or a “dedicated moment of silence to listen to the voice guiding us in that moment, and sort of that experience with just being very grounded in that particular moment” (F2, p. 4). At the conclusion of the meditation, everyone opened their eyes and was reacquainted with the deep blue waters and vast mountains on the horizon once again. Fletcher opened his

eyes and “because of just the completely, utterly, totally at random choice of which pieces of kelp I chose to hang on to, I had this really cool experience of like discovering that there was a crab that was free climbing” up his hand (F2, p. 2). For Fletcher this experience was a “magical moment of...a slice of the natural world that I didn’t expect to be there” (F2, p. 3) that highlighted “there can be an infinite amount of stuff that is still you know, to be discovered (F2, p. 3). This experience brought about his childlike sense of joy at the discovery of new things and connected him to the natural world in a really wonderful unexpected way.

For Fletcher this trip reconnected him with his identity as someone who spends time outdoors. “Saying yes, I am the type of person that goes camping and you know survives being nibbled on by a wolf or whatever. I think that that is certainly you know, provided a...I don’t know like reinforced a positive perception of myself and of the world” (F2, p. 10). It also “performed the job of the...you know, to steal the metaphor everybody uses, like recharging the batteries. I definitely felt better able to deal with the stress of life at the end of that trip than at the beginning” (F2, p. 12). He took mindfulness exercises like mindful eating into his real life and felt reconnected to his purpose and identity. Although there were positive outcomes, Fletcher recognizes that in terms of health and wellbeing a trip like this is not “going to like instantly cure you if you showed up with some pre-existing conditions” (F2, p. 12). For Fletcher implementing things he learned during the course has also been a challenge. “I am a constant ‘I’m going to start meditating tomorrow’ kind of person” (F2, p. 14). Although it “certainly helped me to engage with my desire to make that practice a real part of my life” (F2, p. 14).

5.1.2 Taylor; Who am I and what am I doing here?

It was the final night of the course. We had finished eating dinner and the sun started to set over the water. Reflecting back on it, I feel as though this night was “equally heartbreaking

and really special” (T1, p. 7). I crept along the shore line to get back to my tent when I decided to take a few minutes to myself to watch the sunset in the distance.

Honestly, I think I was pretty overwhelmed with gratitude. Like here I was with this, I remember, I think I was on my own at this point. I was taking this photo and just you know, thinking back on the week...I just enjoyed a few minutes on my own. Like, I can't even tell you how long it was because I was just sort of absorbed” (T1, p. 7).

Our campsite on the last evening was a little island surrounded by a beach during low tide. Looking out onto the water, we were in a beautiful bay with a clear view of Cat Face Mountain; the perfect place to watch a sunset. This moment of solitude was important for me because it “allowed me to really reflect and think about who I am and what I am doing here...I would definitely reflect back on and say that was like a spiritual experience for me.” (T2, p. 5).

This moment was about solitude, but it was...

also just about like, sort of the vastness of Earth, it's really hard to appreciate from home. So taking the series of photos that look like that one, just kind of recognizing, you know, the sun as a massive force, the earth has a massive force, nature in the wilderness as a force that will never quite conquer a hundred percent (T2, p. 5).

Reflecting back I thought about all of the things I learned that week. “I just really appreciate and I find that kind of aspect of personal growth, like a piece of spirituality that I always connect back to, the fact that we can always be learning more from each other” (T2, p. 6). The beautiful scene along with the solitude and the opportunity it gave me to reflect on the trip left me feeling invigorated. “Like a little bit energized. And happy. Like awe inspired, just kind of happy you know” (T2, p. 7).

Taylor grew up in a family that valued and expected everyone to spend time outdoors. Her and her family enjoyed camping trips together but she really fell in love with the outdoors. “I sort of took that to the next level as I grew up. So we did a lot of car camping, a lot of provincial

parks, not as much canoeing, but some hikes and stuff like that. We grew up at a cottage too, so just at the cottage we're always like on the water by the water bonfires, barbecues, that sort of



Figure 5. Taylor's view on the last night of the course.

This is the same image emphasized as Fletcher thing" (T2, p. 1). This love expanded when she went to a kids camp when she was 13. "That's where my interest in the outdoors and like living a life where the outdoors is really important really took off... I just knew that like the outdoors was going to be not only a big part of my personal life, but also my professional life" (T1, p. 1-2).

Taylor has a history of meaningful outdoor travel experiences, including a trip to Bhutan and another to Peru to hike Machu Picchu. Her trip to Bhutan involved following the footsteps of her family, in particular her aunt that wrote about living in Bhutan in the 80's. "I read the readings and was like, I want to do this. And I was also sort of honoring my aunt who had passed away...So it was like, very reflective and important and meaningful for the trip itself" (T1, p. 4). The pinnacle of her trip to Machu Picchu involved an arduous 3am hike arriving to a place called Sun Gate at sunrise.

"There's a really important Peruvian aspect of culture called Pachamama. And it means like thanking Mother Earth, and basically anytime you're going to eat or enjoy any sort of like food or drink, you offer a little bit back to the earth because that's where it came

from. So we actually brought a beer on the Inca Trail, carried it the whole four days, and then when we got to that Sun Gate at Sunrise, we opened it and poured a little on the ground and then enjoyed it together as a group” (T1, p. 2-3).

Both of these trips highlight the importance of the meaning or intentions behind her travel experiences. “I always try to reflect on what something might mean or the meaning behind things. To me that makes it more enjoyable and just a lot more meaningful” (T1, p. 4).

Going into the course Taylor was looking to learn about “ways to incorporate mindfulness and getting back to nature in my day to day and sort of keeping that with me” (T2, p. 10). She also went in with a rough idea of her goals, accomplishing specifically her goal of gaining confidence and a sense of belonging in a nature setting. There were many memorable moments that lead to this confidence as well as some elements of spiritual experiences. Taylor loves to cook, and had a special moment cooking the group dinner on night two of the course in a beautiful natural log kitchen (see Figure 6).

“It’s funny how you can totally strip away like the mascara that I wear when I’m in [the city], or the like, office shirt or the jeans...you can wear your grimy-est sandals and headband and be in your total element and feel like you look like your best version of yourself...I think it’s because it just takes you back to like, exactly what’s in your heart and nothing else matters” (T1, p. 22).

Along with feeling like the best version of herself Taylor got to connect with her purpose. Taylor brought a passion from home into this natural environment and gained confidence in her outdoor cooking skills.

Although she had experienced ocean tides before, waking up to such a dramatic change in the environment was a huge surprise. “And still, this morning I woke up in complete shock. And it’s just a good reminder of actually how powerful nature is...nature holds the power that we will never have the bulk of under control” (T2, p. 6). This morning was the first time Taylor



Figure 6. Taylor cooking dinner in our outdoor kitchen on night two

realized the impact the tides, and the fog would have on her during this trip. “And those two elements ended up being like a major theme of the trip. So that morning, I was like, Whoa, where's the tide? Like, what's going on? And like the fog clearing to reveal those trees was really cool” (T1, p. 23).

Another unexpected moment for Taylor was an interaction with a stellar sea lion. Taylor was behind the group with one of the instructors, and had noticed a floating log or driftwood, which she found strange being that far away from shore. All of a sudden “it came up and went down. And I was like *gasps* and I didn't know what it was at first” (T1, p. 11). This experience left her happy, and excited but “also in that moment a bit scared, like what if it comes over here or whatever like what happens next you know this thing is massive and strong and like I'm nothing compared to it” (T1, p. 11). Taylor took away from these moments how “the unpredictable factor of nature is like a great metaphor for life... You can't control what comes your way or what what's gets thrown at you” (T1, p. 25).

For Taylor this trip had a lot to do with growth. She learned mindfulness strategies that influenced her health and wellbeing, which she defined as “an overall recognition, and effort

towards self-care. So that's like mental, physical, social, emotional, spiritual, like and in, on every level, making sure that you're cared for" (T2, p. 11). Being away from her phone for 8 days resulted in developing strategies to reduce phone use, and a big takeaway was "sort of a deeper appreciation for nature, and which I always knew I had, but like, the more I'm immersed, the more, I get to appreciate it more and more, and I just really enjoy that part" (T2, p. 14). Moments of reflection during the course, as well as reflecting on the experience post trip allowed her to deepen her experience, reflecting on her purpose in life, growth, and how that related to her own unique conceptualization of spirituality.

5.1.3 Chloe; Finding rhythm as a team

Setting off on day two, I felt ready for the first push day. We had arrived at our first campsite last night after a relatively easy few hours of paddling. This mornig the guides let us know that today was going to be the first real challenge. We set off and pretty soon I sort of sunk into the rhythm of being on the water. "I think what was good was just kayaking...it's like the rhythm of it and the quiet moments and I felt really connected and I also feel really connected to water" (C2, p. 3). Even though it was a long day, the rhythms of paddling on the ocean made me feel at ease.

I feel like even when we're paddling hard, I'm like...still doing the same motion...you're not really like thinking about every stroke, right? It just, like, becomes a natural thing. And I think that brings me more to an ease...you're just powering through the motions that you have to do and your breathing is in check. I think all of that brings me back to being connected and being more grounded I think (C2, p. 7).

I struggled with some arm issues and soreness, but with some encouragement from my kayak partner, I just kept on pushing through. "I liked it because we got to like really digging! Like no we're doing this and we have got to paddle really hard and like even the times when we were

paddling hard and not really moving” (C1, p. 8).



Figure 7. The team kayaking together, and finding rhythm on the water

This day allowed me to overcome some of my fears going into the course about my limited paddling experience. “I was like no we’re all doing this together you know?...I think I think that like we really felt like a team?” (C1, p. 8). Connecting with the team on the water was really meaningful for me;

I find that it’s very important, just seeing different perspectives and like experiences and I find that when I was on the water that’s like how I felt. Like everybody’s here for a different reason on this trip. Everyone’s feeling a different way. You know some people are like you know struggling, some people are like really pushing. But like to feel connected to like the earth I think was like the big thing. All of us were doing it together, all of us were in this water you know (C2, p. 5).

The team support during challenging moments and the slower, calmer rhythms of the course resulted in a memorable restorative experience for me. “I think whenever I can I like to find rhythm, I think that’s my thing. Like even just like breathing meditation and like things like that bring me back and make me feel more connected...I can be like a little frantic like I’m just like all over the place?” C2, p. 7).

Chloe grew up in a family that participated in a lot of organized programs along with casually spending time outside. “We did like ballet, we did you know, all the all the programs that your parents could get you in like, Kumon” (C1, p. 2). She biked to school, spent tons of time at the swimming pool, and played outside around her home. As she got a bit older she began to explore the world of outdoor recreation, camping and kayaking with friends in Vancouver. “I started camping when I was like in high school You know, with my friends. They were like, 'oh it'll be like a weekend like camping trip' but not with my family really” (C1, p. 2). Today she continues those casual outdoor activities like swimming and yoga in the park during the summers.

One memorable experience Chloe has outdoors is hiking through the rainforest in Malaysia, sleeping in caves along the way. “What stands out is we had no idea what we were heading into...the unknown was cool, the new environment was cool. Seeing...Malaysia in a different view? (C1, p. 4). Chloe learned a lot about the land through her incredible guides and valued bonding with the group during challenging moments. “So we cut up our water bottles and made sandals. And just did stuff like that because that's all you had and you were like working with your team” (C1, p. 5).

During the course, the team atmosphere and the calming rhythms of paddling on the water and camping in Clayoquot sound were memorable for Chloe, but the solo experience was a moment that sticks out for her as one of the most important.

“I think that personally, like in terms of personal growth I think solo did a lot more than like the other aspects of our trip. I know I can push myself and you know paddle and I know... I can cook food and put up my tent but for solo I think that pushed me more and challenged me more” (C1, p. 8).

This was something totally new for Chloe and “it was important for me because I've never done anything like that. I was really nervous and I survived” (C1, p. 7). Chloe got past the

silence and spent her time setting up her tarp shelter, journaling, and connecting with herself, leaving the experience feeling proud.

It was also memorable for her to come back together with the group activity after Solo. The group was asked to bring a small item on the trip that represented something meaningful, and after solo everyone shared those items with the group.

I feel like more connected to the people that we were on trip with... And when you see it in the sand is kind of like beautiful. How everything's like, so different. But everything comes from, you know, a place that we hold dear to ourselves. And to share it? I think this picture is like I feel connected to the people C2, p. 6).

The important moments on this trip allowed Chloe to connect with herself, the people around her, and the environment in meaningful ways.



Figure 8. The groups meaningful items.

Before the course Chloe had been incredibly busy at work, and this trip provided an important restorative experience. “Truthfully it came at the perfect time for me because our year is crazy at work and like I think if I didn't have that time away to step away from the computer, to step away from technology I would have been burnt out for sure” (C1, p. 5). Stepping away from technology into the rhythms of the course and being present in this landscape was very beneficial for Chloe’s health and wellbeing. “Being in nature and like, just like realizing the

benefits of it, like being able to breathe in the air being not like not getting distracted by things, being present? I think is the most important thing that I learned” (C1, p. 5). She was also able to take some lessons from the guides back home after the course. “I came home and started doing acupuncture... Which was really great to learn more from [our guides] about that” (C2, p. 11). Something important for Chloe was also recognizing each participants subjective experiences, and how the outcomes of this course will be different for everyone. “My other takeaway is everybody...I think I learned that everybody came from like such different backgrounds and I think that was one thing that I took away... there's so many different perspectives and so many different experiences and like we're all doing it together” (C2, p. 415)

Although Chloe took away many important outcomes, the practical application of these to her life back in the city has been a challenge.

I feel like the trip was like, an escape, you know, like a little glimpse of how it should be. That's how I view it. Because when you come back to like, life like once we hit the airport, I was like, oh, we're back. You know, once the cell phones are back in our hands, you're like, Oh, this is back to the routine of daily life and I don't think I...like I'm sure at the beginning, I was more like, Oh yeah, I'm gonna be off the phone more. All of these like things that you say are like your resolutions (C2, p.11).

Chloe attributes this to being ‘out there,’ and having the intention of letting go, feeling more connected to the world, and being mindful when on course but struggling to bring this back to her ‘regular city life.’

5.1.4 Betty; A healing journey

It was the second night of the course, we had just finished eating dinner when the fog started to roll in. We had some free time before the charting session started and everyone was mulling about the campsite in different combinations of people. I found myself sitting down with one of the guides along the shore, out of ear shot of the rest of the group (see figure 9). The conversation we shared was meaningful for me because it helped me realize how important trip

leaders are. “What I took from the trip is...I think the leader is the most important. They are the heart and soul of the trip.” (B2, p. 16). We talked about health, acupuncture, and how the human body relates to nature. “She knows nature very well. And she knows how the body related to the nature. She is a nature friendly person” (B1, p. 12). After our conversation I joined the rest of the group for the charting lesson and everyone went to bed shortly after.

That night continued to be memorable for me as I woke up to an unexpected experience.

“The night after I talked to [the guide] at the beach. That same night everybody went to bed. I go to I have...to find a place to pee. And then I have my head lamp right? That night is very special to me... Because they have a very tiny mist hitting your face. You don't feel it... It's the moisture. Small tiny moisture. It's like a raindrop! You can't see it without the headlamp... When you have the headlamp on you can see, billions trillions of those tiny water drops. Dropping, hitting towards you, facing towards you. It's very like I won't see it in the city. This is the first time in my life I saw it... It's only me that sees this!... And what a chance in my life! And when I go to pee and I have to kneel down, not kneel down squat. I have to squat. When my headlamp look facing at the sand?... Hundreds of insects! Hundreds! Crawling on the sand” (B2, p. 3).

This moment was important for me because I got to see something I had never seen before, something that I didn't know how or why it existed but it did and it was a good reminder that humans are limited. It was an experience that “you cannot ask for it...you didn't expect it but it come with nature and that is spiritual!” (B2, p. 5).



Figure 9. Betty and the guide sharing an intimate moment on night two.

In the last few years Betty has been searching for and taking opportunities to travel. “I always want to do these kind of things while I was young teenager but I haven’t...I don’t have a chance to do it. Now since the opportunity is open for me. So I just jumped in” (B1, p. 4). Two memorable experiences for Betty were participating in a three day cycling trip around Montreal and Hiking in Cinque Terre Italy with her son. The bike trip was incredibly demanding for Betty, because she was only a recreational cyclist, but she learned that if you have the courage to try, a strong mindset, and supportive people around you, you can achieve a lot. Cinque Terre was memorable “because it’s just spectacular views...I don’t want the moment to go away” (B1, p. 9). Betty enjoyed having her own time to explore the space, and with no pressure of a guided tour she could stay there for as long as she liked.

Going into the kayaking trip Betty’s intentions and goals were very clear. “When I go to this trip, when I signed up, I want nature to heal me, that is my priority...I’m asking, seeking for help. To heal...That is my spirituality” (B2, P. 17). Betty was searching for the life changing experience that Outward Bound promotes many youth having during these courses. She was looking to enhance her health which for her meant “[to] just understand my feelings. Just understand that I am in hardship” (B2, p. 10). Although Betty did not have this type of experience during the course; experiences post-trip demonstrated how influential the course was in terms of her own environmental education and holistic health and wellbeing.

Betty stayed in Vancouver for a few days once the course was finished and visited the Vancouver Aquarium during that time.

“I went to the aquarium and I learned...they asked me to do a survey. And I have to look at each picture inside the exhibition. And I understand the animal suffer because human plastic! They got into the water and then there’s so many plastics inside of the sea. And the fish eat the plastic and it killed all the sea animals... Because of humans! And human eating those sea animal and then that means you actually...human affecting the sea animal and human also eat the sea animals then the human is affecting ourselves... Because we

are not environmentally friendly human to animals in the world, we keep polluting” (B1, p. 18).

In the past Betty didn't feel very connected to sea animals, but this visit after spending eight days living around the sea and sea animals, sent her a clear message about the importance of avoiding plastic and educating the next generation about the harms of plastic. She attributed the strength of this lesson to the experiential nature of this course and feeling like you cannot help but become connected to the animals around you. “When you see something hurting the sea animal. You instantly have the feeling that 'Oh, that is so bad.'...It's become a very strong sentence, statement to me” (B1, p. 18). Although she is challenged with eliminating plastics from her day to day life, she is now more aware of the importance of experiential education for children in teaching them about sustainability and environmental issues.

Betty may not have found complete healing during the course, but it became a part of her healing journey. The guides helped Betty to work on her physical health by introducing her to Moxa, a leaf powder used to heat sore muscles in Chinese Medicine, that she bought and used upon returning home as well as influencing her to see a masseuse and an osteopath. More importantly, Betty took the memories of nature connection influenced by the guides into a therapeutic camp she attended after the trip aimed at spiritual and mental healing.

“When I'm at camp, after we discuss group discussion. We were told to go outside to speak to God.... Then at that moment, I remember I am at the camp, Kayak camp! I have the pine tree. I mixed the pine trees leaves with the tea! So I hold with my two hands, I want to smell it again! But the flavor didn't come out. So I used my hands to rub it and lots of scents coming out! I feel so calm! The calm from the nature! Therefore that is special that is the spiritual to me. To me I connect with God, God is calming me down” (B2, p. 12).

Connecting with nature is a way for Betty to connect to her God. “It's spiritual because I believe God created everything so that's why we as human beings are automatically craving for the nature. This is what I believe because we were created by the God we are one of the creatures

same as the other animals, trees. We are one of them. But we call ourselves human beings” (B2, p. 2). These unexpected, connected experiences with nature, and with other people during the course allowed Betty to connect with her spirituality become a part of her health and wellbeing journey.

Today Betty continues to see a counselor, practice meditation with therapists, and practices yoga and mindfulness daily (see figure 10). With the help of the course, and her own efforts towards healing she has found her happiness again. “I don't feel sadness. I am happy. I actually...that sadness I can look at it as the old year. It is shrinking, the problem, the sadness, is shrinking” (B2, p. 16). Although the outcomes of the course weren't initially obvious, Betty took away a great deal in terms of environmental education and the trip was an important component of her holistic health and wellbeing journey.



Figure 10. The final group yoga session that was followed by a guided meditation.

5.1.5 Eva; Finding new rhythms and closely examining life

We said our final goodbyes and I walked down the beach to my solo spot tucked into a corner of the island. After setting up my shelter for the evening I began to explore my home for the next 24 hours. I came across a giant piece of driftwood, patterned with swirling eroded

divots. “I found myself just like tracing little swirly patterns, almost like a maze like thing but never coming up with the same route” (E2, p. 7). While I traced the pattern with my fingers many questions floated through my mind; ‘how long did this take’, and ‘how long has this been here, where does it come from’ (E2, p. 7)? This driftwood reminded me of “this sense of like, this is so much bigger than my 80 years of existence on this planet, this will be here for a lot longer” (E2, p. 7). Continuing to explore I found a beautiful reddish-green plant growing out of one of the cracks on the far end of that same piece of driftwood.

“I am always amazed at where life can grow. It’s like how did this moss grow on this tiny crack in this little tiny way? How is that possible?...And the magic that an actual seed landed there and there was enough water, enough moisture for that to germinate, and for it to grow” (E2, p. 7).

I kept walking down the beach and through the trees, until deciding on finding a comfy spot to do some beadwork, using the beads and handmade felt I had brought from home. I had been “so entranced by the bull kelp all along” (E2, p. 6), and decided to start beading an image of this sea plant. The bull kelp forests are so established in Clayoquot Sound, that they are printed on maps, and could have potentially existed in that spot for hundreds of years. I became very focused on the project, sinking into the repetitive rhythm of the craft.

The Solo experience allowed me to step into a different way of observing, and a different rhythm of living. “I just, I really loved...to just be in the rhythm of whatever it was in that day... And so if that was like the simplicity of not having to perform and like make food or clean up or do all those things, but to just whatever felt in that moment...So I think like the importance to me of that kind of quiet 24 hours solo was super key” (E1, p. 12). Walking along the beach, beading, drawing mandalas in the sand; “I think I just felt more connected...just being able to move and be, and have my thoughts and all of it in a different rhythm” (E1, p. 12). For the whole trip, but especially during solo, I was drawn to getting close up to examine the things around me.

What I had hoped this trip was going to be was to take some time to closely examine patterns and processes that were happening in my life. So I could take note of them to be in a more, if it's like a gentle place of being with myself or in the world or with other people. And so maybe the close-up-ness was that. The wanting to just like look at the small detail and appreciate it (E2, p. 7).

I took so many important lessons away from this trip but being able to slow down, shift into a new rhythm during solo, and be open to the many possibilities of each day were some of the key components for me.



Figure 11. A small plant growing out of the crack of a driftwood log near Eva's Solo spot

Eva grew up hiking and camping with her family everywhere, moving a lot and exploring new parts of the USA and Canada. She went on to a university program centered around immersive outdoor field courses, spending time in remote places doing research on birds. Now, as a wife and mother of two, she spends as much time as she can with her kids outside. Looking to pass on an appreciation for nature, and utilizing the calming effect nature has on her children. “When school ends at 2:30, and they’re totally wrangy we get in the car...it’s like beautiful wilderness, five minutes from our doorstep. And they can just run wild. And so there’s that calming piece like kind of countering that nature deficit. But also using it as a way for me to sort

of like find a grounding in kind of the hecticness of holding three jobs and being in a relationship, owning two properties and having two kids” (E1, p. 3).

Eva has spent so much time outdoors that it is difficult to pinpoint specific memorable moments during past outdoor experiences, but for her two moments stand out:

“It was the first time I saw a full moon rise in the Arctic...It almost took up like half of the entire sky! Because all of the landscape is totally distorted there's no frame of reference and this giant moon that was like, like orange, like Starburst orange just came up over the horizon and I just remember being like blown away...I could not even grasp what was happening. It just all of us were just standing there just for hours just watching. It slowly you know, like made its way higher and smaller, but it was that moment of just like how kind of every single day and every single moment there's still something to be in awe about that just makes no sense but brings you clearly to the present with no other thought in your mind” (E1, p. 4).

She also remembers a time doing research in Northern Alberta, around Athabasca “And I remember like bootin along in my, four wheeler like my quad and just sort of like looking and then there was a black bear just sitting in a field and it was pulling up bull rushes, like cat tails?...you can just watch the kind of beauty and magic” (E1, p. 6). What makes up these types of moments special for Eva is “ the willingness to let your mind wander, and to let go of what should be...not searching for something...I think once you let go of that stuff, it kind of appears to you” (E1, p. 6).

Important moments during the course allowed Eva to grow and learn lessons with nature. The tides and fog reminded Eva to stay open (see figure 12); open to change (E1, p. 15), that “everyday something new will get your eye if you allow yourself to be open to it” (E1, p. 4), open to surprising connections (E2, p.12), and open to learning new things at any age (E1, p. 13). Giant moss covered stumps and little plants growing in tiny cracks of driftwood reminded her that with “death brings life, you know the tree of life continues to grow and still just the complete wonder of something so huge...I think that was one of those sort of awe moments”

(E2, p. 5). The tides changing to reveal beautiful colors and textures reminded her what we are searching for is sometimes hidden below (E2, p. 6), and the tides also help her to see that “this too shall pass...I think helps ground me to be a better parent” (E1, p. 21).



Figure 12. The tides and fog reminding Eva to stay open

In terms of her health and wellbeing, which she defines as finding balance and engagement between a physical, mental, emotional and spiritual component, Eva went into the course looking for ways to incorporate mindfulness into her daily actions and “to be attentive to the small details but be mindful of how do we integrate that into our lives” (E2, p. 12). For Eva these lessons of finding new slower rhythms, being open, welcoming change, and this too shall pass only have long term staying power if they are brought into the context of her life. “If you can’t take what you’ve learned and transfer it and make meaning into the rest of your life then there’s no growth that happens. And so I feel like there was lots of growth that happened and that is continuing to happen from it and I, you know kind of stay more aware of when I start spinning out of control and start thinking in a way that is a bit irrational” (E2, p. 13). Intentions going into the course, and the intentions of applying course outcomes to your day to day life are vital for Eva. But remembering to stay open, mind, body and soul, to unexpected experiences the world has to offer is an important part of a meaningful nature experience.

5.2 Structures of Experiences

5.2.1 *Fletcher*

The essence of these meaningful experiences during the 8-day Outward Bound sea kayaking course for Fletcher can be centered around two major themes associated with the power of nature: (i) surprising and unexpected moments, and (ii) interstitial spaces in nature, as well as a focus on purpose in life.

Fletcher's last night on the course and his interaction with the wolf highlights how these three themes come together to create a meaningful experience. The night started with a beautiful sunset, where Fletcher could spend time within the interstitial space, along the shore. These spaces for Fletcher encompass so much of nature's beauty all at once, "shrinking the world down in a sense" (F1, p. 30). Existing between forest and beach, shore and sea, sand and rock, day and night; "it talks to the uhm the basic soul of humanity...this is the world we live in and this is the beauty of nature" (F1, p. 18). Later that night, Fletcher's experience with a coastal wolf was one that was completely unexpected and authentic, a moment that "you know you wouldn't buy a ticket for if someone tried to sell it to you um so that means it's an experience you can only ever have in a real moment" (F1, p. 23). The experience highlighted for Fletcher the power of nature, as he found himself in a vulnerable position, looking up at a wild wolf tangled up in his sleeping bag. He "felt awe at the power of that animal" (F1, p. 24) as it disappeared in the forest, silhouetted by the moon. Thankfully that wolf chose not to harm Fletcher and because the interaction woke up our guides, they realized the kayaks that were floating away.

Fletcher's interaction with the crab was also very important for Fletcher, highlighting the importance of these unexpected moments and the discovery that comes with them. It was the happy chance of many different components coming together to create this meaningful

experience for Fletcher; the specific bull kelp forest our guides had decided to stop in, the random choice of which piece of kelp he would hold on to, and the time spent there in stillness dedicating our time to a mindful meditative moment. All of these things coming together created a serendipitous moment for Fletcher “that was just so cool. So unexpected yet so completely simple” (F2, p. 3), a moment that for him connected with his idea of a spiritual experience.

The theme of purpose, specifically purpose in life, was also very important for Fletcher highlighting his intentions going into the course and an influential part of his holistic health and wellbeing. Fletcher’s intention for the course was to connect with a part of his identity that he had put on hold for many years. After going through a divorce, he wanted a chance to get back to these activities he had grown up doing. These adventurous outdoor trips allowed him to develop resilience and gain confidence in overcoming the challenges that can arise when spending time in wild places. So, traveling through this landscape, interacting with wolves, kayaking on the ocean, all of it reminded him that this is the kind of person he is and wants to be, which connects with his purpose in life and reinforces his ‘positive perception of himself.’

5.2.2 Taylor

The major themes that make up Taylor’s essence of experience are similar to those that Fletcher highlighted: (i) solitude and moments for reflection, (ii) unexpected experiences, (iii) the power of nature, and (iv) purpose, specifically in terms of growth and learning.

Between Taylor’s moment on the last night of the course, and her time spent during the solo experience, having time to reflect on her own was vital to the memorable moments during the course. These moments gave Taylor the opportunity to reflect; on her current relationships, who she is and why she was on the course, what the course meant to her, and the learning or growth that was happening during the trip. The mindfulness aspect of the course facilitated more

of this quiet solo time and helped Taylor to spend more time reflecting on her growth throughout the eight day course. “Yeah, there's an element of learning. There's an element of self-development, there's an element of reflection and all that comes with being mindful of yourself. So I think it's extremely important” (T2, p. 8/9).

Unexpected experiences with animals and elements of the ocean environment reminded Taylor of the power of nature. The dramatic changes of the tides along with the thick fog blanketing Clayoquot Sound surprised and shocked Taylor. The dramatic change of the environment reminded her that we as humans will never be able to control the forces of nature. These unexpected unpredictable moments provided her with an opportunity for learning and recognizing the unpredictable nature of life. Her surprise encounter with the stellar sea lion also reminded her of the power of nature and how the strength of this giant animal could easily overpower a human if it chose too. These moments coupled with the beautiful views of the last night sunset moment, and the solo experience highlight how nature is “like equally relaxing and forceful. It's like forces of nature but like divine peace as well” (T1, p. 14).

Taylor’s own personal form of spirituality emphasized her purpose and goals in life, growth, and “getting back to the fact that we are nature” (T2, p. 4). Her spirituality “defines certain decisions...how I spend my time, what sort of goals I pursue. I always feel like I am checking in with my spiritual side to make sure that something is true to myself” (T2, p. 4). Being in these types of landscapes play a large role in this spirituality for Taylor because “as humans we are nature” (T2, p.4). Taylor highlighted an Outward Bound video where a 15 year old states “I’m not concrete and buildings, I’m trees, I’m water, I’m land” to explain this connection (T2, p. 4). With this understanding of spirituality, there were many moments during the course that Taylor reflected on as spiritual experiences.

Connecting with her purpose in life was important for Taylor as she was reminded that ‘she belongs’ in nature settings, and ‘feels like the best version of herself’ when cooking outdoors. The trip for her connected with “just getting back to the basics of what it means to be like your true self” (T1, p. 22). The theme of purpose is also connected with growth for Taylor and an important component of her spirituality. Personal growth, the growth of the group, and learning from each other were common themes for Taylor. Those moments where she connect with her purpose allowed for personal growth and she appreciated the growth of the group after solo; “I just feel like we really grew a lot. And I don't know if it was having the solo and then coming back together. To me, that was like a pretty powerful piece. Because when we came back together, we were almost like more of a unit” (T1, p. 12). Taylor went into the course having goals and looking to learn new mindfulness strategies highlighting the importance of the intentions she brings on trip. Her purpose, and the growth that comes with working towards realizing this purpose was an important factor in Taylors meaningful and spiritual experiences during the trip.

5.2.3 Chloe

The essence of Chloe’s experience centered around the three themes of: (i) rhythms of being outside paddling on the water, (ii) connecting with other people during the course, and (iii) overcoming challenges.

Chloe found rhythm and ease in our daily paddles, which was an important aspect of the restorative experience she had during this course. Even on push days, or moments when Chloe’s body was sore, the repetitiveness of paddling was important for finding a slower rhythm compared to the hecticness of Chloe’s everyday life. “Being in the forest away from this non-stop world where people are expecting you to do this and that but it was a different kind of

routine” (C1, p. 6). For Chloe the ease, mindfulness aspect, and slower rhythm allowed her to take the time to connect with nature and with herself. “The kayaking feeling, connected to the water, feeling connected to you know...just thinking of the fog and just being like a little speck in the world!... Feeling connected to the world! We're just out there and there's...there's so much beyond us but we're like moving through it like through nature” (C2, p. 6).

This slower rhythm helped facilitate the ability to connect with other people and the ‘team’ which was a meaningful aspect of the course for Chloe. Opening up to the group after the solo experience, and the feeling of moving through challenges together were important. “We all worked together and we got it accomplished fairly quickly, we just did it. And I think that, I think that’s one of the things during the course you're like, that's why people matter. Cuz you're like, everybody works differently. But we all did it as a team” (C1, p. 15). The guides played a large role in helping the group work together as a team, facilitating this activity and making sure that as a paddling group we stuck together to support everyone’s unique abilities on the water. The guides influenced Chloe to visit an acupuncturist upon returning home and helped Chloe find her calm; “We also had such amazing instructors we didn't have to... I wasn't really worried about you know anything besides oh we're going to paddle, today were going to paddle hard. But just feeling out on the water calm and like everything's like under control you know?” (C1, p. 17).

Finally she was able to overcome challenges, learn new things, and connect with herself. Building her tarp shelter on solo and pushing through hard paddle days helped to build up Chloe’s confidence in her abilities outdoors. “Just to like let go and be like okay like this is a whole new experience. I had kayaked before but not that much, you know and like to actually do it I think was...I felt very like...not like...I don't want to say proud?” (C2, p. 8). Having to wait for

the fog to clear before we could set off on our daily journey taught Chloe that ‘you can’t plan everything’ and sometimes you have to ‘go with the flow.’

5.2.4 Betty

The themes that make up Betty’s experience emphasize three major themes: (i) new and unexpected experiences, (ii) her health and wellbeing journey, and (iii) the influence of other people and the guides in this journey.

The serendipitous experience with the mist highlights how many different components can come together under random circumstances to create a surprise meaningful or spiritual experience. Betty did not expect to have an important moment that night, she simply woke up to go to the bathroom. The weather outside, the type of environment, headlamp she was wearing, and her lack of experience with mist or fog resulted in a unique experience that she could have never planned to have. She got to experience this on her own and it reminded her that humans “are so limited to ourselves, we don’t know a lot of things...I feel I am special because nobody can see it only me” (C2, p. 5).

Betty came into the course with very specific intentions, she wanted to receive the healing benefits that she felt nature could provide her. Although the course did not heal her entirely, the memories and nature connection helped her on her journey. For her connecting with nature is like connecting with her God, because ‘we are one of them,’ we are animals and nature. She drew from moments like making pine tea on the beach in Clayoquot Sound in her everyday healing journey and used those memories to connect with her spirituality and her God. The guides influence helped with her physical healing, influencing her to try things like Moxa and acupuncture. The people and the team atmosphere on the course also helped her with her healing. “before I go for this trip, I don't think...I don't find out what is my character. I'm used to my

character. I don't think my strength or character is special. But I can tell by people surrounding me, they tell me about my character is a kind of encouraging, it's that kind of support, kind of care. They understand me, they listen to me, they are my friends" (B2, p. 9).

The guides on this course influenced Betty's healing as well as her connection to nature. One of our guides 'opened her mind'; she was someone who could 'talk to nature' and was an 'advocate for nature.' This guide also knew how the body connected to nature and shared her knowledge, influencing Betty to try acupuncture after the course. She spent time connecting with Betty and making her feel comfortable on the trip. "She is the role model! She doesn't need to talk a lot but when she talks, you can see and feel that she is different...you feel so secure you feel so comfortable. You trust! (B2, p. 17).

5.2.5 Eva

The essence of Eva's experience centered around stepping into a different rhythm and being open to the learning and growth that came with this. The themes that structure the essence of her experience are: (i) being open to the world, (ii) the rhythms of nature, and (iii) change and growth.

Being open is a theme that permeates most of Eva's experience in Clayoquot Sound. Connections, learning, unexpected moments of awe can all happen if you are open to what can be. The trip provided a "constant reminder to yourself to stay open? ...I think of the places to be open it's like in your mind needs to be open you know, your heart needs to be open your spirit needs to be open, your mouth needs to be open, like everything just needs to kind of be open in some way" (E1, p. 14). Stepping into the chaotic order of the natural world taught Eva to stay open to these unexpected moments.

The different rhythm of living in nature was also important for Eva. Solo provided her the opportunity to exist in the moment, not having to perform or complete a daily task list. She could connect to the things around her and step away from her busy life working multiple jobs, as a mother of two, and a wife. “I think being in nature for me has always given me permission to like be a bit quieter and to take a bit more solo time” (E2, p. 10).

Being open to the world and sinking into the rhythms of nature provided many opportunities for growth and learning. Eva often reflected on the lessons nature teaches and how she has taken those lessons into her everyday life. The lessons of being open, this too shall pass, embracing change, learning at any age were all learned through interaction with elements of the natural environment like fog, tides, animal encounters, and the inner workings of the oceans.

5.3 The Fog Reveals

The analysis process and descriptions of each co-researchers experience revealed a complex meshwork of environmental relations that make up the essence of an 8-day sea kayaking experience, and how meaningful moments during the trip can relate to spiritual outdoor recreation experiences. The fog begins to lift throughout this analysis revealing the key themes that make up the experience essence. The results revealed the importance and value of considering who people are and their stories before they began the course, including their intentions and goals going in. Sinking into a different rhythm, the power of nature displayed within unexpected moments and uncontrollable landscapes, and connecting or reconnecting with life purpose and growth were all important themes that were present within the co-researchers experiences, all themes that relate to the broader notion of spirituality. The results also revealed the reliance of course outcomes such as spiritual experiences or enhanced holistic health and wellbeing on intentionality and post-trip reflection.

Chapter Six: Revisiting the Research Questions

The following chapter looks to discuss the ways in which the data addressed the research questions. The previous chapter explored the essence of co-researchers experiences during the Outward Bound Mindfulness course, while this chapter will look at how these experiences address the subsequent research questions in relation to the broader academic literature. The themes of rhythms, power of nature, and purpose that emerged from the co-researchers experiences are all intimately connected to the spiritual outdoor recreation literature in many diverse ways. Although closely related, they were not always experienced as spiritual during the course due to individual spiritual traditions, social context and intentions of participating in the course. Reflection was an important aspect in reflecting on the course as spiritual, and the outcome of holistic health and wellbeing, specifically spiritual wellbeing, emerged through the theme of purpose.

6.1 Experience and Broader Notions of Spirituality

6.1.1 Course Rhythms

The lived experiences of the co-researchers emphasized that central to their lived experiences were the rhythms of life during the 8-day sea kayaking course. Whether it was Eva sinking into a new rhythm and new way of observing towards the end of the trip, or Chloe finding peace during the repetitive rhythm of paddling on the ocean, the course provided co-researchers the chance to slow down and find restoration. Much of the literature on spirituality and outdoor recreation highlights the importance of the ‘nature setting’ in getting away from everyday life and the different components of time and temporality in facilitating these types of meaningful, spiritual, and restorative experiences (Heintzman, 2010; Kaplan, 1995; Stringer & McAvoy, 1992). Stringer & McAvoy (1992) found that the main inhibitor to a spiritual outdoor

experience was not enough time; alone time or time off from the planned activities of the trip. Co-researchers in this study expressed this component of spirituality through the related theme of rhythms. Stepping into a different rhythm can explain the ways that attuning to the rhythm of these landscapes, such as the beaches of Clayoquot Sound, can facilitate spiritual experiences. I will briefly draw on Lefebvre (2004) to conceptualize this discussion of rhythms and the ways in which people in this study experienced them and move to emphasizing implications for practitioners.

Rhythm can be defined here as a regular flow or movement, where temporality is vital (Flemlsaeter, Gundersen, Rønningen, & Strand, 2019). Drawing on Lefebvre (2004), Flemlsaeter et al. (2019) highlight two main types of rhythms; cyclical (the natural or universal rhythms humans are exposed to such as seasons or tides), and linear (everyday timed information such as social practices and human activity). Lefebvre's (2004) rhythmanalysis emphasizes three types of rhythms; polyrhythmia, arrhythmia, and eurhythmia. Using the body as an example, polyrhythmia involves the combination of many different rhythms such as the functioning rhythms of separate organs in the body, eurhythmia is when the rhythms of these organs are balanced and operating together, and arrhythmia is when this rhythm is destroyed through illness or injury (Rongna & Sun, 2020). Flemlsaeter et al. (2019) state "analysing rhythms enables us to see beyond individual things, images, objects or actions and see their interplay" (p. 938). Both the cyclical and linear rhythms of an 8-day Outward Bound kayaking course, especially moments of polyrhythmia and eurhythmia within place-events, helped participants to connect to a larger ecology and universal rhythm.

For many co-researchers the rhythms of life during the course were important because this slower way of being gave them a chance to reflect on the course in relation to their day to

day lives. This is consistent with many studies that “link spirituality in nature to the time and space for deep reflection and contemplation on the meaning and purpose in life” (Naor & Mayseless, 2019, p. 4). Finding a slower quiet way of being during the solo experience gave Eva a chance to sink into new rhythms and closely examine the patterns and processes of her life. For Fletcher, taking a moment to pause on the water and share a guided meditation among the group created space for a meaningful and surprising interaction with a crab emphasizing the possibilities for learning and discovery in unexpected places. Drawing on Lefebvre (2004), Rantala and Valtonen (2014) emphasizes how being outside of the rhythm, but have being grasped by it, is vital to analysing it. Lefebvre’s (2004) rhythmanalysis can be related to Leder’s (1990) analysis of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology and the disappearing body. The functioning body, or polyrhythmic body in eurhythmia, ‘disappears’ to the conscious sense or is taken for granted at the moment of normal or routine functioning. It isn’t until pain (p. 70), disease (p. 79), learning a new skill (p. 31), or arrhythmia that it comes into direct focus and can be analyzed (Leder, 1990). New rhythms and routines of the course brought previous rhythms into focus, and sometimes into question, providing co-researchers the space to feel restored and reflect on topics that pertain to spirituality such as purpose in life, intentionality, and connectedness.

These rhythms also brought into focus co-researchers embeddedness in the larger cyclical universal rhythms and facilitated moments of transcendence. Waking up to a waterless shore-line left Taylor in awe, and reminded her that the power of these landscapes transcends human control. Finding flow and rhythm while kayaking was important for Chloe as it helped her find peace and brought her back to being connected and grounded. Spending the day engaged in this rhythmic paddle was important for Chloe it helped her find restoration and reflect on the often rushed and frantic feelings of her day to day life. The instructors also paid close attention to the

cyclical rhythm of the tides. The time that the group left every day, had lunch, and arrived to camp at night was influenced by the rhythm of these tides, affording the group an easy paddle in or strenuous and dangerous paddle during high tide or flood. Paying attention to the rhythms of the tides allowed for moments of transcendence which reminded participants of their connection to something greater than themselves, consistent with many previous findings on spirituality (Jirasek et al., 2017; Marsh & Bobilya, 2013).

6.1.2 The Power of Nature

Co-researchers in this study often cited unexpected, uncontrollable experiences as a catalyst to recognizing the power of nature, or the realization of their small part in a larger interconnected system. A recognition of the power of nature through unexpected or uncontrollable experience is often highlighted as a trigger to spiritual, awakening, or meaningful experiences within the literature (Bobilya et al., 2011; Stringer & McAvoy, 1992; Taylor & Egeto-Szabo, 2017; Taylor, S., 2012). These experiences are characterized in the literature by the element of passivity and noesis. Passivity refers to moments when an individual has no control over what is happening, or where the individual is ‘grasped’ by a superior power and noesis refers to gaining knowledge in a spontaneous fashion (Stringer & McAvoy, 1992; Taylor & Egeto-Szabo, 2017). During the course, co-researchers unexpected interactions with animals, with the elements, and aesthetic experiences highlighted the power that nature holds, and an element of spirituality or connectedness.

Both Taylor and Fletcher highlighted interactions with animals as moments that emphasized the power that nature holds. When a stellar sea lion poked its head out of the water three or four meters away from Taylor’s kayak she was shocked, happy, excited but also a little bit scared feeling as though she was nothing compared to the power of that animal. Fletcher’s

serendipitous interaction with a crab free climbing up his hand highlighted the infinite possibilities for discovery and the vast array of knowledge about these landscapes that have yet to be grasped by humans. His interactions with the coastal wolf left him in awe at the power of the wolf, who could have very easily caused him serious physical harm. Curtin (2005) found that “wild animals trigger peak experiences and transcendent consciousness; transcendent because the persona of the experiencer is not dominant, almost that the experience, always spontaneous, is so intense that it overrides the normal state of being” (p. 303). Both of these moments highlighted for Fletcher and Taylor moments that were out of their control and reminded them of the power that nature holds, aligning with components of a spiritual experience.

Similar to unexpected interactions with animals, unexpected or uncontrollable interactions with the elements were also cited as illuminating the power and force that nature holds. Betty’s surprise experience with the nighttime mist illuminated the larger ecology of things at work; the temperature, the lighting, the weather, the specific beach, the time of day, the ants, all the many flows of energy that came together to create this place event. It was a ‘right place, right time’ sort of moment that highlighted the many uncontrollable forces at work resulting in a spiritual experience for her. The tides were important for Taylor in recognizing the power of nature. Waking up to a waterless shoreline was a good reminder of the awe inspiring power of nature that humans will never have fully under their control. Similar to experiences with animals, these unexpected moments highlight the power of nature, helping co-researcher to move away from a purely anthropocentric way of interacting with these landscapes.

Aesthetic qualities of nature were also noted by co-researchers as important in illuminating the power that nature holds. A moment alone on the last night of the course, looking out onto the sun setting over the mountains allowed Taylor a moment to reflect on the vastness

and power of the earth. Fletcher highlighted how the simple act of looking up at a tree can illuminate the power and complexity within the branches, complexity and efficiency that a ‘team of engineers’ couldn’t create if they tried. Feeling connected to the water and seeing the fog drift over islands and mountain tops made Chloe feel as though she was ‘just a little speck in the world.’ Aesthetic experiences that illuminate the power nature holds are frequently mentioned as conducive to spiritual experiences within the literature (Ashley, 2007; Foster, 2012; Fox, 1999). Foster (2012) found that the aesthetics of wilderness led participants to spiritual feelings of awe and led them to consider “their place within the immense structure of the world” (p. 252).

6.1.3 Purpose

A large component of spirituality centers around the idea of purpose; finding meaning and purpose in life, spirituality as life purpose, connecting to a purpose in life greater than self, or reconnecting to life’s purpose (Fischer, 2011; Foster, 2012; Huss, 2013; Stringer & McAvoy, 1992). Co-researchers in this study consistently emphasized themes around life purpose, including identity, growth, goals, values, a journey, and learning as meaningful or spiritual elements of the trip. They discussed the power of nature, their goals for the trip, and experiences that transcended self to include the larger ecology of experience. Outdoor recreation experiences are often cited as conducive to themes centered around purpose in life (Ashley, 2007; Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Jirasek et al., 2017). Co-researchers experiences of purpose can be organized into the themes of growth and learning, and overcoming challenges during the kayaking course as both personal and shared opportunities for developing or reconnecting with purpose in life.

There are countless opportunities for personal and shared growth and learning within outdoor recreation experiences. During the 8-day kayaking course co-researchers cited learning

from nature, reflections on personal values, and connecting with their authentic self as moments for growth and learning that enhanced an understanding of purpose in life. Eva and Taylor cited many lessons learned from the landscapes of Clayoquot Sound. The changing tides and the evaporating fog reminded Eva that “this too shall pass” which helps her in her life back home as a parent. Surprising experiences reminded Eva to stay open to change, learning, and new experiences, connecting back to her intentions and purpose of the course. Fischer (2011) highlights the ways that nature illuminates change, metamorphosis and death, “mirror[ing] the patterns of our personal experience...[and] nurtures hope as we move through our own transitions” (p. 176). Moments of solitude looking out at the sun setting over a vast sea allowed Taylor the space to reflect on her goals and purpose in life, and all that she had learned on the course. Jirasek et al. (2017) found that aesthetic perceptions of the beauty of the nature were often an impetus for personal growth because of the feelings and emotions influencing the whole person. Fletcher also emphasized a similar moment of looking out at the “interstitial space” of the shoreline, that appeals to the “basic soul of humanity” (F1, p.18).

Often the literature highlights spiritual outdoor recreation experiences as moments that can influence an individual’s values and beliefs (Heintzman, 2010; Taylor & Egeto-Szabo, 2017) Taylor and Egeto-Szabo (2017) discuss a secondary shift that can happen during awakening experiences characterized by a shift in values and a new sense of optimism or confidence. Betty attributed the profound emotions she felt during her visit to the aquarium post course to directly connecting with the marine environment of Clayoquot Sound. This experiences was eye opening and influenced her opinions on single use plastic. Fletcher and Taylor also highlighted reconnecting with their values and purpose. Fletcher rediscovered a part of himself that had been ‘put on hold’ which reminded him of the value of outdoor recreation in his life and Taylor valued

learning, growing and connecting with ““exactly what’s in your heart [where] nothing else matters” (T1, p. 22).

Co-researchers also emphasized the importance of learning and growing from other people and the group as connecting to purpose and spirituality. Sharing ideas and experiences, emotional support, meaningful discussion, and mentorship from peers is frequently mentioned as conducive to spiritual experiences through learning, connection, and self-transcendence (Foster, 2012; Fox, 1997; Heintzman, 2010; Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999). Co-researchers highlighted the importance of the guides on this course, both in terms of learning from them and the atmosphere for personal development they created. Betty emphasized that the leader is the heart and soul of the trip, Chloe highlighted the importance of the group coming back together to learn about each other after the solo experience, and the guides lessons on reading nautical maps and the tides reminded Eva to be open to the many things left to learn in life. Foster (2012) found that participants on a canoe trip emphasized the importance of being shaped by mentors in terms of spiritual experiences; as people to aspire to in life, as creating bonding experiences among groups, and as teaching about environmental ethics. Co-researchers in this study learned about themselves and about each other through interactions with the landscapes, shared experiences, and the guides as mentors.

Consistent with the literature, participants frequently mentioned overcoming both personal and group challenges as a meaningful or spiritual component of the trip. Challenges provide the opportunity for self-development, pushing personal boundaries, and influencing intensely embodied experiences (Bobilya, 2013; Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Schmidt & Little, 2007). Chloe and Taylor both emphasize the importance of making it through the 24-hour solo experience, and overcoming difficult paddling days on the water. They made it through

soreness and uncertainty to feel proud and in their element. Similar to growing and learning as a group, overcoming challenges as a group was also memorable for the co-researchers. Even though there were times Chloe was exhausted, having a group behind her helped overcome the challenges of the course. Betty also spoke at length about a picture that represented the group experience, and sharing a common goal.

It is a balance between these group experiences and adequate solo time that helps to facilitate moments around spirituality and life purpose (Heintzman, 2010; Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999). The nature of the course, along with the important facilitation by the guides, enhanced moments for learning, growth, overcoming challenges, and reflections on life purpose and spirituality.

6.2 Meanings of Spirituality During the Course

Co-researchers experiences connected with broader notions of spirituality in many closely related ways, but the meanings of experience during the course for each person were varied. Betty explicitly experienced many moments on the course as spiritual, although Taylor and Fletcher required post-course reflection to make connections between their experiences and their definition of spirituality. Chloe struggled to use the world spirituality or nature-spirituality and opted to discuss moments of connection to help with the ineffability or challenges in putting these types of experiences into words. Eva didn't experience the course as spiritual specifically, but could recall many moments of spiritual or meaningful experiences in nature in the past. Consistent with the literature understanding an experience as spiritual was dependent on co-researchers intentions for the course, their spiritual background, and their social context going into the course (Fredrickson and Anderson, 1999; Heintzman, 2010). Reflecting after the course in the context of this study and specific discussions of spirituality played an important role in making connections between participants definitions of spirituality and their own experiences.

During the course, different intensities of experiences also played a part in shaping co-researchers ability to recall, discuss, and explain.

6.2.1 Spiritual Background and Social Context

Using an emplacement nexus in this study as a theoretical tool helps to see the larger ecology of co-researchers lives, including the histories, social context and intentions participants bring into experiences. In terms of spiritual background, Betty was someone who identified as a religious person equating religion to spirituality, she was able to recognize experiences as spiritual in the moment of experience, emphasizing that not everyone might think this way. Eva grew up with very religious grandparents, questioning and reflecting on their beliefs from an early age. In university she was exposed to many different land based belief systems allowing her to develop her own sense of spirituality connected to “the beauty and the power and the rhythms” of nature that make up her worldview (E2, p. 3). Both of these co-researchers recognize, can verbalize, and have can identify previous understanding of spiritual outdoor recreation experiences. This is consistent with Heintzman (2010) who emphasized the importance of history and spiritual traditions as antecedent conditions for spiritual outdoor recreation experiences.

6.2.2 Intentions

Also consistent with Heintzman (2010) is the importance of intentions going into the course. Taylor went into the course with an idea of the goals she wanted to accomplish, such as incorporating mindfulness strategies into her day to day life. Spirituality wasn't something she thought about going into the course, and isn't a topic that she usually reflects on at her current life stage. Eva also highlighted the importance of the intention of a person's time spent outside. Experiences for her are very different depending on whether they are a five minute walk to catch

up with a friend or a more immersive experience with time to reflect. Betty came into the course with very specific intentions, looking for a healing experience in terms of her mental and emotional health. Her focus during the course was on this process of healing so her experience was centered around this intention. Co-researchers intentions drove the decisions they made during the course, the thoughts they had, and the experiences they were apart of during the course.

6.2.3 Reflection

Moments for reflection during the course, as well as after the course in the context of this study were also vital in creating space for and thinking about spirituality. Closely related to rhythms, having the space and time within solo and group settings to reflect on important philosophical topics was crucial for co-researchers to experience nature spirituality during the course. After an extensive review of the literature, Heintzman (2010) and Bobilya et al. (20011) both highlight components of the nature setting, as well as the structure of recreation components (solitude/free time/group experiences) in facilitating Important moments of reflection. Solo moments for reflection were vital for Taylor to reflect on who she is and what her purpose was on the course and Chloe greatly valued the group reflection period in transcending herself and connecting to the group. Reflecting after the course in the context of this study was a vital aspect of understanding the experience as spiritual. Stringer and Mcavoy (1992) found that reflecting on personal definitions of spirituality after the course allowed participants to understand their experiences as spiritual.

Taylor emphasized that spirituality isn't in her regular vocabulary, which is part of the reason she didn't experience the course as spiritual, although she could make connections when reflecting post-course, especially in terms of personal growth. Fletcher also didn't necessarily

have a spiritual outdoor recreation experience during the course, but defining spirituality helped him see how the trip was the basic definition of that for him. Histories, social context, intentions, and the ability to reflect were all important factors in meanings of spirituality experienced during the course. Eva eloquently summarized this notion in terms of a discussion of the ways these experiences can't be forced:

I don't know if I'm going to be able to answer this question. I just I don't feel as though the whole trip was for me. But I don't think life in general is like that for me. Like you find [spirituality] in moments and often moments in which you're not looking for it. I think that's why I've always found like religion really contrived. Like we are going to force you to feel this right now, as opposed to these moments and I think in the last conversation, I attributed it to like a lot of things like that giant moon that was rising where I was like 'what'?! That kind of awe inspiring moment. It's a kind of spirituality of around awe and openness and all of those things. (E2, p. 10)

Eva's intentions, her history with religion and nature spirituality, as well as the importance of spontaneity highlights that outdoor recreation experiences were very different for each co-researcher. Although not every co-researcher identified spirituality in the moment of experience, understanding co-researchers histories and intentions going into the course, along with providing them adequate group and solo reflection time can help practitioners and researchers in facilitating these experiences and their beneficial outcomes.

6.3 Spirituality and Holistic Health and Wellbeing

This study has so far emphasized the many different ways of verbalizing these experiences, whether that is an awakening, peak, transcendent, psychologically deep, or intensely embodied experience. Conceptualizing these experiences as spiritual can help to make connections between spending time recreating in these types of landscapes and the outcome of improved holistic health and wellbeing of co-researchers. Holistic health and wellbeing is defined in this study as the interconnectedness of the physical, mental, social, and spiritual domains of health and wellbeing, characterized by purpose in life, oneness with nature and

others, commitment to something larger than the self, and a sense of wholeness (Chan, C. et al., 2014; Heintzman, 2010). Other realms such as emotional, environmental, cultural have been noted across the literature, but this study focused on some of the main individual indicators of health and wellbeing. All but one co-researchers recognized the interconnectedness of different spheres in their personal definitions of health and wellbeing, while the other participant emphasized her current focus on the mental and emotional realms. This next section will explore these definitions of holistic health and wellbeing, and then focus on participants understanding of spiritual wellbeing. It will also include a discussion of the application of these outcomes to their lives at home as well as

When defining what holistic health and wellbeing meant for them, most participants echoed the literature emphasizing a balance between interconnected spheres of health. For Taylor, Eva, and Chloe holistic health and wellbeing was defined based on mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, social spheres and the journey to find balance among them. They emphasized recognition and effort towards self-care, and overall harmony in life. Fletcher recognized these spheres but for him holistic health and wellbeing required aesthetic components and contact with the 'natural world.' Betty's intentions for the course revolved around mental and emotional healing so this was reflected in her understanding of health and wellbeing, and understanding her current emotional feelings of hardship. For Betty mentorship from health professionals, and also support from other people were key elements of her health and wellbeing. These understandings are consistent with current perspectives on holistic health and wellbeing, as well the large body of knowledge that recognizes the important role natural landscapes and support from others within outdoor recreation can play in individual health and wellbeing (Chan C. et al., 2014; Ihara et al., 2011; Kaplan, 1995; Unruh & Hutchinson, 2010).

All participants spoke about the ways in which the course influenced their overall short-term holistic health and wellbeing. The course was often described as a restorative, grounding, and balanced experience. The course ‘recharged the batteries’ or was restorative, influenced changes in participants daily routines including visiting health practitioners back home, left participants feeling supported and cared for, and helped participants learn a variety of different mindfulness practices. Participants found the course restorative through the slower rhythms of living in these landscapes and being present in the moment. The group as a whole also emphasized the balance of the course in terms of all realms of holistic health and wellbeing; it was a good physical challenge but not too hard, there was a good amount of group development but also adequate time for solo reflection, and the mindfulness focus helped with restoration, mental, and emotional wellbeing.

Although co-researchers defined their health and wellbeing based on the interconnectedness of multiple spheres of life discussing the spiritual component specifically was often very challenging. As some found it challenging to discuss spirituality in the context of the trip, going a step further to think about ways in which the course influenced spiritual wellbeing was a further challenge. This, along with the challenge in putting spiritual topics into words can help to explain the gap in exploring specific spiritual dimensions of holistic health and wellbeing and how they relate to outdoor recreation (Chan C. et al., 2014; Heintzman, 2010; 2002). Spiritual wellbeing includes a journey towards purpose and meaning in life, recognition and commitment to something larger than the self, oneness with nature and connectedness with others, and renewal of the human spirit (Capaldi et al., 2015; Heintzman, 2002; 2010; Ihara et al., 2011). All participants recognized a spiritual component to their health and wellbeing even if they found it challenging to discuss or elaborate on. Due to her religious background, Betty was

one of the few who recognized right away the influence this type of course could have on her spiritual wellbeing. Natural landscapes are one of the ways that Betty connected with her God so spending time in these landscapes allowed her to further build her spiritual relationships and enhance her spiritual-leisure coping or the ways that she utilized spiritual resources in times of stress (Heintzman, 2010). She took her experiences with pine needle tea into future therapeutic programs, drawing on these sensory memories and connecting with her God through the pine needles. This is a specific example of how outdoor recreation experiences enhance spiritual wellbeing and coping through connectedness with nature and others.

Betty was the only participant that specifically elaborated on the ways that this course influenced spiritual wellbeing, while Taylor, Fetcher, Chloe and Eva were less specific in their discussions. Although they struggled to elaborate specifically on spiritual wellbeing they were able to touch on to a certain extent, with their overall experiences relating closely to the definitions of spiritual wellbeing found in the literature. Taylor gained confidence that she belonged outdoors, and specifically connected growth and learning from others to spirituality. The trip allowed Chloe to transcend herself and feel deeply connected to the seaside landscapes of Clayoquot Sound and to each different person's stories on the course. Eva was open to finding connection to the rhythms of these landscapes and spent time closely examining and thinking about the growth and learning that happened during the course to her family life at home. Connections can also be made between Fletcher's discussion of health and wellbeing and spiritual wellbeing. Fletcher had felt as though as part of his personality had been put on hold, and this trip was a way to reconnect to an element of his purpose. Spiritual wellbeing was mainly enhanced in this course in the form of growth, learning, and connecting to purpose in life, along with providing opportunities for transcendent connected experiences.

Although many positive things were taken from the course, co-researchers emphasized challenges in implementing what they learned and experiencing long term benefits. For some participants the course was an escape, with a resolution attitude towards implementing practices such as meditation, mindful eating, and being present within natural landscapes. Chloe found that “once we hit the airport, I was like, oh, we're back. You know, once the cell phones are back in our hands, you're like, oh this is back to the routine of daily life” (C2, p. 11). Fetcher echoed this sentiment but highlighted the importance of the course in helping him to “engage with my desire to make that practice a real part of my life” (F2, p.14). To successfully achieve long-term benefits from these experiences co-researchers suggested a focus on contextualizing the course in terms of your life, opportunities for reflection, and repeat experiences. Both Betty and Taylor went in with clear goals of what they wanted to get out of the course leading to positive changes to Taylors day to day routine and more strategies for Betty to implement on her health and wellbeing journey. Growth for Eva only happens if you can transfer what you learned to the context of your life with repeat experiences or engagement with outdoor recreation as important for this outcome. Reflecting on the course once it was done in the context of co-researchers lives was also beneficially in long term holistic health and wellbeing outcomes.

As the literature continues to explore the relationship between holistic health and wellbeing and outdoor recreation, research on the less understood sphere of spiritual wellbeing must be emphasized. Co-researchers demonstrated the short-term health benefits of the course, and emphasized discussions around purpose, growth, and connection when influencing spiritual wellbeing. This study also shows how pre-course intentionality and goal setting, and post-course contextualizing and reflection are crucial aspects of implementing course outcomes.

Chapter Seven: Moving Forward

7.1 Implications for Practitioners

This study reveals many important considerations for practitioners in preparing for, facilitating, and reflecting on spiritual outdoor recreation experiences in the context of excursions and trips. It demonstrates the importance of learning about participants pre-course, creating balanced experiences, and providing opportunities to reflect on experiences post-trip. Not only is this important in understanding how, when, and why people have spiritual experiences in nature, it can also help generally with creating more meaningful and memorable outdoor recreation experiences. Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behavior, a balance between slow pedagogies and skilled embodied practice, and Post Visit Action Resources will highlight important considerations for practitioners when designing and facilitating meaningful outdoor recreation experiences.

7.1.1 Intentions

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) helps to explain human behavior and intentions in specific situations and has been used within the outdoor recreation and tourism literature to look at risk management (Gstaettner, Rodger & Lee, 2017), specific ecosystem visitation (Park, Lee, & Peters, 2017; Juschten et al., 2019), and decision making regarding personal protective behavior (Oghenekaro et al., 2015). The TPB emphasizes attitudes, both instrumental (risk vs reward) and affective (positive vs negative feelings), subjective norms (opinions of important others), and behavioral control (perceived ability to complete a task) to explain people's planned behavior and intentions going into a leisure experience. TPB can be used in the context of this study to emphasize the importance of learning about participants and their intentions or planned behavior during the pre-trip planning process of outdoor recreation experiences to create

meaningful and possible spiritual experiences. Participants in this study came into the course with specific goals and intentions on what they wanted to achieve during the course. These intentions were carried with participants through each decision they made, and influenced their ability to be open or closed off to possible spiritual experiences during the course.

Strategies that involve exploring participant intentions pre-course are essential in creating opportunities for meaningful engagement during outdoor recreation experiences. Cooley et al. (2020) used the theory of planned behavior to create a pre-course educational video aimed at enhancing participant intentions to work together in groups in outdoor learning settings. They found that this pre-course video greatly enhanced participants “attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and learning intentions towards the experience” which were further enhanced when paired with a goal setting activity (Cooley et al., 2020, p. 41). Pre-trip activities that focus around the theory of planned behavior, enhancing attitudes towards a topic, or understanding participant intentions and goals will help create a more meaningful recreation experience. They can help inform participants about topics such as mindfulness or spirituality, and also take into consideration participant intentions and goals in course design. As the creation of videos can be time consuming, mechanisms such as pre-course surveys or goal setting activities guided by the TPB can help course facilitators in the planning and preparation of an experience. This information can be passed to course guides or facilitators which can use this information in program design.

7.1.2 Balanced Course Design

The results of this study highlight the value in a balanced approach to outdoor recreation design, that includes both slower rhythms and time for intrapersonal reflection as well as the acquisition of skills, group development, and activity. This balanced approach creates many

different opportunities for meaningful and spiritual experiences to emerge. Payne and Wattchow (2008) make a case for slow pedagogies, that emphasize a careful consideration of the practice of time and a slower rhythm of time, as opposed to a focus traditional activities and technologies such as kayaking and the use of equipment such as spray skirts, to help people attend more positively to creating a sense of place. Mullins (2014) on the other hand, suggests that it is through the skilled embodied practice of outdoor recreation activities, where one can find flow and rhythm, that can create an ecological approach to outdoor recreation and a comingling of people and landscapes. I argue that intentionally facilitating opportunities for participants to tune into slower cyclical rhythms, as well as find flow and rhythm in the practice of outdoor activities can create balanced outdoor recreation experience that provides opportunities to connect with spiritual outcomes. It is through the balanced nature of this particular Outward Bound Mindfulness course that demonstrates the importance of attending to both of these types of rhythms.

Outdoor recreation and outdoor education is often seen as an opportunity to slow down and connect with certain landscapes, yet many of these programs include jam packed schedules where instructors are felt pressured to fill in time with activities (Fittler, 2017; Payne & Wattchow, 2008). Fittler (2017) states “the busy-ness of doing conceals a deeper awareness of being...when we give freely of our time, when we pause to listen and to slow down, new possibilities emerge and we experience a different connection with the world” (p. 25). Slow pedagogies challenge a traditional focus on skills or activities that can potentially dilute a sense of place through pre-determined and anthropocentric ways of moving across and relating linearly to the outdoors (Payne and Wattchow, 2008). They suggest a focus on the “experiential qualities

of place and its natures, rather than outdoor activities” allowing landscapes to speak to us, emphasizing the inherent value of places (Payne & Wattchow, 2008, p. 35; Fittler, 2017).

The 8-day Outward Bound Mindfulness course provided opportunities to experience these sort of slow pedagogies through the element of mindfulness. Instructors intentionally programmed in opportunities to slow down and exist in the moment through solo experiences, meditations on the water, beach yoga, and mindful eating experiences. Solo experiences were frequently mentioned as an opportunity to “just be in the rhythm of whatever it was in that day” (E1, p. 12) or “really reflect and think about who I am and what I am doing here” (T2, p. 5). Slowing down and pausing on the water in meditation led to animal interactions or a “magical moment of uhm a slice of the natural world that I didn’t expect to be there...it brought me joy” (F2, p.3). Finding a slower rhythm and moments of reflection were crucial for moments of transcendence, connection, and spirituality.

Mullins (2014) ecological approach to outdoor recreation and concept of skilled embodied practice is also relevant to the implications of this study. Mullins (2014) ecological approach looks to diminish a Western distinction between nature and society emphasizing a focus in adventure programming on “how activities shape participants attention to and influence on their surroundings” (p. 322). He highlights the way skilled embodied practices “enable selves and landscapes to co-mingle” (Mullins, 2014, p. 324). Participants embody landscape through skills that develop certain musculatures, callouses or bruises, while they also influence certain landscapes as they bolt up rock climbing routes or trample hiking trails. Skills are learned through long term, practical experience that involve care and judgement when reacting to fluid environmental conditions, highlighting the importance of building relationships with landscapes and place to successfully execute skills (Mullins, 2013). Skilled embodied practice can result in

flow experiences, or as Humberstone (2011) emphasizes, intense embodiment and spiritual experiences.

During the course Chloe found rhythm in the linear cycle of daily paddling. The pattern and rhythm of using this skill allowed her to connect to the water; “it’s like the rhythm of it too and the quiet moments and you’re just like, I felt really connected and I also feel really connected to water” (C2, p. 3). Paddling left Chloe with sore shoulders and arms, and disrupted the shoreline bull kelp forests and marine life; a comingling of people and landscape. The expert skilled performance and leadership from the guides emphasized for participants the way the natural rhythms and cycles influence our experiences and allowed for reflections on the transcendent elements of landscapes. The fog delayed our departure certain days or afforded a more adrenaline filled kayak, and the guides read weather patterns and planned departures around the tides. The lead us towards a more intimate interaction with the landscape in order to complete the skilled practice of a sea kayaking journey.

This Outward Bound Mindfulness course helped participants step into a new slower rhythm of living, and experience the rhythms of skilled embodied paddling finding flow, connection, and a sense of calm. Both an ecological approach with a focus on skilled embodied practice and an emphasis on slow pedagogies looks to step away from anthropocentric understandings in outdoor recreation and education. Drawing on both of these perspectives in course design will encourage practitioners to adopt a discourse where embodied knowing can create greater environmental understanding, through both the comingling of people and landscapes through skills as well as slowing down attending to environmental affordances and allowing the world to draw us in. Future outdoor education programs should look to find balance between both activity or ‘doing’ and inactivity or ‘being’ (Rantala & Valtonen, 2014).

Intentionally programming experiences this way make room for deeper more meaningful experiences, and spiritual tenants to emerge.

7.1.3 Post-Visit Action Resources and Reflection

The value of reflection was highlighted during the course, but it was noted as a crucial part of the post-course learning process, especially in terms of a discussion of spirituality and holistic health and wellbeing. Rantala and Valtonen's (2014) discussion of being outside of the rhythm of everyday life during the course to analyze and reflect on life also applies to being outside of the course in order to reflect and analyze it. Reflecting on the course in the form of a post-course interview allowed participants to make connections between their personal understanding of spirituality and their experiences. In a study looking at adventure, wellness, and ecotourism Hunt and Harbor (2019) echoed the importance of the contrast between experiences at home and during the outdoor recreation experience, along with the importance of post-visit resources in support of applying course outcomes in the context of everyday life. Falk (2005) states that post experience prompting and specific information, specifically that which focuses on simple and practical ways of applying what participants learned in the contexts of their lives, are essential for behavioral change. This is vital in terms of applying the outcome of holistic health and wellbeing, reflecting on spirituality and spiritual wellbeing, applying mindfulness strategies, and developing long term leisure spiritual coping.

Post-visit action resources are one such strategy that have been explored in bringing about behavior change and continued learning post experience (Bueddefeld & Van Winkle, 2017; Falk, 2005; Hughes et al., 2011). Post-visit action resources are resources given both on and off site such as emails, newsletters, links to web resources, surveys, or puzzles and games for children (Bueddefeld & Van Winkle, 2017). With co-researchers emphasis on reflection,

especially post-course reflection in understanding experiences as spiritual and enhanced holistic health and wellbeing, providing some type of post-visit action resource to participants is essential. Bueddefeld and Van Winkle (2017) suggested future post-visit action resources should employ social media applications for daily and personalized interaction with participants. Outward Bound type tripping organizations, outdoor summer camps, outdoor education centers, and community recreation facilitators can all include post-visit action resources after experiences, in the form of social media engagement, emails, newsletters, and even follow up meetings to help enhance experiences and facilitate more sustainable course impacts.

Spiritual experiences in nature are often out of human control, and influenced by surprise or unexpected interactions with animals, elements, and others which presents one of the many challenges for practitioners in facilitating spiritual outdoor recreation experiences (Bobilya et al., 2011; Stringer & McAvoy, 1992; Taylor & Egeto-Szabo, 2017; Taylor, S., 2012). Although they are often out of control, practitioners can begin to think about creating an atmosphere that facilitates an openness within participants to these types of experiences. Using the Theory of Planned behavior and goal setting activities to discover more about participant intentions, creating balanced courses that include both slow pedagogies and skilled embodied practice, and drawing on Post-Visit Action Resources and opportunities for reflection can facilitate spiritual outdoor recreation experiences for participants. Considering these components can lead to more meaningful engagement when recreating in diverse natural landscapes and feelings of enhanced holistic health and wellbeing that can go beyond the short term.

7.1.4 Tensions and Implications for the literature

This study followed a framework based on Ingold's (2000) Dwelling Ontology, phenomenology, and used an emplacement nexus to demonstrate a holistic approach to the

essence of experience. This approach emphasized the recognition of the ways in which humans are already nature, looking towards demonstrating that many elements of life are deeply connected and related. Although helpful in recognizing the manifold flows of energy that come together to create an experience, this perspective revealed tensions between my own subjectivity as a researcher and co-researchers views on their relationships with as well as their understandings of the essence of their outdoor recreation experience. Co-researchers emphasis on the rhythms and power of nature as a component of spirituality help emphasize the deep connections humans have with nature. Yet much of their discourse surrounding the course and their conceptualization of the power of nature can be problematic in widening the nature culture divide. There is a call within the outdoor recreation, outdoor recreation and outdoor education literature to begin to explore these tensions and critique the current nature vs culture discourse surrounding outdoor recreation (Gabrych, 2018; Mullins, 2014). The following provides a critical discussion of the essence of co-researchers experience and implications for future outdoor recreation research.

Co-researchers emphasis on the rhythms of nature and feeling a part of a greater system can provide an alternative to the current understanding of ‘getting back to nature’ or ‘getting away’ from everyday life. Much of the literature on spirituality and outdoor recreation highlights the importance of the ‘nature setting’ and getting away from everyday life in order to have meaningful, spiritual, or restorative experiences (Heintzman, 2010; Jirasek et al., 2017; Kaplan, 1995; Stringer & McAvoy, 1992). Although helpful in emphasizing the importance of a slower, less cluttered way of living, this conceptualization fails to recognize the interconnections between humans and the natural landscapes that surround them and the ways that humans are already embedded in the world. The theme of rhythms or stepping into a different rhythm found

in this study can be referred to as a more all-encompassing way of understanding the way humans experience the rhythm of different landscapes and place-events. As opposed to getting away from everyday life, and getting back to nature, participants were able to tune into a larger rhythm that were already ultimately apart of, but couldn't experience because of the static of a hectic and busy city life. This finding is important for practitioners because it can once again challenge the problematic discourse around 'getting back to nature' recognizing the ways that we are already nature.

The unexpected or uncontrollable experiences that co-researchers emphasized during the course are important because they are transcendent in nature and move people away from an anthropocentric way of thinking, where humans are the most important and have control over their surroundings. Gabrysch (2018) highlights the many issues with current human-environmental relationships, where humans see themselves as removed from nature when in actuality we "breathe the air, drink the water, eat other species, co-exist with millions of microorganisms on our external and internal surfaces, all of which as essential to our health and survival" (p. 372). Much of the literature is beginning to recognize that humanity is in need of a shift in values and global transformational of consciousness to recognize our interconnectedness in a larger system and that we are not the most important influence on the planet (Caton, 2018; Cocks & Simpson, 2015; Gabrysch, 2018). These types of experiences where people can move beyond themselves and recognize the power that nature holds can be an important element of this re-conceptualizing of human-nature relationships.

Although this understanding moves us away from an anthropocentric view it is still grounded in a human vs nature approach. With this perspective nature is seen as the powerful force, but it still perpetuates the nature vs culture divide. Mullins (2014) ecological approach to

outdoor adventure using skilled embodied practice draws on Ingold's (2000) dwelling to provide an alternative to the Western distinction between nature and culture in adventure programming. This is "facilitated by conceptualizing skilled practice as enabling people to act within, shape, and be shaped by (i.e., interact and develop with) various, specific, and dynamic human and nonhuman communities, landscapes, and environmental processes that include the social, economic, and biophysical" (Mullins, 2014, p. 329).

Outdoor recreation facilitators must begin to reflect on their own philosophical understandings of human-nature relationships, critiquing the nature culture divide that has been problematized in much of the literature (Grimwood, Haberer, & Legault, 2015; Mullins, 2014). Grimwood et al. (2015) challenges wilderness leaders to consider the ways in which they present stories of the land "alert[ing] their followers with critical attentiveness and an appreciation for the plurality of perspectives" (p. 147). They emphasize the importance of using critical pedagogies to challenge assumptions and practices that are normalized in outdoor recreation (Grimwood et al., 2015). The theoretical orientation used in this study has helped to illuminate the ways examining spiritual outdoor recreation experiences, using an emplacement nexus and dwelling ontology, can help challenge the nature culture divide, but also reveal tensions within co-researchers relationships with natural landscapes.

7.2 Study Limitations

Although this study makes important contributions to the literature, it wasn't without its limitations. Issues of sampling and an exploration of the long term outcomes of the course were the most prominent limitations of this study. Creswell (1998) states that participants, or co-researchers, in a phenomenological study must be those that have experienced the phenomenon and who will be able to articulate said phenomenon in detail. He also emphasizes that it is not

required for participants to be located at a single site, or coming from similar context (Creswell, 1998). This study chose to recruit participants from the one Outward Bound course, but they did not necessarily have any experience with spiritual outdoor recreation. This resulted in challenges when discussing spiritual outdoor recreation in certain contexts and especially within the discussion of spiritual wellbeing. Although this can be seen as a limitation to the study, this approach is consistent with my research questions that ask how the essence of course experience relates generally to spirituality and spiritual outdoor recreation experiences. This approach is not uncommon within the spiritual outdoor recreation literature (Stringer & McAvoy, 1992), especially within spiritual tourism studies (Wilson & Suhud, 2016), and has been used in studies that draw on phenomenology specifically (Jirasek et al., 2017). This approach allowed experiences to happen organically without the influence of the research process and then could be analyzed after in terms of spirituality. It also revealed important elements that must be considered when thinking through ways to facilitate these experiences such as spiritual tradition and social context, intentions, and reflection.

This study was also limited in exploring the long term benefits and outcomes of this type of course, which has been noted as a common challenge in studies that look at exploring the relationship between outdoor recreation and spirituality (Heintzman, 2010). It was also limited in that a longer ethics process meant interviews happened five to six months after the course took place, as opposed to soon after. This process lacked a truly long term analysis, but it did allow for a discussion of how the course had affected co-researchers lives thus far. Some co-researchers emphasized a ‘resolution’ perspective, or felt challenged in applying the things they learned during the course in the context of their own lives. Others highlighted small changes to their daily routines, or ways they had contextualized their experience in terms of their own lives.

Future research would benefit to interview co-researchers immediately after the course and then again once long term outcomes could be established.

7.3 Moving Beyond

This results of this study have provided implications for both practical considerations when designing outdoor recreation experiences and for the academic literature in studying spiritual outdoor recreation through the current theoretical orientation that problematizes the nature culture divide in outdoor recreation research. When thinking about future studies, this discussion encourages a consideration of moving beyond the current context to consider the implications for a broader social and political climate. Fischer (2011) states that “a healthy spirituality always attends not only to the inner life, but to social concerns as well” (p. 180). This sentiment is being echoed by many authors who propose that spiritual outdoor recreation experiences can positively influence individual and collective environmental ethics through intense embodied experiences and transcendent shifts in perspectives on values and beliefs (Humberstone, 2011; Taylor & Egeto-Szabo, 2017).

7.3.1 Spirituality and Environmental Ethics

The main themes that surround the current conceptualization of spirituality center around a recognition of one’s place with a much larger universal system and connection; renewed connection to the self, to that which is beyond the self, to nature, and to other people (Ashley, 2007; Brymer et al., 2010; Capaldi et al., 2015; Fischer, 2011; Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Heintzman, 2010; Humberstone, 2011; Humphreys, 2018; Huss, 2013; Ingman, 2011; Jirasek et al., 2017; Taylor, 2010). If spiritual outdoor recreation experiences center around feelings of connection and recognition of the interdependence of all beings and things, then future research should focus on how these experiences can influence environmental ethics. The idea that

connected immersive outdoor experiences can influence environmental values permeates much of the literature on environmental ethics. In 1949 Aldo Leopold wrote about land ethics:

All ethics so far rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. His instincts prompt him to compete for his place in the community, but his ethics prompt him also to co-operate...The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animal or collectively: the land (p. 239).

Leopold was perhaps one of the first conservationists to recognize the deeply interconnected relationship between humans and their environment. Many studies in the literature today have acknowledged and empirically studied this relationship (Capaldi et al., 2015; Dutcher et al., 2007; Fabjanski & Brymer, 2017; Humberstone, 2011). Dutcher et al. (2007) argue that a sense of connectivity with nature is essential in developing environmental values. They define connectivity as “a perception of sameness between the self, others, and the natural world...a dissolution of boundaries and a sense of shared or common essence between the self, nature, and others” (p. 475). This study has empirically demonstrated this dissolution of boundaries. It showed how surprise experiences with animals and elements as well as connecting with different rhythms during the course helped co-researchers feel connected and provided moments of transcendence where they could recognize the power that nature holds, shifting the away from an anthropocentric perspective. Although these shifts were minor in this study, there is a need to explore how spiritual outdoor recreation experiences can influence environmental ethics, and even lead towards participation in larger social and environmental movements.

7.3.2 Social and Environmental Movements

The outdoor recreation and sport literature is beginning to look at the ways in which individual spiritual experiences in nature can transcend the individual sphere and move into the political. As mentioned above spirituality involves connection, and feeling a sense of connection

to all lines of matter in the meshwork of life can influence individuals environmental ethics and actions. Humberstone (2011) discusses the potential of these transcendent experiences to bring communities of people together in social or environmental action. She argues that individual meaningful or spiritual experiences participating in outdoor recreation activities, such as surfing or climbing, can lead to communities of participants coming together when the landscapes they have deeply affective connected experiences with, are threatened (Humberstone, 2011). These environmental and social movements frequently arise out of the surfing and windsurfing communities.

Taylor (2010) describes how surfing develops understandings of nature as powerful, transformative, healing, and sacred. “Such perceptions, in turn, often lead to ethical actions in which mother nature, and especially its manifestation as mother ocean, is often considered sacred and worthy of reverent care” (p. 104). In a 2007 study, Taylor discusses four specific examples of movements that have risen out of surfing communities; Save our Surf, Surfrider, Surfers Environmental Alliance, and the Groundswell Society (Taylor, 2007). Save our surf was one of the first, non-governmental organizations developed in Hawaii to stop a development that would destroy a surfing break, Surfrider works to promote positive dimensions of surfing culture as well as prevent destruction of surfing breaks, Surfers Environmental Alliance developed from individuals who left Surfrider looking for stronger environmental activism, and Groundswell society celebrates indigenous cultures, their connections to the sea, and emphasizes indigenous connection to the land (Taylor, 2007). Humberstone (2011) also discusses examples of organizations and social efforts that have risen from communities of those deeply connected to the ocean, and the recreation they do in these spaces.

The results of this study demonstrate the need for more empirical work that looks at individuals who have experienced spiritual outdoor recreation, and how these experiences have or can influenced environmental ethics. Fischer (2011) states that “A healthy spirituality always attends not only to the inner life, but to social concerns as well” (p. 180). Future empirical research is needed to illuminate this potential outcome of spiritual outdoor recreation experiences.

7.3.3 Conclusion

This study explored the lived experience of participation in an 8-day Outward Bound Mindfulness course, and its relationship to spiritual outdoor recreation. Its theoretical orientation, drawing on Dwelling, constructivism, hermeneutic phenomenology and an emplacement nexus reflected an understanding of spirituality outdoor recreation that includes recognizing one’s place among a larger ecology of life. It created an interconnected understanding of the many components that converge within a spiritual outdoor recreation experience, and illuminated many important elements and outcomes of these experiences. Essences of rhythms, the power of nature, and purpose connected with definitions of spirituality and social context, histories, reflections, and intentions influenced co-researchers experiences of spirituality during the course. Co-researchers discussed the ways in which experiences influenced their holistic health and wellbeing and call for future research to focus on spiritual wellbeing and long term health outcomes. Practitioners can implement the TPB, balanced course design, and PVAR to enhance the facilitation or understanding of spiritual outdoor recreation experiences, and this study challenges practitioners to think about their own philosophical understandings of recreation facilitation. This study has made contributions to many different fields of academia and provides many important considerations for practitioners.

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Appendix A

Reflexive Journal Guide

Timeframe

- Daily, 30-60 minutes
- During anticipated down time (early morning, before dinner etc.) or during designated course journaling sessions

Research Questions

1. What is the essence of experience during an 8-day Outward Bound Mindfulness course?
2. How does this essence relate to broader notions of spirituality?
3. What meanings of spirituality are experienced during the course?
4. How do meanings of spirituality influence the outcome of holistic health and wellbeing

Journal Format

- Pen & Paper
- Organization: Memorable Moments, Timeline, Critical Analysis
- Highlighting sensory interactions and affective embodiment

Topics Covered

1. Sensory Interactions

- a. Sight
- b. Sound
- c. Touch
- d. Taste
- e. Haptic
- f. Synesthesia

2. Affective Embodiment

- a. Emotions and feelings associated with physical practice

3. Critical Analysis

- a. Positions of power
- b. Ways of knowing
- c. Methodological tensions

Guidelines

Johnson and Parry (2015) state “reflexivity documents the personal experiences, ideas, mistakes, dilemmas, epiphanies, reactions, and thinking connected with a qualitative study” (p.46). Reflexivity involves an open position, where researchers can challenge their positions of power, ways of knowing, and explore methodological tensions and decisions (Genoe & Liechty, 2016; Johnson & Parry, 2015). Genoe & Liechty (2016) outline many different types of reflexivity, and this study will be informed by epistemological reflexivity. This type of reflexivity challenges content of research questions, analyzes how subjective experiences of the researcher influence research, and involve a critical and open position highlighting the importance of understanding the self before understanding the other (Genoe & Liechty, 2016).

These journals will include daily, thirty to sixty-minute reflections, that will be separated into memorable moments, a basic timeline of the day, and a critical analysis or comment section. I will be exploring the essence of experience of an 8 day Outward Bound mindfulness course during the moment of experience. This will include descriptions of sensory interactions, heightened sensory awareness, as well as the affective embodiment of nature-based recreation and how these potentially contribute to spiritual nature-based recreation experiences. Organizing

these journals with a section focused on memorable moments will mirror the semi-structured photo-elicitation interviews that my participants will take part in during the data collection process. When interviewing others, the literature states that focusing on memorable experiences allows for potential spiritual experiences to emerge without researcher influence (Fenton & Walker, 2016). My hope is that using the same technique with myself will allow space to naturally reflect on important moments of the day, and highlight what made those moments important. This will create content that can be analyzed for spirituality as opposed to being explicitly about spirituality.

Critical analysis will aim to understand my relationship with spirituality and nature-based recreation. Genoe & Liechty (2016) suggest starting “by writing about your research position and your knowledge about and experience with the topic, both personal and academic, prior to beginning data collection” (p.490). Writing about and reflecting on this history will allow me to understand how I am influenced, and how I influence the research process. Dowling (2006) highlight how this method is consistent with hermeneutics and the hermeneutic circle of understanding. “Understanding is derived from personal involvement by the researcher in reciprocal processes on interpretation that are inextricably related to one’s being in the world” (Dowling, 2006, p.12). Journals will use this history to discuss positions of power, ways of knowing, and to explore methodological tensions and decision making (Genoe & Liechty, 2016).

The second theme of these journals will involve exploring the lived experience of nature-based recreation in the moment of experience, and the relation to spiritual experience. The literature acknowledges meaningful sensory interactions that occur between humans and nature settings during spiritual experiences, that often result in heightened sensory awareness. Sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell will be explored during journal sessions, as well as the haptic sense and synesthesia. The haptic involve a plurality of the sense of touch, that includes “kinesthesia (a sense of movement), proprioception (one’s felt-body position in space, including the inward perception of muscles), and the vestibular system (sense of balance)” (Allen-Collinson & Leledaki, 2015, p.464). Journals will also explore how the senses relate to each other and how they are experienced together which can be known as synesthesia.

Finally, journals will focus on affective embodiment. Dufrechou (2004) discusses embodiment and embodied writing as “speak[ing] from the perspective of the body, entwining in words our senses with the senses of the world” (p.359). It looks to illuminate human experience from the inside out, paying close attention to details (Dufrechou, 2004). Affective embodiment then looks to understand the emotions and feelings associated with physical sensory practice, as “there are few activities that are so vividly entwined with the acting, perceiving, thinking, and feeling body” such as nature-based recreation (Humberstone, 2011). These journals will look to explore the emotions and feelings associated with physical embodied nature-based recreation, thinking about their influence on experiences and spirituality.

These reflexive journals will be used to situate my own subjective position as a researcher and explore my lived experience during the 8-day Mindfulness course. It will look to be very critical of my position as a researcher, analyze my methodological decision making, and explore the sensory, and affective embodiment during the trip. These journals will illuminate the lived experience of spiritual nature-based recreation and will be used to better understand study participants upon data collection.

Appendix B
Reflexive Journal Example

Tuesday July 24th SOLO DAY

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Memorable Moments

• Solo Kayaking

- I got to go in a solo today
- I felt so free, so much closer to the ocean, very much in control
- ~~It was also fun to challenge myself to keep up with the front of the pack as much as I could~~

* Mudras meditation in Bull Kelp forest

Sp. moment • Today we tried more intervals while

Kayaking - go hard for a bit and then break

- We stopped before a crossing in a patch of bull kelp, our guides said to anchor the kayak by grabbing a bulb - others do this to stay close to each other when sleeping
- We then practiced a meditation with our hands in the 'ok' position
- It felt amazing to breathe deeply and connect my body and breath with the world around me. I sent positive energy to mother ocean and father sky, listened to the sounds of the waves and the

and situation gives me confidence & coping skills

Timeline

- left camp @ 9:30, foggy, wet, everyone was pretty cold
- I was excited to try the solo cat, the first one that I got in was pretty small and my legs had to be extended pretty far out, it was super uncomfortable so one of the guys agreed to trade with me Fletcher
- Paddle was calm, we only needed to travel 4.5 nautical miles today, so we would have a lot more down time at our next stop, we were also staying 2 nights here so that was super sweet
- Today it was the most technical paddle because we were going closer to open ocean and we had to paddle through a 'rock garden' as our guides called it.
- ~~We were lucky it was so calm, we could see starfish on rocks along the coast starfish!~~
- even the rock garden was calm
- we did have to do a surprise surf landing when we got to our destination
- The guides didn't realize how big the waves were coming into shore, I went first with our guide and wasn't super grateful

Spiritual Experiences # Change / growth in my own spirituality

There have been many meaningful experiences so far on this trip. Emotional experiences, breath-taking ones, challenging ones. I have felt many aspects of spirituality, but I feel like things have changed since some of my earlier experiences with nature spirituality. My experience in Hawaii felt as though I was experiencing love for the first time. I was surprised and I was so overcome with emotion. It was like nothing I had ever experienced before. Now when I come across these meaningful experiences in nature it's as if I am reconnecting with a close friend after years apart, re-kindling an old flame. The feelings feel familiar, I almost feel more like my true self. I feel healthier, more alive, still emotional, but different. Not as surprised; more like yes this makes sense. After a few years of personally and professionally researching and learning more about nature spirituality / spiritual NR it makes sense that these feelings feel more familiar. The environment is also slightly more familiar than say Maui Hawaii. The trees are

Critical Analysis

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Power

Because I am a strong paddler, the guides asked me if I would switch spots with one of the girls who was with a weaker paddler. I of course said yes but questioned how I would make that happen without the other paddler knowing why we were switching or making them feel bad. I asked the person if I could paddle with them for the rest of the day. I wanted to get to know them better (which was a lie). They said they already had a partner so I kind of left it at that. The other guide came & talked to me while we were packing up and I mentioned it might be better for her to talk to them herself. They weren't really listening to my suggestion. We had a good chuckle about the power that came with being the guide of the trip. I thought about how my study could have been very different if my methods involved doing direct research w/ the participants during the study. I think

Appendix C

Initial Contact Script: WhatsApp Group Chat & Email

Due to existing relationships and communication, participants will be notified personal via text message that they have been sent an email asking for their participation in this study and for photo-consent. These communications will be more casual and will direct participants to the more academic forms of communication. The email sent will outline what is required of them in terms of participation and have attached the consent letter. Participants will have the chance to read through the document before they agree to participate. An option to verbally consent will be available to all participants, and they will be recorded agreeing to the terms of the study.

→Initial Text Script

Hey __,

I hope you are doing great! I am interested in doing research about our Outward Bound trip together in Clayquot Sound for my Master's thesis! I have recently received ethics clearance and am soooo excited to learn more about what the experience was like for you! I have sent you an email that provides more details to what the study is about, and what participation will look like. Basically I would come meet up with you in Toronto two separate times, or I can skype or call you for the interview (for those in Toronto)... Basically I would skype you or call you to interview you about the trip two separate times (for those not in Toronto) and we would talk about the trip together . I also want to use all of the incredible photos we all took to guide the research! Check the email out and send me an email back or a text if you are interested/have any questions! If you aren't interested in participating, I would really love to still use your pictures from the trip for the study. I hope I get to see you or talk to you soon!

→Email Outline

Hello __,

Hopefully this email finds you well, and settling back into everyday life. Our trip has been on my mind in more ways than one, and I don't think the withdrawal symptoms will ever really go away. With that being said, I am hoping to connect with you very soon to chat about our experience together as part of my Master's Thesis.

I am looking to learn more about your experience on the Outward Bound Mindfulness course that we took part in together from July 21-28, 2018. My study is looking to explore nature-based recreation, spirituality, and health and wellbeing. My study defines spirituality as the way people connect with something bigger than themselves, that provides meaningful connections to a much larger reality. This includes how people develop meaningful connections with nature, with each other and, reconnect with themselves. I am also interested in learning about the outcomes of this experience for you and its affect, if any, on your health and wellbeing.

All I would need from you is two 45-60 min sessions to interview you about your experience. I want to incorporate pictures that we took on the trip into the interview process to help guide our conversation. I can come meet you at a coffee shop, restaurant, your home, your office, or anywhere that you feel comfortable talking with me. This can also be done via skype or telephone (for those in Toronto). This interview can be done via skype or telephone at any time that is convenient to you (for those elsewhere). If you took pictures on the course, I would love if you could give me permission to use these pictures during the interview process. If you are comfortable being featured in any of the photos, there is also a photo-consent section in the consent form attached for you to complete. If you wish to consent on the phone I can give you a call or feel free to call me at the number below. If you do not provide consent, you will not be featured in any of these pictures, or your face will be blurred out.

If you are interested in participating, or would like more information, please email me at this address or text/call me at (204) 798-6000. If you do not want to participate, but are willing to release your photos, or consent to photos of you being used, please fill out the attached form and send it back my way, or give me a call to verbally consent. Thanks again and I really hope to hear from you soon!

Jordana Milne
Candidate, MA in Recreation and Leisure Studies
University of Waterloo

Information and Consent Letter

A Phenomenological Investigation of Spirituality in Nature-based Recreation Experiences

Student Investigator: Jordana Milne; Candidate, MA in Recreation and Leisure Studies
University of Waterloo , Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
Telephone: 204-798-6000 Email: jordana.milne@uwaterloo.ca

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Bryan Grimwood, University of Waterloo, Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
Telephone: 519-888-4567 Email: bgrimwood@uwaterloo.ca.

Invitation to Participate

You are invited to participate in a research study about nature-based recreation, human-nature connection, and spirituality. This study will be using photographs and potentially videos to guide the interview process, so I would first like to request permission to use the photographs you took or/and the photographs you are in from the Outward Bound Mindfulness Course that took place on July 21-28 2018, for research purposes. This involves showing photographs to other course participants during the interview process as well as potentially using photographs for research conference presentations. If you are interested in releasing your photos or giving permission to be included in photos please scroll down to page four of this letter to fill out the form. Alternatively on page four you can find the contact information if verbal/email consent is preferred.

For those interested in participating, the purpose of this study is to explore the lived experience of participation in a Canadian Outward Bound mindfulness course, and its relationship to spiritual nature-based recreation. The objective of this study is to better understand participant experiences and if, or how, these experiences relate to the notion of nature spirituality and connectedness. This study will also look to investigate how these experiences influence the outcome of holistic health and wellbeing. This research is important as it will explore how recreation can enhance nature connection and improve holistic health and wellbeing. Please note that participation in this study is voluntary, and if you have any questions feel free to ask prior to consenting to the study.

Participation

As an individual who participated in the 8-day Outward Bound Mindfulness course you are eligible to participate in this study. Participation in this study will consist of two, 45-60 minute interviews in which you will be asked to elaborate on your experiences during the mindfulness course that took place from July 21-28, 2018 in Clayquot Sound Vancouver Island. Interviews will be mainly conversational, but specific questions may include “what was your most memorable moment of the trip” or “did this trip have any effect on your health and wellbeing?” Participants will be asked to choose 4-12 photographs to guide the interview process. These

photographs can be from the trip, or from previous nature-based recreation experiences. They will be based on 4 basic interview themes, and can be personal photographs or photographs taken by other mindfulness course participants. Participants may bring their own pictures or choose from a selection through a dropbox file the researcher will provide for each separate participant. As a participant you will also be shown and asked to discuss photos from the researchers experience.

Interviews will be scheduled in person or via skype at your convenience. Interview style will be conversational, and you will have the opportunity to ask the researcher questions as the interview proceeds. With your permission interviews will be audio recorded, and later transcribed for analysis. Once the interview transcription has been completed, you will be sent a copy to review for accuracy and clarify any points that you wish. Any participant who signs the photo consent form does consent to identifiers being used in the interview process or conference presentations on this research. A summary of the findings and final paper will be made available to anyone who wishes to access it.

Rights as a Participant

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to answer any questions you prefer not answering by requesting to skip the question and you may decline to the use of your photos/videos. Further you may decide to end the interviews at any time by advising the researcher of decision.

If you wish to leave this study please communicate this to the researcher through email, indicating if you wish to have your data removed from the study. In appreciation of your time you will receive a 25 dollar gift card to Mountain Equipment Co-op. Pro-rated remuneration will include a 10 dollar MEC gift card if you only participate in one out of two interviews. The amount you receive is taxable. It is your responsibility to report this amount for income tax purposes.

Benefits to Participating

Participation in this study may benefit you in the following ways...

- Additional, in-depth reflection of personal meanings attached to the 8-day Outward Bound Mindfulness course
- An in-depth discussion of mindfulness including understanding its relationship to spirituality and how mindfulness practices can be used in a real life setting
- An understanding of ways in which spiritual nature-based recreation experiences can increase personal health and wellbeing

Risks to Participating

No physical risks are associated with participation in the study. This study will ask you to recall meaningful recreation experiences in nature, as well as reflect on your feelings associated with these experiences. This can potentially lead emotional discussions both positive or negative. If a question, or the discussion, makes you uncomfortable, you may choose not to answer.

If your interview is conducted via skype, please be aware that whenever information is transmitted over the internet privacy cannot be guaranteed. There is always a risk your responses may be intercepted by a third party (e.g., government agencies, hackers). University of Waterloo

researchers will not collect or use internet protocol (IP) addresses or other information which could link your participation to your computer or electronic device without first informing you.

Given the focus of this study and the small number of individuals involved, it's possible that others may be able to identify your involvement by recognizing comments made by you, even with the use of pseudonyms. The risk associated with this would be equivalent to sharing your views and opinions openly and within a public venue.

Protecting your Confidentiality

Participation in this study will be considered confidential. Your name will not be used in any paper or publication resulting from this research, however with your permission, quotations may be used with a pseudonym in place of your real name. Any identifiers will be eliminated from the data and stored separately. As previously mentioned you may also choose to allow the photos and videos in which you appear to be used in papers and presentations to help illustrate study findings. Although your name will not be used, your face may be seen in these images, which means your participation would not be confidential. Data collected will be stored on a password protected computer for a minimum of 1 year. Study records will be kept for a minimum of 1 year after last use, as per University of Waterloo Policy. Please note that you will not be able to withdraw consent once papers are submitted to publishers. You can withdraw your consent to participate and have your data destroyed by contacting the researcher up until two weeks prior to the thesis defense (July 2019)

Verbal Consent

If you wish to verbally consent to participation in this study, the release of your photographs, or consent to your images being used in this study, please call Jordana Milne using the contact information found below.

Ethics Clearance

This study has been reviewed and cleared by the University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE#40211). If you have questions for the Committee, please contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca.

If you have any further questions, or would like further clarification, feel free to contact myself or my supervisor.

Thank you,

Jordana Milne

Candidate, M.A. in Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo

Phone: 204-798-6000 Email: jordana.milne@uwaterloo.ca

Dr. Bryan Grimwood

Faculty Supervisor: Faculty of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo

Phone: (519) 888-4567, ext. 32612. Email: bgrimwood@uwaterloo.ca

Photo Consent and Release Letter

By checking off the boxes below, I agree to the terms detailed beside each box. I am aware that I may withdraw this consent before publication without penalty.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE#40211). If you have questions for the Committee contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca.

For all other questions contact Jordana Milne phone at (204) 798-6000, or by email at jordana.milne@uwaterloo.ca.

Please check the following that apply...

I agree to release the video and photographs that I took during the 8-day Outward Bound Mindfulness course to the researcher to be **used for teaching, scientific presentations and/or publications** with the understanding that I will not be identified by name.

I agree to release the video and photographs that I took during the 8-day Outward Bound Mindfulness course to the researcher to be **used during interviews for research purposes** with the understanding that I will not be identified by name.

I agree to allow video and/or photographs in which I appear to be **used in teaching, scientific presentations and/or publications** with the understanding that I will not be identified by name.

I agree to allow video and/or photographs in which I appear to be **used during interviews for research purposes** with the understanding that I will not be identified by name.

_____ (Please print)

Participant Name

Signature of Participant

_____ (Please Print)

Witness Name

Witness Signature

Date

Consent of Participant

By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Jordana Milne of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo and Dr. Bryan Grimwood of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I may withdraw from the study without penalty by advising the researchers of this decision.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE#40211). If you have questions for the Committee contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca.

For all other questions contact Jordana Milne by phone at (204) 798-6000, or by email at jordana.milne@uwaterloo.ca.

I agree to:

Participate in the Interview.

Participate in the Interview and have it audio recorded to ensure accuracy in transcription analysis

The use of anonymous quotations in any paper or presentation resulting from this study.

Participant Name (Please print)

Signature of Participant

Witness Name (Please Print)

Witness Signature

Date

Appendix E

Interview Guide Semi-Structured Photo-Elicitation Interviews

Interview One

Themes of Focus

1. Types of nature-based recreation you enjoy participating in
2. Memorable moments during the 8-day Outward Bound Mindfulness Course

Questions

→Picture 1

1. Talk to me about the first picture you chose
2. What kind of nature-based recreation activities do you like to participate in?
 - a. What is your history with nature-based recreation? What types of activities have you done in the past?
3. How often do you participate in this activity? How often would you like to participate?
4. How would you define a nature-based recreation activity?
5. Why do you participate in this activity?
6. Do you have a favorite memory of this type of activity?

*What were your emotions in those moments?

*What did your body feel like in those moments?

*What was the most memorable sensory detail you can remember? Smells, sights, sounds, touch, combinations?

→Picture 2

7. Let's talk about the trip, can you give me a general description of what it was like for you?
8. Tell me about your most meaningful or memorable moment from the trip?
 - a. What makes this meaningful for you?
 - b. What were the emotions you felt during this experience?
 - c. What did you feel physically during this experience? Reflect on what you felt in your body?
 - d. Can you talk about the sensory nature of your experience? Do you remember the sounds, smells, sights, feelings etc.?
 - e. What are your feelings about this experience now?
 - f. How did that experience influence your day to day life, if at all?

→Intersubjective photos

- Participant will look at 10 pictures that represent memorable moments for me and choose two that they identify with.

9. Out of the 10 pictures here, choose 2 that you identify with in terms of memorable moments. Tell me why you chose these.
10. Do you have any questions for me regarding why I chose these pictures?

Interview Two

Themes of Focus

1. Spirituality and spiritual experiences during the course
2. Moments of the course that influenced health and wellbeing
3. Course Outcomes

Questions

1. Recap: Do you have anything you want to add or clarify from the last time we spoke?
 - a. Read back to them my understanding of what their history with nature-based recreation was, memorable moments, why they were memorable etc.

(Tell me about your most meaningful or memorable moment from the trip?)

- a. What makes this meaningful for you?
- b. What were the emotions you felt during this experience?
- c. What did you feel physically during this experience? Reflect on what you felt in your body?
- d. Can you talk about the sensory nature of your experience? Do you remember the sounds, smells, sights, feelings etc.?
- e. What are your feelings about this experience now?
- f. How did that experience influence your day to day life, if at all

→Touch on these questions again

→Picture 1

2. Can you explain your first picture?
 - a. Why did you choose this picture?
 - b. Did you experience any moments of spirituality during the course?
 - c. Do you relate your memorable experience to meanings of spirituality?
3. How do you define the term spirituality?
 - a. Would you consider yourself a spiritual person? Why or why not?

4. How do you define the term nature spirituality?
 - a. What does this term mean to you?
 - b. Does nature play a role in your personal form of spirituality?

→Picture #2

5. Can you explain your second picture?
 - a. Why did you choose this picture?
6. What does health and wellbeing mean to you?
 - a. How would you define holistic health and wellbeing?
 - b. Would you consider yourself a healthy and well person?
 - c. What types of things do you do to enhance/maintain health and wellbeing?
7. Did the course have any effect on your health and wellbeing during the trip?
 - a. What about after the trip?
 - b. Has there been any long term effects?

→Concluding thoughts

8. Can you tell me about what you took from the course?
 - a. What were the outcomes for you?
 - b. Why did you choose this picture to represent the things you took from the course?
9. Do you continue to practice mindfulness post-trip?
 - a. What types of practices have you continued?
 - b. Are there practices you would like to incorporate more into your daily routine?
 - c. Does mindfulness relate to your view of spirituality?

→Intersubjective photos

- Participant will look at 10 pictures that represent spirituality, health and wellbeing, and the outcomes I took from the trip.

1. Out of the 10 pictures here, choose 2 that you identify with. Why do you connect with those pictures?
2. Do you have any questions for me regarding why I chose these pictures?

Appendix F Transcript Example and Summary

C's spirituality much more relating to connecting w/ other ppl in the environment (kayaking + mindful) facilitating those types of connections

156 J: Ya amazing! So kind of going back to your pictures I'd love to talk about those
157 a bit more is there any in that kind of series...so I've got I think how many four
158 pictures here...five, four...is there any in that series that you really identify with in
159 terms of this idea of spirituality or connection? and kind of just talk about what
160 that brings for you.

161 C: All of them to bring up connection spirituality, but in different ways. I feel like
162 you know, our yoga one I always feel more connected when we're like outside
163 doing yoga on the ground.

164 J: Yes, yeah, we're the same in that way. I love this idea that you keep talking
165 about yoga and doing it outside and filling the ground on your feet.

166 C: Yeah, I think that's like one picture that I find really connected. And I like that
167 it's like all of us doing it together. Also like our little trinkets that we
168 brought. Because I feel like everybody's connected to their own item you know,
169 and everyone's brought it together and like we lugged it along on our like
170 kayaking trip and...

171 J: Especially J's big one! I She's amazing for bringing that!

172 C: She is she's so good! But I think not like connecting to the earth really but
173 connected to each other I feel more when I look at this picture. I feel like more
174 connected to the people that we were on trip with. You know? And when you see
175 it in the sand is kind of like beautiful. Like, how everything's like, so different.
176 But like, everything comes from, you know, a place that we hold dear to
177 ourselves. And to like share it? Like I think this picture is like I feel connected to
178 the people.

179 J: Yes agreed.

180 C: The other ones like the kayaking feeling connected to the water, feeling
181 connected to like you know...just thinking of like the fog and like you know just
182 just being like a little speck in the world! [laughing].

183 J: That's so awesome I love that!

184 C: Feelig connected like to the world! We're just like we're out there and like
185 there's...there's so much beyond us but we're like moving through it like through
186 nature. Even when it held us back the fog we're just like, you know, we're on sand

* Yoga + learn

* sharing stories

* trip facilitated social connection

* humans are small in the world

* moving through nature, through this thing that's beyond us

Chloe Interview 2 Summary

- 1) Sp. = something beyond us / we are small
 - Yoga in the park moment
 - Kayaking on the water - something beyond us
 - So much history of the area - Joe
- 2) Rhythm of Nature (Paddling / being on the water)
 - Slower Rhythms - only focus on a few things
 - Very calming
 - Setting up camp & getting settled

(reflective)
- 3) Experience was Restorative (b/c of slower Rhythms) Related to WB
 - before the trip burnt out
 - Nature helps you to be more mindful and relax
 - Sensory stimuli 'Fresh air'
 - New experiences away from home
- 4) Group / Social Experiences
 - Everyone had a different perspective / experience, but we all did the trip together, had a shared experience
 - Post solo exp - sharing & being open with each other
 - Takeaway
- 5) Can't Plan everything / can't control Nature
 - Fog dance moment
 - 1st night
- 6) Mental health / Social — balance btwn phys. men. Sp. harmony
 - mind is usually always going
 - Rhythms + Nature allowed for restoration

- proud of her accomplishment
- more comfy than she thought

→ growth? Eva #1 Summary *smell of salty water

1.) Change

"only constant is change" p. 21

- Relationship w/ NBR changes over time (3 stages)
 - ① Kid: no agency, but left big impression on how she wants to live life
 - ② Young Adult: deep immersion into nature, away from civilization, lose herself, birds as a way to navigate landscape, escape
 - ③ Parent: restorative 4 kids, granding
- Tides of Fog Night 1 - how quick the land can change
 - "This too shall pass" - lesson w/ Benia p. 14, surprised
 - So much to learn about oceans, learn by being immersed p. 13

6.) Sad + Joy

- Man who drowned while we had a really amazing time experience
- Privilege to choose to exp. Nature, some ppl face these dangers / challenges every day

2.) Being open

- [to new / surprising exp.]
- Trying new things, push it
 - To change
 - To learning - Tides + moon
 - To special experiences ie the moon
 - Awe, magic, ineffable, expansive p. 4, wonder
 - Lost track of time

3.)

- Bear on quad - couldn't plan it, no fear, beauty, magic.
- salty smell - expansiveness, okay with whatever happens in those moments

3.) Stories (Knowledge / Learning)

- Undergrad thesis: Inuit Elder - connection to land*
- Joe - land is full of so many stories, history / connection to the land*
- Man drawing - Joy + Sorrow, land holds these stories
- Catface Mt - stories behind that name

4.) Letting go

- of what should I have to be, not searching, just existing
- Solo - creating her own rhythms, slowing down, no plans, connected

5.) Team

- supporting C with steering
- vet exits, Z being supportive
- connecting w/ others



• relationship w/ nature
changes 4

95 E: Yeah I think there was this one moment that I had. This was must have been in the
96 year, I think it was in 2000. So I was in the High Arctic on an island called...well we
97 were in East Bay Sanctuary, off of Southampton island on an island called Eider island
98 and I had this moment where I had been so immersed in nature. And because there was
99 the High Arctic, I couldn't tell if it was 7am on my watch or 7pm? Partially because of
100 the light or the timing, like it just, it didn't actually really matter kind of what time it
101 was just the cycle of life just kind of happening, you know? Birds would come onto
102 land, and then go off the land. But it was the first time I saw a, like a full moon rise in
103 the Arctic. But it was, it almost took up like half of the entire sky! It was...because all of
104 the landscape is totally distorted because there's no frame of reference and this giant
105 moon that was like, like orange, like Starburst orange just came up over the horizon and
106 I just remember being like blown away...I could not even grasp what was happening. It
107 just all of us were just standing there just for hours just watching. It slowly you know,
108 like made its way higher and smaller, but it was that moment of just like how kind of
109 every single day and every single moment there's still something to be in awe about that
110 just makes no sense but brings you clearly to the present with no other thought in your
111 mind.]

112 J: That's so awesome. Emotionally how did you feel in that moment?

113 E: I think, you know, I think, what was the emotion I think it was like I don't know is
114 awe an emotion? Or just like expansive or just wide open? Like it just felt like
115 everything was opening wide like this giant moon was rising that was like, you know,
116 like, I hold my arms out and the expanse of the moon was bigger than my like, my arm
117 span! And just like how, like just kind of awe and wonder.

118 J: Yeah, amazing. What do you when you think back on that moment, like what did
119 it...what do you think of like, what did it kind of teach you if it taught you anything or
120 what do you take from that moment?

121 E: Uhm...well I think from that was sort of like, kind of like that was like striking
122 beauty but the idea that every day something new will get your eye if you allow
123 yourself to be open to it, right? There's a new thing that you can be learned that you can
124 learn in every single moment or something new that you can see in every single
125 moment.]

Adult period
of life - pre
kids

Time, lost
track of time
• cycle of
life happens

• Orange
moon
giant

• couldn't grasp
it
• standing for
his watching

* Awe,
present,
no other
thoughts
* expansive
* wonder

being open

• something new
can be learned

A Phenomenological Investigation of Spirituality in Nature-based Recreation

Interview 1: Fletcher Christian

January 18

J=Jordana Milne

F=Fletcher Christian

[inaudible]=Inaudible or unclear

[Bracket]=background noise i.e. laugh

[overlaps]=Two comments overlap

10 J: I kind of want to hear about your relationship with nature-based recreation, so
11 like camping or kind of what activities you grew up doing or like doing, you
12 know that kind of stuff.

13 F: Ya absolutely okay. Uhhh so I have a pretty good like family history of that,
14 when I was a wee little kid, my families like big vacation every year was we
15 would go down to Maine to Acadia National park, which is the US National Park,
16 it's almost an island, its technically like an [Inaudible, sounds like ismis] which is
17 this really neat section of Maine that was private property until 1950 or something
18 like that? So as a result of that it was never despoiled to the extent that, you know
19 the rest of the world is despoiled?

Family history of
*

20 J: Ya for sure!

21 F: And we spent a lot of time hiking. I think my parents, before they had my sister
22 and I, did every single hike in the park over the course of many years, just to say
23 that they had done it kind of thing.

parents w/!

24 J: That's a good bucket list thing!

25 F: Ya! And Uh...my most memorable, uhhh memory of the place is there's this
26 hike called the beehive, which is this small mountain that looks exactly like a
27 beehive, like the haircut, in terms of like sort of multiple levels [laughter from J]
28 of rock that just kind of go up like a pyramid but rounder.

29 J: Ya.

30 F: And then they have this crazy hike where they had drilled like iron rung
31 ladders into the side of the mountain and so you like, go up a ladder and then you,
32 you know traverse right or left, and then you go up a ladder and traverse right or
33 left, and then you go up a ladder and traverse right or left.

34 J: Whaaaat??

Appendix G Preliminary Grouping

A Phenomenological Investigation of Spirituality in Nature-Based Recreation Experiences
Data Analysis: Preliminary Grouping Document

Fletcher Christian: Significant Statements	Preliminary Grouping
Theme 1-History/Relationship with NBR (Orange)	
<p>“so I have a pretty good like family history of that, when I was a wee little kid, my families like big vacation every year was we would go down to Maine to Acadia National park, which is the US National Park, it’s almost an island.” (F1, p.1)</p> <p>“And we spent a lot of time hiking. I think my parents, before they had my sister and I, did every single hike in the park over the course of many years, just to say that they had done it kind of thing.” (F1, p.1)</p> <p>“it was a...9 day canoe trip in Temagami, 5 days of uh base camping and like white water canoeing skills.” (F1, p.3)</p> <p>“And that was my first experience of like doing kayak camping right after doing canoe camping and realizing oh wow...you can travel with so much more equipment and so much more style” (F1, p.3)</p> <p>I still feel like the fact I got up afterwards finished the portage, and finished the trip you know went into the wilderness again. Like it’s an important part of who I am... doing those trips it's like yeah, kind of just to prove to yourself you can” (F1, p.12)</p> <p>“Uhm well I mean the lower mainland here is great for that probably my favorite like easy zero effort and like you don't have to worry about like doing a safety plan and like actually planning ahead. Is there's a really beautiful bird park in Tsawwassen called the George Reifel Bird Sanctuary..., it has this very nice feeling of interstitial space like the border between two different types of environments because it had like a forested area it has an open area it has a Marsh area and then there’s the ocean right there. And so it’s like traveling through 3 or 4 different environments” (F1, p.14)</p> <p>“The Northshore search and rescue team constantly has to pull people off the mountain who get stuck overnight like in their office clothes” (F1, p.16)</p> <p>“Yeah so I'm still not divorce that's dragging out for ever and, you know, dealing with that is fairly stressful not on a sort of day to day basis because it's one of those things where nothing will happen for a month and then you know, you have to deal with a flurry of documents or letters or whatever.” (F2, p.10)</p>	
Theme 2-Interstitial Spaces (Purple)	
<p>“...it has this very nice feeling of interstitial space like the border between two different types of environments because it had like a forested area it has an open area it has a Marsh area and then there’s the ocean right there. And so it’s like traveling through 3 or 4 different environments” (F1, p.14)</p> <p>“I love how they just kind of curated the different mix of like environment?” (F1, p.14)</p>	

“And this one, I look at it and to me, what I see is actually rocks in the water and then I see that space between the rocks and the water and then the distance I see the forest in the sky and just from the light I also see the dusk, like that line between day and night for me that is like the most like perfect spiritual place to be is in this moment between all of these different things that represent all of the different things that are beautiful about nature” (F1, p.17) Photo 1

“I mean, I think they have like a sort of basic human, uhm, I think they appeal to everyone at a sort of subconscious level... it's just it talks to the uhm the basic soul of humanity say like, this is the world we live in and this is the beauty of nature is in these places where you can see, you know, so much of it at once.” (F1, p.18)

“you know it shrinks the world down in a sense that even though you cannot see... Your still seeing you know forest, shore, beach, ocean, fresh water. So even in that very small, relatively small space that is encompassed... with the branch at the top kind of making you feel like you're inside that space as well, like underneath it almost?” (F1, p.30)

Theme 3-Power of Nature (Red)

+ Overcoming Challenges/Risk

“Uhh but it's basically the first experience I ever had as a kid realizing that nature can be scary? And that can be really fun.” (F1, p.2)

“So ya what was supposed to be you know a very nice downhill portage was immediately very difficult because it had been like just pissing rain the week before we went so the first half of the portage was just like mud, mud, mud...like slip n slide” (F1, p.8)

“Yeah! Uhm and so it was it was during the second half of the trips that we almost had multiple fatalities” (F1, p.8)

“And I would have laughed if I wasn't you know too busy trying to bail out of a pack and like finish watching my life flash before my eyes” (F1, p.10)

“Ya so that was the one portage that tried to kill four people over the course of three hours or so.” (F1, p.11)

“Probably just the basic fact of like no matter what goes wrong.. you just like you just have to keep going... a lot of it just boils down to not giving up.” (F1, p.13)

“I think that you know, when it comes down to it, it's a very standard human condition of wanting to know your own limit. And wanting to know like 'hey if I was put into this horrible situation would I make it?’” (F1, p.12)

“Because I think it's a fun reminder that camping is you know like you know a real complicated human experience and it's not just like oh I am going to pitch a tent and it's going to be like a five star resort. Like there's logistics there's effort that was required to like get this fly to actually like stand up.” (F1, p.30) Logistics, being prepared

“saying yes like I am, the type of person goes camping and you know, survives being nibbled on by a wolf or whatever” (F2, p.10)

+ Power

“I was looking at it about on the beach, it was silhouetted against the clouds and the sky and I was staring directly at it and it disappeared without moving.” (F1, p.22).

“And you know just looking up at a wolf from below and having that experience of realizing that even though it's two or three meters away it can somehow disappear, while you are looking at it. Which is awesome in the sense of like, awe inspiring. In like the original like dictionary sense of that word, like not just cool or neat but like I felt awe at the power of that animal. And the...the sky was beautiful. It was a legitimately beautiful night” (F1, p.24)

“As much as we can, like build cars and rockets to the moon, something as simple as that would most likely still illude us” (F2, p.8) –about the complexity of trees

Theme 4-Surprise/Unexpected Moments (Coral)

“Where you know woke up in the mouth of a wolf. And you know you learn some things about yourself very quickly at that point, uh ya know I would say among other things that were a surprise that night I was honestly surprised that didn't piss myself.” (F1, p.19)

“and had a moment of, I like to think we were both equally surprised [laughter from J] because I..I feel like the wolf thought it was stealing like a food back or a backpack or something” (F1, p.20)

“Uhm and so just that wonderful opportunity of...you know you wouldn't buy a ticket for if someone tried to sell it to you um so that means it's an experience you can only ever have in a real moment.” (F1, p.23)

“But because we had paused there and because of just the completely, utterly, totally at random choice of which pieces of kelp I chose to hang on to, this really cool experience of like discovering that there was a like crab that was free climbing” (F2, p.2)

“for me was just a very kind of magical moment of uhm a slice of the natural world that I didn't expect to be there” (F2, p.2)

“Just being there you know for that short time and taking that moment to be aware of your surroundings and...to do that little meditation led me to like have this sort of discovering something completely unexpected” (F2, p.3)

“there can be an infinite amount of stuff that is still you know, to be discovered.” (F2, p.3)

“That was just so cool. So unexpected yet so completely simple. I mean we experienced that as children when every sort of new thing brings us joy and we sort of get away from it as adults because we get... partially more cynical as adults, but mostly we just have fewer new experiences as adults” (F2, p.3)

“I wasn't expecting to have a new observation in nature that was unknown to me in that particular small moment? But I did and it brought me joy.” (F2, p.3)

Theme 5-Real/Authentic Nature (Green)

“I just will stare at a tree or the edge of a forest or any kind of sort of beautifully complex shapes like that, and just enjoy the hell out of that like weird quirk of human biology where things fade away and come back into focus as they fade back into light.” (F1, p.18)

“But there's, you know, a certain level of silence that you just can't get even within a reasonable distance of the city. Uhm and a certain... I don't know there's just something much more real about a tree in a forest as opposed to a tree in a park.” (F2, p.7)

“I can't think of the word but it's just a much more real connection with the actual natural world. And instead of with a curated, you know, facsimile of it.” (F2, p.8)

“There's a beautiful complexity in looking up into the branches of that and just seeing like you know...you and I and a team of engineers can sit down with an unlimited budget for a year and the you know, okay design like the most efficient solar panel you ever could and we wouldn't get close to you know the efficiency of like...you're you know, randomly chosen tree in the forest.” (F2, p.8)

“like, even though it's not necessarily like wilderness in the same way the rest of the trip was like it really just, you know, it takes that box of getting you out into the real world. Not the curated paved world that is these big cities we live in today.” (F2, p.15)

“it's real because it's natural as opposed to you know, what are you know are very carefully, you know, curated, scripted, controlled worlds that we live in” (F2, p.16)

“And that's just, you know, I talked before about, you know, these trees of all for hundreds of millions of years. Well, so did humans. And you know, we may have invented these cities within the last, you know, 10s or hundreds of generations, but they don't go much past that” (F2, p.16)

“So yeah like that natural world that we experienced out there in Clayoqout was just, that's the real world that we...you know evolved to feel was correct for lack of a better word yeah and so I think it's vital importance for your sanity, spirituality and mental health. You know the part of...the part of you that is where all those things overlap is the part of you that like, needs to get out and enjoy that part of the world.” (F2, p.17)

Theme 6-Privilege (Dark Blue)

“And I was very very lucky that my school board in Kingston Ontario has a program called Outreach... I don't remember the exact details, but I think at some point somebody left them an endowment or bequeathment or something like that. Uhhh and so they have kind of like the camps that we started at” (F1, p.2)

“I'm a sort of your stereotypical upper middle class white male, who's parents both have good jobs, and Kingston is not exactly the most multicultural city and so it's probably the first actual indigenous person that I had ever talking for more than 10 seconds” (F1, p.13)

“I often say to people like I have led a legitimately charmed. Part of that is you know, white privilege, class privilege family privilege from like having two parents who have good jobs and all that other stuff. The part that...I legitimately lived a charmed life” (F1, p.25)

Theme 7-Senses (Pink)

“because I knew that I had just had a huge adrenaline dump... Because if you have a good adrenaline dump in your body and you don't actually have an opportunity to like run or jump up and down or do something to actually burn it... a bad day because that doesn't actually count as exercise and so the adrenaline just pours into your muscles.” (F1, p.22)” –Fell back asleep

“And like, you know, they can be mosquitoes and the smoke can be blowing in your face but still like and that is just a worthwhile human experience of awesomeness in my opinion” (F1, p.28)

“But there's that, you know, pervasive and wonderful smell the ocean you know one of the reasons why I would do the trip in the first place as opposed to like just going down a river or something” (F2, p.5)

“but also have like the you know the sound of the waves on the beach or something like that because the photos are great but by themselves they don't quite get you there it needs a little something more. I'm trying to think of any of my videos would have like well a loop you could use.” (F2, p.18)

Spirituality Definition & Spiritual Experiences (Light Blue)

“I...I dunno I think the universe just likes me? You know that doesn't mean...I mean I... to the extent that anyone really believes in the world, I mean I am philosophically aware of the fact, like moments like these make you think about it.” (F1, p.25)

“But certainly, you know, there were, there were those moments that one felt especially connected to the natural world.” (F2, p.1)

“Ya uhm I guess spirituality is the aspect of the human experience that reminds you that you are part of the greater whole of the natural world” (F2, p.1)

“But because we had paused there and because of just the completely, utterly, totally at random choice of which pieces of kelp I chose to hang on to, this really cool experience of like discovering that there was a like crab that was free climbing” (F2, p.2)

“for me was just a very kind of magical moment of uhm a slice of the natural world that I didn't expect to be there” (F2, p.2)

“but I wasn't really expecting like a completely unexpected moment like that? And it was it was magical.” (F2, p.2)

“Just being there you know for that short time and taking that moment to be aware of your surroundings and...to do that little meditation led me to like have this sort of discovering something completely unexpected” (F2, p.3)

“I wasn't expecting to have a new observation in nature that was unknown to me in that particular small moment? But I did and it brought me joy.” (F2, p.3)

“and it was because we had that sort of dedicated moments of silence to you know, listen to the voice you know, guiding us in that moment and sort of had that experience with just being very grounded in that particular moment of time that stuff you know, within, within one foot of me that I would never have noticed otherwise, just became that much more real.” (F2, p.4)

“But because we had that particularly calm moment and I was able to really focus on the most minute you know, vibrations that I was feeling in my hand, I realized ‘hey wait a minute there's like, I'm feeling some footsteps or something here like there's, there's something else going on” (F2, p.4)

“I would definitely say the whole concept of like the interstitial space and those photos... to me is the sort of definition of that uhm, concept of just like being centered in nature and adding the opportunity to sort of have the optimal view of nature. You know you get the sound of the waves on the rocks, the view obviously, the smell of the ocean and then to watch the sunset and sort of day turn to night like that for me is a very like meditative spiritual place to exist in that moment.” (F2, p.5/6)

“But if there's something you know, unique about humans, I think it's the ability to find you know, magic in the mystery whether that involves you know, writing it down in a book and building a building around it or just going out into nature.” (F2, p.7)

“Well I think for me like nature is you know where spirituality is kept.” (F2, p.7)

“But there's, you know, a certain level of silence that you just can't get even within a reasonable distance of the city. Uhm and a certain... I don't know there's just something much more real about a tree in a forest as opposed to a tree in a park.” (F2, p.7)

“But I think going on that trip when I did, and meeting all you wonderful people and just having the opportunity to get back out there. And, you know, for me it was also about sort of reclaiming a part of my personality or part of my life that sort of been put on hold” (F2, p.10)

“And you know, spiritually we've touched on it from its excellent by virtue of where it takes you” (F2, p.12)

“it's got more to do with like, you know, fire suppression and building codes and the most economical use of building materials than it has to do with like, you know, truth or beauty or anything that was the like good for your soul.” (F2, p.16)

“So yeah like that natural world that we experienced out there in Clayoquot was just, that's the real world that we...you know evolved to feel was correct for lack of a better word yeah and so I think it's vital importance for your sanity, spirituality and mental health. You know the part of...the part of you that is where all those things overlap is the part of you that like, needs to get out and enjoy that part of the world.” (F2, p.17)

Health & Wellbeing Definition (Indigo)

“personal well-being really requires...some kind of contact with the natural world and being steeped in the beauty of the natural world?” (F2, p.1)

“The mindful eating experience. Yeah, it really blew my mind. It's like, just how thinking about what you're doing. I mean, it sounds so simple, but we really don't do that very often in almost any context” (F2, p.6)

“But I think going on that trip when I did, and meeting all you wonderful people and just having the opportunity to get back out there. And, you know, for me it was also about sort of reclaiming a part of my personality or part of my life that sort of been put on hold” (F2, p.10)

“I don't know sort of like reinforce my positive mental perception of myself and of the world?” (F2, p.10)

“A part of me that had sort of been put on the shelf and looked at fondly for the last decade, literally. But uh, not actually broken out. And so as a result of this trip I could sort of break that out” (F2, p.11)

“It wasn't a marathon. it wasn't easy or hard It was just that right amount of like, you know, working hard enough every day that you didn't have any trouble falling asleep at night, but not so hard that like you're, you know, don't feel like you've been beaten with a paddle.” (F2, p.12)

“And you know, spiritually we've touched on it from its excellent by virtue of where it takes you” (F2, p.12)

“socially we had a pretty dang excellent group. There was some you know, stressors.” (F2, p.12)

“Well, I think for me that's all part and parcel of the rest, right? So if you're if you're in a place where you're getting good exercise and you're being able to have a good spiritual bounce with the universe and hang out with a bunch of great people then I mean the mental health pretty much just comes along for the ride.” (F2, p.12)

“I don't think it's necessarily going to like instantly cure you if you showed up with some pre-existing conditions. For myself you know it definitely performed that job of the...you know, to steal the metaphor everybody uses, like recharging the batteries. I definitely felt better able to deal with the stress of life at the end of that trip than I did at the beginning.” (F2, p.12)

“I think the biggest one is that...of course implementation is always...I could be better at implementing it but it certainly made me much more aware of you know how much I'm eating. That's probably the biggest...in a given 24 hour period since then what's the one thing you've actually thought about?” (F2, p.12)

“Was just you know that the actual practice of mindfulness and taking a moment to actually you know, meditate on a daily basis or you know, do yoga” (F2, p.13)

“but I was still very much brought up in the like boys don't cry uhm, you know at the beginning of my life and so just having an opportunity to actually stop and be actively aware of ones like emotional reality” (F2, p.13)

“I was like ya, no this seems like a nice group of people that I'm going to be, like, pretty open. And so I'm glad I did because, you know, that enabled, you know, a much more real connection with everyone.” (F2, p.14)

“I am at a uh, constant 'I'm going to start meditating tomorrow' kind of person.” (F2, p.14)

“Uhm I can't say any honesty that it was the thing that like, you know, successfully got me doing on a more frequent basis. But it was certainly, you know, it certainly helped me engage with you know, my desire to make that practice a real part of my life.” (F2, p.14)

“And I have to stop and realize that I have no idea because an entire day has gone by without me looking at the sky, and it's like oh that's just not right at all” (F2, p.15)

Summary

Great story teller

1. **Returning to his roots:** Grew up hiking/camping, likes canoeing/kayaking, trip is reclaiming part of personality
2. **Interstitial Spaces & Transcendence** [in-between, liminal spaces..wayfaring/wandering? i.e. life actually happens in these in between spaces, Ingold & dwelling]
3. **Power of Nature:** overcoming challenge/risk, power (wolf, trees)
4. **Surprising/Unexpected moments:** Wolf, Crab
5. **Real 'authentic' nature** (distance from city, natural vs man made, biophilia) [were not actually separate from nature, we don't need to reconnect with nature we need to change our perception of nature, see the nature/natural around us]
6. **Spirituality** "Ya uhm I guess spirituality is the aspect of the human experience that reminds you that you are part of the greater whole of the natural world" (F2, p.1) Magic, unexpected/surprising, existing in the moment, 'real' nature, interstitial, power of nature
7. **Nature spaces needed for WB** (**Purpose/enhanced mental perception of self, physical WB & food,)

Appendix H

Summary 2

Fletcher Summary

1. **Returning to his roots:** grew up hiking and camping with parents in Temagami National Park, likes canoeing and kayaking (Kayaking more because you can “travel with so much more equipment and so much more style”), going through divorce and the trip was “about sort of reclaiming a part of my personality or part of my life that’s sort of been put on hold”

“saying yes like I am, the type of person goes camping and you know, survives being nibbled on by a wolf or whatever” (F2, p.10) PURPOSE

- a. Family/Childhood Nature Experiences
 - b. Returning to His Roots
 - c. Privilege
 - Access to outdoor rec excursions growing up
 - White middle class male-lack of multiculturalism growing up
 - Parents great jobs, lived a ‘charmed’ life
2. **Interstitial Spaces + Transcendence:** Liminal spaces and environments, ‘in-between’ many different types of environments, seeing everything that’s beautiful about nature in one view, Connecting to all elements of larger ‘nature’ with one view
“ What I see is actually rocks in the water and then I see that space between the rocks and the water and then the distance I see the forest in the sky and just from the light I also see the dusk, like that line between day and night for me that is like the most like perfect spiritual place to be is in this moment between all of these different things that represent all of the different things that are beautiful about nature” (F1, p.17) Photo 1
3. **Power of Nature**
 - a. Overcoming Challenges/Risk
 - i. Multiple almost fatalities canoe trip
“I think that you know, when it comes down to it, it’s a very standard human condition of wanting to know your own limit. And wanting to know like ‘hey if I was put into this horrible situation would I make it?’” (F1, p.12)
 - ii. Experiences teach you to never give up
 - b. Power
 - i. The wolf experience
 - ii. Complexity of trees
“There’s a beautiful complexity in looking up into the branches of that and just seeing like you know...you and I and a team of engineers can sit down with an unlimited budget for a year and the you know, okay design like the most efficient solar panel you ever could and we wouldn’t get close to you know the efficiency of like...you’re you know, randomly chosen tree in the forest.” (F2, p.8)
4. **Surprising/Unexpected Moments**
 - a. Wolf experience

“Uhm and so just that wonderful opportunity of...you know you wouldn't buy a ticket for if someone tried to sell it to you um so that means it's an experience you can only ever have in a real moment.” (F1, p.23)

- b. Crab experience, have them all the time as a kid not as an adult
“I wasn't expecting to have a new observation in nature that was unknown to me in that particular small moment? But I did and it brought me joy.” (F2, p.3)

5. Real/Authentic Nature Required to Connect with Spirituality/Health

- a. Distance from the city to get silence
- b. Natural spaces real, human made spaces curated and fake
“it's real because it's natural as opposed to you know, what are you know are very carefully, you know, curated, scripted, controlled worlds that we live in” (F2, p.16)
- c. Biophilia
“So yeah like that natural world that we experienced out there in Clayoquot was just, that's the real world that we...you know evolved to feel was correct for lack of a better word yeah and so I think it's vital importance for your sanity, spirituality and mental health. You know the part of...the part of you that is where all those things overlap is the part of you that like, needs to get out and enjoy that part of the world.” (F2, p.17)

6. Spirituality Definition/Experiences

- a. Def: “Ya uhm I guess spirituality is the aspect of the human experience that reminds you that you are part of the greater whole of the natural world” (F2, p.1)
- b. *Really struggled compared to the last interview to talk about spirituality, self-identified atheist
- c. Components of spirituality: Magic, unexpected, surprising, existing in the moment/mindfulness, ‘real’ nature is where it is kept, interstitial, power of nature
 - i. “for me was just a very kind of magical moment of uhm a slice of the natural world that I didn't expect to be there” (F2, p.2)
 - ii. “and it was because we had that sort of dedicated moments of silence to you know, listen to the voice you know, guiding us in that moment and sort of had that experience with just being very grounded in that particular moment of time that stuff you know, within, within one foot of me that I would never have noticed otherwise, just became that much more real.” (F2, p.4)
 - iii. “Well I think for me like nature is you know where spirituality is kept.” (F2, p.7)

7. Holistic Health and Wellbeing

- a. Nature spaces needed for WB
 - i. *“personal well-being really requires...some kind of contact with the natural world and being steeped in the beauty of the natural world?” (F2, p.1)*
- b. Purpose and wellbeing: Enhanced mental perception of self; Trip reconnected him with who he sees himself as and restored his confidence
 - i. *“But I think going on that trip when I did, and meeting all you wonderful people and just having the opportunity to get back out there. And, you*

know, for me it was also about sort of reclaiming a part of my personality or part of my life that sort of been put on hold” (F2, p.10)

ii. *“I don't know sort of like reinforce my positive mental perception of myself and of the world?” (F2, p.10)*

c. Physical WB & Food

d. Not convinced about long term outcomes

i. *“I don't think it's necessarily going to like instantly cure you if you showed up with some pre-existing conditions. For myself you know it definitely performed that job of the...you know, to steal the metaphor everybody uses, like recharging the batteries. I definitely felt better able to deal with the stress of life at the end of that trip than I did at the beginning.” (F2, p.12)*

ii. *“Uhm I can't say any honesty that it was the thing that like, you know, successfully got me doing on a more frequent basis. But it was certainly, you know, it certainly helped me engage with you know, my desire to make that practice a real part of my life.” (F2, p.14)*

iii. *“I am at a uh, constant 'I'm going to start meditating tomorrow' kind of person.” (F2, p.14)*

Appendix I Invariant Constituents

A Phenomenological Investigation of Spirituality in Nature-Based Recreation Experiences
Data Analysis: Invariant Constituents and Clustering

Fletcher Christian: Significant Statements	Reduction & Cluster
Theme 1- Nature/NBR Important Part of Identity	
<u>A. Family/Childhood Nature Experiences</u>	
“so I have a pretty good like family history of that, when I was a wee little kid, my families like big vacation every year was we would go down to Maine to Acadia National park, which is the US National Park, it’s almost an island.” (F1, p.1)	
“And we spent a lot of time hiking. I think my parents, before they had my sister and I, did every single hike in the park over the course of many years, just to say that they had done it kind of thing.” (F1, p.1)	
“And that was my first experience of like doing kayak camping right after doing canoe camping and realizing oh wow...you can travel with so much more equipment and so much more style” (F1, p.3)	
“I still feel like the fact I got up afterwards finished the portage, and finished the trip you know went into the wilderness again. Like it’s an important part of who I am... doing those trips it's like yeah, kind of just to prove to yourself you can” (F1, p.12)	
<u>B. Returning to his Roots</u>	
“Yeah so I'm still not divorce that's dragging out for ever and, you know, dealing with that is fairly stressful not on a sort of day to day basis because it's one of those things where nothing will happen for a month and then you know, you have to deal with a flurry of documents or letters or whatever...it was also about sort of reclaiming a part of personality or a part of my life that had been put on hold” (F2, p.10) –Fletcher on the timing of the trip	
<u>C. Privilege</u>	
“And I was very very lucky that my school board in Kingston Ontario has a program called Outreach... I don’t remember the exact details, but I think at some point somebody left them an endowment or bequeathment or something like that. Uhhh and so they have kind of like the camps that we started at” (F1, p.2)	
“I’m a sort of your stereotypical upper middle class white male, who’s parents both have good jobs, and Kingston is not exactly the most multicultural city and so it's probably the first actual indigenous person that I had ever talking for more than 10 seconds” (F1, p.13)	
“I often say to people like I have led a legitimately charmed. Part of that is you know, white privilege, class privilege family privilege from like having two parents who have good jobs and all that other stuff. The part that...I legitimately lived a charmed life” (F1, p.25)	
Theme 2-Interstitial Spaces	

“Uhm well I mean the lower mainland here is great for that probably my favorite like easy zero effort and like you don't have to worry about like doing a safety plan and like actually planning ahead. Is there's a really beautiful bird park in Tsawwassen called the George Reifel Bird Sanctuary..., it has this very nice feeling of interstitial space like the border between two different types of environments because it had like a forested area it has an open area it has a Marsh area and then there's the ocean right there. And so it's like traveling through 3 or 4 different environments” (F1, p.14)

“And this one, I look at it and to me, what I see is actually rocks in the water and then I see that space between the rocks and the water and then the distance I see the forest in the sky and just from the light I also see the dusk, like that line between day and night for me that is like the most like perfect spiritual place to be is in this moment between all of these different things that represent all of the different things that are beautiful about nature” (F1, p.17) Photo 1

“I mean, I think they have like a sort of basic human, uhm, I think they appeal to everyone at a sort of subconscious level... it's just it talks to the uhm the basic soul of humanity say like, this is the world we live in and this is the beauty of nature is in these places where you can see, you know, so much of it at once.” (F1, p.18)

“you know it shrinks the world down in a sense that even though you cannot see... Your still seeing you know forest, shore, beach, ocean, fresh water. So even in that very small, relatively small space that is encompassed... with the branch at the top kind of making you feel like you're inside that space as well, like underneath it almost?” (F1, p.30)

Theme 3-Power of Nature

A. Overcoming Natures Challenges

“So ya what was supposed to be you know a very nice downhill portage was immediately very difficult because it had been like just pissing rain the week before we went so the first half of the portage was just like mud, mud, mud...like slip n slide” (F1, p.8)

“Yeah! Uhm and so it was it was during the second half of the trips that we almost had multiple fatalities” (F1, p.8)

“Probably just the basic fact of like no matter what goes wrong.. you just like you just have to keep going... a lot of it just boils down to not giving up.” (F1, p.13)

“I think that you know, when it comes down to it, it's a very standard human condition of wanting to know your own limit. And wanting to know like ‘hey if I was put into this horrible situation would I make it?’” (F1, p.12)

“Because I think it's a fun reminder that camping is you know like you know a real complicated human experience and it's not just like oh I am going to pitch a tent and it's going to be like a five star resort. Like there's logistics there's effort that was required to like get this fly to actually like stand up.” (F1, p.30) Logistics, being prepared

“saying yes like I am, the type of person goes camping and you know, survives being nibbled on by a wolf or whatever” (F2, p.10)

B. Power

“I was looking at it about on the beach, it was silhouetted against the clouds and the sky and I was staring directly at it and it disappeared without moving.” (F1, p.22).

“And you know just looking up at a wolf from below and having that experience of realizing that even though it's two or three meters away it can somehow disappear, while you are looking at it. Which is awesome in the sense of like, awe inspiring. In like the original like dictionary sense of that word, like not just cool or neat but like I felt awe at the power of that animal. And the...the sky was beautiful. It was a legitimately beautiful night” (F1, p.24)

“As much as we can, like build cars and rockets to the moon, something as simple as that would most likely still illude us” (F2, p.8) –about the complexity of trees

“There's a beautiful complexity in looking up into the branches of that and just seeing like you know...you and I and a team of engineers can sit down with an unlimited budget for a year and the you know, okay design like the most efficient solar panel you ever could and we wouldn't get close to you know the efficiency of like...you're you know, randomly chosen tree in the forest.” (F2, p.8)

Theme 4-Surprise/Unexpected Moments

A. Wolf Moment

“Where you know woke up in the mouth of a wolf. And you know you learn some things about yourself very quickly at that point, uh ya know I would say among other things that were a surprise that night I was honestly surprised that didn't piss myself.” (F1, p.19)

“and had a moment of, I like to think we were both equally surprised [laughter from J] because I..I feel like the wolf thought it was stealing like a food back or a backpack or something” (F1, p.20)

“Uhm and so just that wonderful opportunity of...you know you wouldn't buy a ticket for if someone tried to sell it to you um so that means it's an experience you can only ever have in a real moment.” (F1, p.23)

B. Crab Moment

“But because we had paused there and because of just the completely, utterly, totally at random choice of which pieces of kelp I chose to hang on to, this really cool experience of like discovering that there was a like crab that was free climbing” (F2, p.2)

“for me was just a very kind of magical moment of uhm a slice of the natural world that I didn't expect to be there” (F2, p.2)

“Just being there you know for that short time and taking that moment to be aware of your surroundings and...to do that little meditation led me to like have this sort of discovering something completely unexpected” (F2, p.3)

“there can be an infinite amount of stuff that is still you know, to be discovered.” (F2, p.3)

“That was just so cool. So unexpected yet so completely simple. I mean we experienced that as children when every sort of new thing brings us joy and we sort of get away from it as adults because we get... partially more cynical as adults, but mostly we just have fewer new experiences as adults” (F2, p.3) x

“I wasn't expecting to have a new observation in nature that was unknown to me in that particular small moment? But I did and it brought me joy.” (F2, p.3)

Theme 5-Real/Authentic Nature

A. Getting Away from the City

“But there's, you know, a certain level of silence that you just can't get even within a reasonable distance of the city. Uhm and a certain... I don't know there's just something much more real about a tree in a forest as opposed to a tree in a park.” (F2, p.7)

B. Real Vs Curated

“I can't think of the word but it's just a much more real connection with the actual natural world. And instead of with a curated, you know, facsimile of it.” (F2, p.8)

“like, even though it's not necessarily like wilderness in the same way the rest of the trip was like it really just, you know, it takes that box of getting you out into the real world. Not the curated paved world that is these big cities we live in today.” (F2, p.15)

“it's real because it's natural as opposed to you know, what are you know are very carefully, you know, curated, scripted, controlled worlds that we live in” (F2, p.16)

C. Biophilia

“And that's just, you know, I talked before about, you know, these trees of all for hundreds of millions of years. Well, so did humans. And you know, we may have invented these cities within the last, you know, 10s or hundreds of generations, but they don't go much past that” (F2, p.16)

“So yeah like that natural world that we experienced out there in Clayoquot was just, that's the real world that we...you know evolved to feel was correct for lack of a better word yeah and so I think it's vital importance for your sanity, spirituality and mental health. You know the part of...the part of you that is where all those things overlap is the part of you that like, needs to get out and enjoy that part of the world.” (F2, p.17)

Theme 7-Senses

“because I knew that I had just had a huge adrenaline dump... Because if you have a good adrenaline dump in your body and you don't actually have an opportunity to like run or jump up and down or do something to actually burn it... a bad day because that doesn't actually count as exercise and so the adrenaline just pours into your muscles.” (F1, p.22)” –Fell back asleep

“And like, you know, they can be mosquitoes and the smoke can be blowing in your face but still like and that is just a worthwhile human experience of awesomeness in my opinion” (F1, p.28)

“But there's that, you know, pervasive and wonderful smell the ocean you know one of the reasons why I would do the trip in the first place as opposed to like just going down a river or something” (F2, p.5)

“but also have like the you know the sound of the waves on the beach or something like that because the photos are great but by themselves they don't quite get you there it needs a little something more. I'm trying to think of any of my videos would have like well a loop you could use.” (F2, p.18)

Spirituality Definition & Spiritual Experiences

A. Definition

“Ya uhm I guess spirituality is the aspect of the human experience that reminds you that you are part of the greater whole of the natural world” (F2, p.1)

“Well I think for me like nature is you know where spirituality is kept.” (F2, p.7)

“And you know, spiritually we've touched on it from its excellent by virtue of where it takes you” (F2, p.12)

“But certainly, you know, there were, there were those moments that one felt especially connected to the natural world.” (F2, p.1)

B. Interstitial Spaces + Real Nature

“I would definitely say the whole concept of like the interstitial space and those photos... to me is the sort of definition of that uhm, concept of just like being centered in nature and adding the opportunity to sort of have the optimal view of nature. You know you get the sound of the waves on the rocks, the view obviously, the smell of the ocean and then to watch the sunset and sort of day turn to night like that for me is a very like meditative spiritual place to exist in that moment.” (F2, p.5/6)

“But if there's something you know, unique about humans, I think it's the ability to find you know, magic in the mystery whether that involves you know, writing it down in a book and building a building around it or just going out into nature.” (F2, p.7)

“So yeah like that natural world that we experienced out there in Clayoquot was just, that's the real world that we...you know evolved to feel was correct for lack of a better word yeah and so I think it's vital importance for your sanity, spirituality and mental health. You know the part of...the part of you that is where all those things overlap is the part of you that like, needs to get out and enjoy that part of the world.” (F2, p.17)

“it's got more to do with like, you know, fire suppression and building codes and the most economical use of building materials than it has to do with like, you know, truth or beauty or anything that was the like good for your soul.” (F2, p.16)

C. Unexpected Crab Experience

“But because we had paused there and because of just the completely, utterly, totally at random choice of which pieces of kelp I chose to hang on to, this really cool experience of like discovering that there was a like crab that was free climbing” (F2, p.2)

“and it was because we had that sort of dedicated moment of silence to you know, listen to the voice you know, guiding us in that moment and sort of had that experience with just being very grounded in that particular moment of time that stuff you know, within, within one foot of me that I would never have noticed otherwise, just became that much more real.” (F2, p.4)

“But because we had that particularly calm moment and I was able to really focus on the most minute you know, vibrations that I was feeling in my hand, I realized ‘hey wait a minute there's like, I'm feeling some footsteps or

something here like there's, there's something else going on” (F2, p.4)

D. Purpose

“But I think going on that trip when I did, and meeting all you wonderful people and just having the opportunity to get back out there. And, you know, for me it was also about sort of reclaiming a part of my personality or part of my life that sort of been put on hold” (F2, p.10)

“I...I dunno I think the universe just likes me? You know that doesn't mean...I mean I... to the extent that anyone really believes in the world, I mean I am philosophically aware of the fact, like moments like these make you think about it.” (F1, p.25)

Health & Wellbeing Definition

A. Definition

“personal well-being really requires...some kind of contact with the natural world and being steeped in the beauty of the natural world?” (F2, p.1)

B. Purpose

“But I think going on that trip when I did, and meeting all you wonderful people and just having the opportunity to get back out there. And, you know, for me it was also about sort of reclaiming a part of my personality or part of my life that sort of been put on hold” (F2, p.10)

“I don't know sort of like reinforce my positive mental perception of myself and of the world?” (F2, p.10)

“A part of me that had sort of been put on the shelf and looked at fondly for the last decade, literally. But uh, not actually broken out. And so as a result of this trip I could sort of break that out” (F2, p.11)

C. Holistic Components

“The mindful eating experience. Yeah, it really blew my mind. It's like, just how thinking about what you're doing. I mean, it sounds so simple, but we really don't do that very often in almost any context” (F2, p.6)

“It wasn't a marathon. it wasn't easy or hard It was just that right amount of like, you know, working hard enough every day that you didn't have any trouble falling asleep at night, but not so hard that like you're, you know, don't feel like you've been beaten with a paddle.” (F2, p.12)

“And you know, spiritually we've touched on it from its excellent by virtue of where it takes you” (F2, p.12)

“socially we had a pretty dang excellent group. There was some you know, stressors.” (F2, p.12)

“Well, I think for me that's all part and parcel of the rest, right? So if you're if you're in a place where you're getting good exercise and you're being able to have a good spiritual bounce with the universe and hang out with a bunch of great people then I mean the mental health pretty much just comes along for the ride.” (F2, p.12)

“but I was still very much brought up in the like boys don't cry uhm, you know at the beginning of my life and so just having an opportunity to actually stop and be actively aware of ones like emotional reality” (F2, p.13)

“I was like ya, no this seems like a nice group of people that I'm going to be, like, pretty open. And so I'm glad I did because, you know, that enabled, you know, a much more real connection with everyone.” (F2, p.14)

D. Not a 'Cure-all'

“I don't think it's necessarily going to like instantly cure you if you showed up with some pre-existing conditions. For myself you know it definitely performed that job of the...you know, to steal the metaphor everybody uses, like recharging the batteries. I definitely felt better able to deal with the stress of life at the end of that trip than I did at the beginning.” (F2, p.12)

“I think the biggest one is that...of course implementation is always...I could be better at implementing it but it certainly made me much more aware of you know how much I'm eating. That's probably the biggest...in a given 24 hour period since then what's the one thing you've actually thought about?” (F2, p.12)

“Was just you know that the actual practice of mindfulness and taking a moment to actually you know, meditate on a daily basis or you know, do yoga” (F2, p.13)

“I am at a uh, constant 'I'm going to start meditating tomorrow' kind of person.” (F2, p.14)

“Uhm I can't say any honesty that it was the thing that like, you know, successfully got me doing on a more frequent basis. But it was certainly, you know, it certainly helped me engage with you know, my desire to make that practice a real part of my life.” (F2, p.14)

“And I have to stop and realize that I have no idea because an entire day has gone by without me looking at the sky, and it's like oh that's just not right at all” (F2, p.15)

Summary

1. Nature/NBR Important Part of Identity
 - a. Family/Childhood Nature Experiences
 - b. Returning to his Roots
 - c. Privilege
2. Power of nature
 - a. Overcoming Natures Challenges
 - b. Power/Nature is bigger than us
 - c. Personal Purpose?
3. Surprising/Unexpected moments (Nature/Animals)
 - a. Wolf
 - b. Crab
4. Authentic Nature
 - a. Getting away from the City
 - b. Real Vs. Curated
 - c. Biophilia
 - d. Interstitial spaces
5. Spirituality=part of a greater whole of the natural world
 - a. Interstitial Spaces + Real nature

b. Unexpected Crab Experience

c. Purpose

6. Wellbeing= Contact with and being steeped in the beauty of the natural world

a. Purpose

b. Holistic

c. Not a 'Cure-all'

→ Meaningful moment = wolf/near death backpacking

→ Spiritual moment = Crab/Interstitial Spaces

Summary 3

1. What is the essence of experience of an 8-day Outward Bound Mindfulness Course?
2. How does this essence relate to broader notions of spirituality?
3. What meanings of spirituality are experienced during the course?
4. How do meanings of spirituality influence the outcome of holistic health and well-being.

Fletcher

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