‘This Is How I Know’:
A Qualitative Study of Parents’ Experience and Perception of Intuition
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By

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Beverley Jean Digout, candidate for the degree of Master of Social Work, has presented a thesis titled, ‘This is How I Know: A Qualitative Study of Parents’ Experience and Perception of Intuition, in an oral examination held on July 30, 2018. The following committee members have found the thesis acceptable in form and content, and that the candidate demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the subject material.

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ABSTRACT

Intuition has been a topic of interest and research in many disciplines such as management, business, nursing, psychology, counselling, and parent education/support. However, little has been researched or written that reflects parents’ experience and perception of intuition as a source of knowledge within the parent-child relationship. Through the process of narrative inquiry, this qualitative research study endeavoured to explore the role of intuition within the parent-child relationship as a viable source of knowledge and connection. Building on the premise that parents know their children best, this study explored the experiences and perceptions of intuition through the eyes of parents. The stories of six parents engaged in various stages of their parenting journey are shared through multiple sources of data including written or spoken words and photographs. The stories gathered make meaning of the presence of intuition within the parent-child relationship, with the overarching thread being the importance of relationship. As the stories unfolded, five themes emerged – trust, courage, connection/presence, home/nature and honour. Together these five themes made room for the recognition of intuitive knowledge within the parent-child relationship. This thesis presents the stories of parents intuition as a viable source of knowledge connected to their relationship with their child(ren). This paper identifies how intuition could be better utilized for enhancing the parent child connection.

*Keywords: intuition, parenting, narrative inquiry, parent/child relationships, parent knowledge*
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DEDICATION

For my mom and dad, with love and gratitude.

I miss you both every day and think of you often.

I wish you were here to say ‘we knew you could do it’

“Wrapped in love”
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"The more people have studied different methods of bringing up children the more they have come to the conclusion that what good mothers and fathers instinctively feel like doing for their babies is usually best after all" (Spock, in Parker, 1998, p.4).

The words of Spock and others (Landesman Ramey, 2002; Meyer, Wood & Stanley, 2013; Neufeld & Maté, 2005; Smith, M., 2010) suggest that parents are their child’s first teacher, mentor, and ultimately know their children best. Raising children involves the daunting task of recognizing what to do and when to do it, as well as figuring out the best actions to take from infancy to adolescence. The level of parental knowledge required is compounded with a parent’s desire to raise a caring and nurturing child who has a strong sense of self and the emotional skills necessary to cope with life’s ups and downs (Companies Committed to Kids [CCK], 2015; Pew Research Centre [PEW], 2014; Smith, M., 2010; Tam & Lee, 2010). Others maintain that we are currently living in a culture where judgement of parents and how they parent is rampant (Kang, 2014; Neufeld & Maté, 2005; Senior, 2010).

Kohn (2005) and others (Sommers-Flanagan, Polanchek, Zeleke, Hood & Shaw, 2015) propose that the challenging and stressful task of parenting often evokes feelings of incompetence. New parents all over the world feel unprepared for the reality of parenthood despite many efforts to provide support and education for this significant life transition (Borg Xuerb, Abela, & Spiteri, 2013; Condon, Boyce, & Corkindale, 2004; Cronin, 2003; Gage & Kirk, 2015; Liamputtong, 2009). Parents feel overwhelmed and burdened by trying to do their best to follow a self proclaimed gold standard of raising children (Bendall, n.d.; Senior, 2010; Sommers-Flanagan, Polanchek, et al., 2015). Others suggest that parents believe that everything they do is consequential, thereby creating inner turmoil and anxiety to always do things right
(Cottam & Espie, 2014; Koestner as cited in Bendall, n.d.; Smith, 2010; Wilkins, 2006). These feelings prevail despite the plethora of information available regarding the importance of the parent child relationship, knowledge related to child development, and the significance of the attachment relationship mediating positive outcomes for children and families (Geinger, Vandenbroeck, & Roets, 2014; Neufeld & Maté, 2005). More than previous generations, parents are exposed to an overflow of information in an environment rich with technological access. This information is in the form of parenting experts, courses, books, electronic resources, support groups, and online chat rooms related to parenting including everything from sleep training to potty training to how to make organic vegan baby food (Kehily, 2010; Neufeld & Maté, 2005).

In their desire to do right, parents, to some degree, have removed themselves from the fundamental role within the parent child relationship. Prevalent literature refers to this concept as ‘parenting from the head, rather than the heart’ (Grille, 2012; Neufeld & Maté, 2005). As a result, parents and children are experiencing a disruption of the natural order of things (Grille, 2012; Meyer, Wood & Stanley, 2013; Neufeld & Maté, 2005; Smith, R., 2010). Children are, more than ever, “relying on the support, guidance, and modeling from their peers – people whom nature never intended to place in a parenting role” (Neufeld & Maté, 2005, p. 7). The return to a state of balance within the parent child relationship requires an awareness of the importance of the attachment relationship and a commitment to connect with children in meaningful and purposeful ways (Clinton, 2008; Neufeld & Maté, 2005). Parenting in this manner has been linked to positive child outcomes such as reduced risk of depression and fewer conduct problems in adolescence (Wagner, Cohen & Brook, 1996), greater peer acceptance (Davidov & Grusec, 2006), and better academic achievement (Chao & Willms, 2000; Uddin, 2011). Some call this way of relating to children ‘connection before correction parenting’, ‘relationship based
parenting’ or ‘parenting attunement’ (Golding, 2015; Tuttle, Knudson-Martin, Kim, 2012).

Attunement reflects how reactive a person is to an individual’s emotional needs and moods. A person who is well attuned will respond with appropriate language and behaviors based on another person's emotional state (Erksine, 1998). They are good at recognizing moods and emotions in another person and adapting their own response in accordance. Well attuned parents are important in that they are able to detect what their children are feeling or thinking and respond appropriately. In essence, they are sensitively, empathetically and intuitively responsive to their children – they have the ability to be present to, and with, their child (Chau & Giallo, 2015; Clinton, 2008; Duncan, Coastworth & Greenberg, 2009; Golding, 2015; Neufeld & Maté, 2005; Wilkins, 2006). Neufeld and Maté (2005) postulate adults who ground their parenting in [a] solid relationship with the[ir] child, parent intuitively. They do not resort to techniques or manuals but act from understanding and empathy. If we know how to be with our children and who to be for them, we need much less advice on what to do (p.14).

Historically, the practice of supporting parents was organized in a traditional didactic educational format (Collins, Maccoby, et al., 2000; Lam & Kwong, 2012; Meyer, Wood & Stanley, 2013). An expert or professional would make a presentation and parents would ask a question - most typically - “what to do when”. An answer would be provided in a formula laden way (Brown, 1935; Gruenberg, 1940; Lam & Kwong, 2012). Limited emphasis was given to a parent’s intuitive knowledge of their children. Some suggest not much has changed. Siegel and Hartzell (2003) state “parents are no longer making thoughtful intuitive choices about how to parent children, but rather are reacting on the basis of experiences in their past and external sources to provide answers” (p. 28). Whether it be access to an overabundance of information or
the sharing of information in a didactic way, both removes the parents as experts of their children and does not acknowledge an intuitive way of knowing their children.

Acknowledgment of a parent’s intuitive knowledge of their child is the initial place to start the discourse when supporting parents (Kang, 2014; Neufeld & Maté, 2005; Papousek, 2011). Supportive parenting thrives with a parent’s “intuitive ability to know their child, facilitating positive social consequences for children” (McNeely & Barber, 2010, p. 603). The natural progression of child development allows for parents to know their children intuitively (Neufeld & Maté, 2005). Parenting intuitively provides parents with the confidence and knowledge they need to quit worrying and maximize the beneficial impact of the time they have with their children—by paying attention to—and interacting with them. As further articulated by Neufeld & Maté (2005), parents

have lost sight of nature’s role in the whole process of maturation and growing up.

Parents and nature are a team. And nature cannot go on without the parental role of being able to foster individuality and viability unless the attachment needs are fully met (p. 7). Therefore, understanding the relationship between a parent and child through this lens suggests the importance of, and acknowledgement of, knowledge affected by intuition.

Widespread literature suggests intuition is a recognized source of knowledge within many disciplines, including business (Baldacchino, Ucbasar, Cabantous, & Lockett, 2015; Lange & Houran, 2010; Salas, Rosen, & Granados, 2010; Williams, 2012;), education (Brown, 2013; Koksvik, 2013), counselling (Chudnoff, 2013; Dodge Rea, 2001; Jeffrey, 2012; Osho, 2001), and the parent child relationship (Cronin, 2003; Grille, 2012; Kang, 2014; Neufeld & Maté, 2005; Papousek, 2011). However, limited research exists articulating the stories of parents’ experience of intuition.
This research study addresses an identified gap in the literature. It asks parents to reflect on their experience of intuition and situates parents as experts in their relationship with their children, creating opportunities for awareness of the presence of intuition. In my research, I employed narrative inquiry as my methodology. Narrative inquiry considers the participants as authors of their stories instead of the objects of research (Tuli, 2011). The research question asks: “what are parents’ experiences and perceptions of intuition as a source of knowledge within their relationships with their children?”. 

1.1 Study Rationale and Purpose

The purpose of this narrative study was to understand and describe parents’ lived experience and perception of intuition as a source of parental knowledge within their relationship with their children. Intuition, according to Hodgkins (2008), is the result of the way our brains store, process and retrieve information on a subconscious level and is therefore, a real psychological phenomenon. Intuition is described as a process that gives us the ability to know something directly without analytic reasoning. It bridges the gap between the conscious and non-conscious parts of our mind, and also between instinct and reason (Hodgkins, 2008; Koksvik, 2013; Lange & Houran, 2010).

Upon personal reflection and through information gained by conducting the literature review for this research study, assumptions began to emerge for me. As the researcher, I felt that it was important to articulate these assumptions as they became inherent to informing my understanding of the research question and subsequent study design. The assumptions are as follows:

1. Everyone, including but not limited to parents, is intuitive.
2. Parents use their intuition in parenting and can describe aspects of it.
3. Intuition is a source of knowledge.
4. Intuition can be studied and storied.
5. Intuition is a valid and important part of decision-making.
6. Intuition can increase the effectiveness of decisions.
7. Narrative knowledge is created and constructed through stories of lived experiences, and the meaning created.
8. There are multiple realities constructed through lived experiences and interactions with others.

Working within an interpretivist paradigm, this study follows a narrative methodology in order to expand space within the literature for the experiences of parents to be presented as they are given opportunity to reflect on their intuitive knowledge of their children.

1.2 Background to the Study: Narrative Beginnings & Research Motivations

The decision to conduct a study exploring parents’ experience of intuition was a confluence of personal and professional related factors. As I reflected on my personal and professional experiences, a sense of curiosity emerged. I was intrigued by the opportunity to give voice to parents to not only enhance opportunities for parent support but also celebrate their intuitive knowledge and understanding of their children in a meaningful and heartfelt way.

My interest as a researcher in the concept of intuition is framed within the context of the experience and perception of intuition as a source of parental knowledge. This interest emerges as a parent of two adult sons and as a professional working with parents. For over thirty years I have worked as a social worker with parents in various capacities. The perspective I bring to this research project is situated within a white middle class westernized knowledge base. My understanding of the parent child relationship is firmly located in one of mutual respect and
connection. I understand the importance of fostering secure attachment relationships between child and caregiver, to ensure the best possible outcomes for children. As a professional social worker, I advocate for the fair and equitable treatment of children as well as the best possible supports for those caring for children. I believe in the universality of providing supports and services in ways that are meaningful and relevant to those receiving support. However, I do not have extensive knowledge of parenting practices within a cultural context and do not profess to understand the nuances of the parent child relationship across cultures.

With this in mind, I have come to understand and appreciate that the notion of knowing our children intuitively is seldom acknowledged in a globalized world. Prevalent thought seems to focus on what to do if and when scenarios if solutions to parenting issues are sought (Camarata, 2015; Green, 2004; Neufeld & Maté, 2005). In my working experience, I have observed that parents seeking external support were often quick to dismiss their intuitive knowledge regarding their own child. As a professional, I responded to a parent’s concern in a way that was incongruent to what my intuition, as a parent and professional, was telling me. However, not understanding or paying attention to this knowledge, I obliged the parent’s request, providing possible solutions, recommending educational groups and directing them towards specific books or articles. Neufeld & Maté (2005) refer to this as “parenting from the outskirts” (p. 45).

Garcia and Ford (2001) suggest, “how we know spans a range from a thinking, rational, analytical framework to one based out of intuition and an embodiment of knowing” (p. 81). Dodge Rea (2001) argues those working in a helping, clinical relationship may not fully understand the value and benefits arising from intuitive knowledge. This may be attributed to lack of awareness and understanding around intuition due to “lack of training to attend to the gut
hunches, sudden ideas, flashes of understanding, and physical sensations through which intuition can present itself” (Jeffery, 2012, p. 38). In identifying the value of intuition in counselling, Eisengart and Faiver (1996) state that counsellors must try to maintain a therapeutic connection to the client while trying to measure and understand the significance of all the messages, formulate some sort of organizing principle, choose from several plausible alternative interventions, and respond most appropriately. Using intuition can enrich the repertoire of therapeutic skills and can provide a significant avenue for helping the client (pp. 47-48).

As suggested by Garcia & Ford (2001) regarding how one knows, my interactions with the parents were initially firmly rooted in a thinking, rational framework. However, I ‘just knew’ that this was not meaningful or helpful to the parent/child relationship in the long term. As I came to acknowledge and understand the feelings I was experiencing as intuition, the fundamental aspects of counselling were enhanced. Attunement to one’s thoughts, feelings, and body can provide an additional level of information about clients (Bove & Rizzi, 2009; Dodge Rea, 2001; Garcia & Ford, 2001; Jeffrey, 2012). In my experience as a social worker, paying attention to my feeling of ‘just knowing’, or my intuition, provided clues about the information parents were not expressing, insight into areas that needed exploring, and potential warning signs related to the counselling process.

My own experience of parenting led me down a similar path as I poured over countless books and articles on how to become a ‘better’ parent, negating what I knew intuitively about my children. I would find myself trying to fix or mend a perceived problem (emphasis on perceived) with one or both of my sons. The more I read, the less I knew and the more I doubted my ability as a competent parent. Unconsciously, I was falling into the realm of looking outward for
resources and support, not relying on what I intuitively knew about my children. None of this felt right.

I believe knowledge is present in many forms and venues. There is a Buddhist saying, “that when the student is ready, the teacher will appear” (Siddartha Gautama Buddha, n.d.). The teacher for me, as a parent, was an emergency room doctor. This emergency room doctor was examining my son for possible discharge after a significant fall and potential head injury. The doctor’s response to the medical people attending to my son was, “Parents know their child best and it is important to listen to that knowledge when contemplating a course of action”. My son, thankfully, was fine but the feeling of acknowledgement and validation stays with me today.

As simplistic as this story may sound, the experience was tremendously influential in how I parent my children and ultimately, how I implemented change, working and building relationships with the parents seeking support. I began paying attention to my awareness of my own stories of intuition while working with parents. I also began to explore and listen for stories of intuition and ways of knowing that the parents I was working with experienced, and subtly expressed when discussing their children. The opinions, suggestions and knowledge of the perceived experts were not disregarded. They were, however, woven into the tapestry of overall knowledge, creating an opportunity for enriched dialogue, connections, understanding, (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin, Pushor & Orr, 2007) and enhanced parental self-efficacy (Neufeld & Maté, 2005). The tapestry became a co-creation of knowledge situated within a relationship of mutual respect and understanding.

1.3 Summary

This thesis is divided into five chapters, organized as follows. Chapter One introduces the research topic, purpose and rationale of the study, questions, and motivations. Chapter Two
provides a review of the literature that examines the acceptance of intuition as a source of knowledge within a variety of disciplines and the positioning of intuition as a source of knowledge within the parent and child relationship. The literature review concludes with a discussion of parenting influences described as internal and external. Chapter Three describes the methodological approach of the study, theoretical approaches supporting the parent-child relationship, as well as such areas of inquiry as participant recruitment, data collection, and analysis of data. Chapter Four explores themes arising from a holistic-content analysis of the data submitted by the participants, and is presented as six themes: trust, courage, connection/presence, home/nature and honour, held together by relationship.

Finally, in Chapter Five, I demonstrate how this project fits into and expands the parameters of existing literature on the topic of parental intuition. Implicit in the discussion is the understanding that intuition is a valuable source of knowledge. I present my understanding regarding the possibilities of intuitive knowledge within the parent child relationship, enhancing parental self-efficacy and attunement within this relationship; I identify the practice implications and relevance for social work a study of this nature and design has on parental relationships, parental self-efficacy, direct service and program planning within the field of parent support, and potential policy implications related to family and children. Last, an overview of the limitations are discussed. A brief conclusion of the study draws the chapter to a close.
CHAPTER TWO: THE CONCEPT

This chapter begins by defining intuition and then outlines major themes in relation to intuitive knowledge within diverse disciplines. Following this is a discussion on the need to explore intuition as a source of knowledge within the parent-child relationship. I then map out an understanding of parenting by first examining internal and external influences in which parenting occurs. Further discussion ensues on parents’ access to information and support systems towards the goal of identifying a conceptual space for this research study.

2.1 Defining Intuition

*Intuition will tell the thinking mind where to look next* (Salk, 1991).

One of the main challenges in studying intuition is identifying an operational definition. An extensive literature review on intuition was conducted by Shirley and Langen (1996), concluding that when it comes to an absolute and specific definition of intuition, “there is no consensus” (p. 565). The word intuition is derived from the Latin verb *intuēri*, which when translated means to look upon or to see within (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intuition). Berne (1949) in *The Nature of Intuition*, described intuition as “knowledge based on experience and acquired through sensory contact with the subject, without the *intuitior* being able to formulate to himself or others exactly how he came to his conclusions” (p. 4). Kang (2014) writes that, “intuition is knowledge without rational processing, thought, or observation” (p. 284). The experience of intuition is suggested to be universal and has been intrinsic to the work of great minds from every field of knowledge including Apple’s former CEO, Steve Jobs; McDonald’s franchiser, Ray Kroc; Polaroid’s inventor, Edwin Land and Nobel Peace Prize’s winner for discovery of penicillin, Sir Alexander Fleming (Johnson & Kruse, 2010).
In their early work, Kahneman and Tversky (1972) investigated the phenomenon that people estimate things badly in areas where they are usually considered to be competent. These authors subsequently developed the theory of two parallel operating systems of information processing (Bruner, 1962; Hogarth, 2005; Kahneman & Frederick, 2002; Sloman Sloman, 2002). One mode is described as operating deliberately, rationally and analytically with the other mode working associatively, intuitively and tacitly. Hammond (1993) claims that these two operation modes can be located at a continuum of consciousness: the intuitive mode is on the unconscious side of the continuum, and the rational mode is on the conscious side. The border between these two modes exercises variably on the continuum between the two poles. This means that intuitive decisions can be conscious (i.e., if somebody follows a gut feeling) and rational decisions can be partly unconscious (e.g., if somebody follows a given order) (Gladwell, 2005). Others propose intuition is the brain drawing on past experiences and external cues to make a decision that happens very quickly. The reaction is at a non-conscious level (Dodge Rea, 2001; Hodgkins, 2008; Williams, 2012) suggesting a general feeling persists that something is right or wrong (Nadel, 2011; Williams, 2012).

Thus, the phenomenon of knowing something, and yet not knowing how one came to know is a common theme throughout the writings on intuition. While many definitions of intuition have been postulated, for the purposes of exploring the research question: “What are parents’ experience and perception of intuition as a source of knowledge within their relationship with their children?” I chose to use Carson’s (1999) definition of intuition as “a unique way of knowing where one comes to some knowledge without evident rational thought or interference” (p. 329).

Specific to relational dynamics, Carson (1999) suggests intuition is an aspect of creativity
or divergent thinking that is crucial to purposeful interactions. Divergent thinking, according to Carson (1999), is less data driven and appears to be associated with the ability for “individuals to master their environment”, whereby “knowledge is co-constructed based on personal interpretations of their internal and external interactions” (p. 328). Social work as a helping profession encompasses creativity, intuition and inductive reasoning in combination with values, morals and beliefs (Goldstein, 1999).

It was my belief, that by using this definition as a starting point, participants in this study had the opportunity to creatively respond to the research question: “What are parents’ experience and perception of intuition as a source of knowledge within their relationship with their children?” in a manner that was spontaneous, immediate and allowed room for divergent thinking. This was of particular importance to me given discourse in relation to the stimulus overload of parenting information previously discussed. I also felt that by defining intuition as such, participants would be more apt to respond in a way that reflected their way of knowing supporting the suggestion that “each way of knowing deepens our understanding and adds another dimension to our view of the world” (Hartman, 1999, p. 3). In essence, participants were encouraged to be in the moment with their children, acknowledging their way of knowing without judgment or criticism.

2.2 The Other Side of Intuition

There are those that argue against the use of intuition as a source of knowledge. Lieberman (2000), who supports the concept of intuitive knowledge, describes some of the skepticism directed towards intuition as being a valid and reliable form of knowledge. Some depict intuitive thought as “mysterious and unexplainable” or “as something inaccurate, hokey, or epiphenomenal” (Lieberman, 2000, p. 109). Freud’s perception of the usefulness of intuition
suggested it is “an illusion to expect anything from intuition” (Jones as cited in Lieberman, 2000, p 109). Others report concerns that intuition seems to lack the logical structure required of information processing (Aarum Andersen, 2000). Still others suggest that reliance on intuition for problems involving logic has no sense of “alternatives being weighed algebraically” (Lieberman, 2000, p. 110) or a “cost-benefit analysis being undertaken” (Lieberman, 2000, p. 110) rendering the outcomes unreliable. Kerfoot (2003) submits that in many situations leaders are valued for their ability to produce analytics that direct actions and the soft side of intuition is less valued. For example,

a leader in a budget meeting who says "I just know" when asked to defend the budgeted numbers will not be valued when, in fact, if you have enough experience with budgets and acuity, you do know intuitively before you have the numbers that validate your intuition. However, in these situations, only spreadsheets will be accepted (p. 253).

This way of thinking about intuition is situated in an historical period from 17th and 18th century Europe (Grille, 2012). Historians call this period the Age of Enlightenment or Reason. Its purpose was to “reform society using reason, rather than tradition, faith and revelation, and advance knowledge through science, promoting intellectual interchange and opposing superstition and intolerance” (Withers, 2008, p. 691). Thought process during this period emphasized the significance of empirical data, or rational thought, as useful and important, de-emphasizing intuitive knowledge.

Despite the perceived skepticism of intuitive knowledge, the vast majority of literature reviewed for this research study suggests intuition is a viable source of knowledge within many and varied disciplines. To this point, intuition has been demonstrated in empirical studies to be faster and more sophisticated than analytical thinking (Lange & Houran, 2010; Lieberman, 2000;
Williams, 2012) as well as more accurate (Khartis & Ng, 2000; Koksvik, 2013). As a result, the understanding and knowledge related to recognizing and encouraging intuition (Akinci & Salder-Smith, 2012; Dodge Rea, 2001) has seen significant advancement and continues to expand across diverse domains.

2.3 Intuition Within Varied Disciplines

Disciplines that traditionally have not been associated with intuition, such as management and business, have begun to recognize the value of intuition. For example, the term ‘entrepreneurial intuition’ is used to identify holistic managerial decision-making skills (Aarum Andersen, 2000; Baldacchino, et al., 2015; Lange & Houran, 2010). Decisions are made by combining intuitive knowledge - a sense of right or wrong, a gut feeling - with factual data, such as profit projection and forecast reports. The literature identifies increased profits, better managerial skills, better personal and professional relationships, and enhanced self-efficacy of staff as potential outcomes of acknowledging intuition within the management and business domains (Akinci & Sadler-Smith, 2012; Johnson & Daumer, 1993; Kharti & Ng, 2000; Shirley & Langan-Fox, 1996; Sinclair & Ashkansay, 2005; Williams, 2012).

Intuitive strategic leaders, such as Intuit Chairman Bill Campbell and Apple’s founder Steve Jobs, revealed a pattern of success, not by eliminating bias in decision-making but by incorporating an intuitive bias in the evaluation of available analytics (How we do it, 2010). Jobs used intuitive leadership to drive Apple to become one of the most inventive technology companies to arise since the 1980s, resulting in a $200 per share stock price by 2007 (Finkle & Mallin, 2010).

Stewart (2002) reports that brilliant decisions of executives and leaders come from the gut, and offers the example of the United States of America Marine Corps that now has moved
away from the checklist, rational analysis format of solving problems in critical moments. How a leader responds to crisis determines the outcome. After consulting with cognitive psychologist, Gary Klein, and studying successful decision making in crises, the Marine Corps now teaches the intuitive approach that encourages creativity, which is more appropriate for uncertain times. The process of consciously analyzing every situation is not effective. Goleman (1998) makes the point that being overly analytical is the “equivalent of having too much college and too little kindergarten” (p. 34).

The findings of Gallén’s (2006) study put forward that the cognitive composition of the top management team affects the strategies they prefer. Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) from 39 management teams associated with the spa industry (hotels, entertainment spas and health or rehabilitation spas) were interviewed. Gallén (2006) proposed that intuitive-thinking top management teams prefer either a prospector or an analyzer strategy. However, results of the study indicated that in the higher levels of organizational hierarchy, the more complex the executive decision, the more intuition was used.

Others have examined the role of intuition in promoting the quality of forecasts on the stock market. Stock market investments rely on forecasts of market development. Because complete information is not available, entirely rational decisions cannot be made and it becomes necessary to rely on intuition. Harteis & Gruber (2008) conducted an empirical study of 32 professionals with varying experience in the stock market. The study asked participants to use intuition in addition to rational justifications to predict stock rates. Two groups of 16 subjects each were compared. The expert group were those with 4 to 20 years of experience. The group of novices were those subjects with up to 4 years of experience. The results suggest intuitive predictions of stock market development are better than rationally justified ones and those
participants in the expert category predicted more precisely than those in the novice category. The study suggests that with experience, one learns to trust and rely on knowledge generated through intuition (Harteis & Gruber, 2008). People begin to recognize and pay attention to the signs of intuitive knowledge, feeling confident to act on those feelings and signs. Tesolin (2000) further suggests that, “learning to work with intuition isn’t only necessary, but is valid and essential to business and personal success” (p. 76).

Intuition is also linked with teaching and music composition (Spranza, 2013; Swanwick, 2003). Music composition is one of the subjects most music teachers are required to teach. The composer Karlheinz Stockhausen (1997) in Swanwick (2003) speaks about the role of intuition in his work:

…intuition transforms every normal action into something special that one doesn’t know oneself. So I am a craftsman, I can start working with sounds, with apparatuses and find all sorts of new combinations. But when I want to create something that amazes me and moves me, I need intuition. I don’t mean an intellectual idea. I need to become involved, to come into a state where I do something without knowing why I do it (p. 127).

Kirliauskienė (2014) examined the importance of intuition in music education by conducting key informant interviews with three experienced music teachers. Intuition was defined in these three ways: as the ability to read the students, as knowing something without knowing why, and as being able to take an educated guess about what students can handle and how to proceed. The focus of the interviews was the teacher’s “subjective opinions regarding the importance of intuition in music education” (Kirliauskienė, 2014, p. 210). The teachers were also asked in what way intuition is manifested in their work as a phenomenon. It was determined that the three music teachers in this study used intuition to focus on the big picture and also to quickly solve
problems in the classroom (Kirliauskienè, 2014, p. 215). The teachers recognized when they were using intuition. When they realized it was imbedded into everything they do, they acknowledged it helped them reflect on what went well or badly, and helped them listen to the possibilities for future growth in teaching musical skills (Kirliauskienè, 2014).

The literature also suggests intuition is increasingly accepted and explored within the fields of medicine and nursing (Green, 2012; Middleton-Green, 2015; Rew, 2000). The results of a study by Woolley and Kostopoulou (2013) identifying clinical intuition in family medicine, suggest of the eighteen family physicians interviewed about patient cases in which they believed that they had experienced an intuition, all participants “thought that their intuitive judgment was in conflict with a more rational explanation or what other colleagues would do” (p. 66). However, 14 of the 24 cases presented by the eighteen physicians that met the inclusion criteria of the study indicated the initial intuitive response or gut feelings of the doctor were accurate. The other cases did not meet the inclusion criteria in that reliance on intuition was not identified within the initial diagnosis.

Similarly, within the field of nursing, Green (2012) proposed, “nursing intuition is grounded in learned experience which is precisely for the goal of maximizing the benefit of action for both the patient and the nurse” (p. 109). In other words, “intuitions are real responses to real experiences and situations that are immediate and non-inferential in logical terms” (Green, 2012, p. 109). Likewise, a descriptive phenomenological study undertaken by Hassani, Abdi, Jalali and Salari (2016) looked at the use of intuition by critical care nurses specifically recruited from hospitals affiliated to Kermanshah University of Medical Science (KUMS) located in Kermanshah, Iran. Of the 12 critical care nurses who participated in the study, seven (58.3%) were female and 88.3% (ten) had a Bachelor of Nursing (BSc) degree. The study
consisted of semi-structured interviews with each of the 12 participants using a questionnaire comprising open questions such as “What is the definition of intuition?” “How do you perceive the intuition signs?” and “What are your experiences of using intuition in clinical practice?” From the qualitative analysis of data, four main themes emerged: understanding intuition as a feeling; understanding intuition as a thought; understanding intuition as receiving a sign; and understanding intuition as an alarm. The study results suggest participating nurses were very comfortable using intuition when paying more attention to the patients by “checking their vital signs, carefully administering the medications, and notifying physicians of felt concerns in addition to increasing their concentration on patient symptoms, with implications for fewer complications and mortality” (Hassani, et al., 2016, p. 70).

Furthermore, in the last decade, an increasing amount of literature has given credibility to the importance of clinical intuition and its role in counselling and psychotherapy (Bove & Rizzi, 2009; Dodge Rea, 2001; Tantia, 2014). The concept of clinical intuition suggests therapists can know something about their clients without knowing how they know it or even what they know (Jeffrey & Stone Fish, 2011). A therapist’s intuitive capacity is described as “being connected with the processes of affective attunement and the gift for grasping the other’s state of mind” (Bove & Rizzi, 2009, p. 39). Some suggest clinicians go through a subconscious and intuitive analysis to determine an appropriate course of action; clinicians are “highly valued for their ability to recognize familiar patterns and to use their gut in times of complexity to come to conclusions and options for interventions” (Kerfoot, 2003, p. 253).

To this point, Jeffrey & Stone (2011) conducted a study examining intuition and its use amongst eight marriage and family therapists (MFTs) with varying degrees of experience. The phenomenological study was used to identify the lived experience of therapists’ intuition, how it
felt and was made sense of, as well as their opinions and ideas about the use of intuition in therapy. The results of the study suggest intuition to “be a powerful tool in clinical work as an additional source of information, a guide, and a relational connector…and may not be as sporadic a phenomenon as has been assumed” and there may be a process of “preparation, attunement, and experience that renders intuition available to many clinicians” (Jeffrey & Stone Fish, 2011, p. 359).

Others agree, proposing intuition seems to play a role alongside of theory in a therapy session. Garcia and Ford (2001) stated “most persons, and perhaps, especially counselors, also find themselves organizing and comprehending their immediate experience by way of another faculty: the lesser understood mechanism of data-intake and construal known as intuition” (p. 80). Bohart (1999) described the ever-present degree of innovation in how a therapist uses a particular approach with a particular client: “A smooth flowing therapy session does not require as much thought; therapists can respond, like good drivers or basketball players, intuitively, based on recognition of what is happening in the flow of the interaction and on what is needed next” (p.301).

Dodge Rea (2001) stated, “truly tailoring therapy to meet the individuality of the client requires placing clinical observation above theory, statistics, and expectation, where the value of intuition increases markedly” (p.102). Eichler and Halseth (2010) suggest, “like writers, group leaders and therapists are sometimes cognitive, and sometimes creative and intuitive, depending upon the need” (p.84). Ward (1999) agrees, proposing, “there will always be occasions when clinicians are required to make rapid decisions. They need to be capable of thinking efficiently and quickly (i.e., intuitively) in situations of irreducible uncertainty, as well as be competent to use more analytical methods if and when the situation demands” (p. 8). Clearly, mental
processes, such as thinking efficiently, quickly and analytically in conjunction with intuitive knowledge are necessary and valid, providing well-rounded experiences for both clinician and client.

Similarly, the professional intuition of social workers is proposed to be developed through “intersubjective encounters with clients and is then reshaped and stored as part of the practitioner’s work experience knowledge” (Cheung, 2016, p. 26) or practice wisdom. Intuitive social work practice includes the capacity to “be present with the client, immersed in experience and absorbed in the process” (Nye, 2012, p. 127). Intuition was identified as an important part of child and family social workers’ (CFSWs’) sense-making toolkit in a qualitative research study. Cook (2017) used a psychosocial analysis of narrative interviews to investigate how 18 social workers constructed a professional judgment in relation to an initial home visit, focusing on the role of intuition within that judgment. The findings revealed that social workers’ intuitions alerted them to potentially salient information, providing a much clearer understanding of the dynamics often present during chaotic home visits.

Similarly, Isenberg (1989) posits social workers are able to “sense a problem, react rapidly through well-learned behaviour patterns, synthesize isolated elements of data, and circumvent rational analysis and bypass in-depth thinking” (p. 97). Acknowledging the validity of intuition does require practice and, as stated previously, confidence in the ability to ‘know without knowing’ (Nye, 2012). Hence, the helping process within social work encompasses a clear understanding of one’s values, morals and beliefs in combination with creativity, inductive reasoning and intuition.

2.4 The Concept of Intuitive Parenting

Similar to the therapeutic relationship within counselling and social work, intuition is
suggested to exist between a parent and child when attunement is present, manifesting as a supportive, caring, and empathic relationship, facilitating positive social consequences for children (Cronin, 2003; DeHart, Pelham, & Tennen, 2006; McNeely & Barber, 2010;). As discussed, attunement provides the foundation from which intuitive knowledge and connection emerges. Just as clinicians and therapists experience and acknowledge intuition in a clinical setting, the same opportunity exists for parents. However, the parent child relationship has the advantage of experiencing attunement within an emotional context unique to that relationship. Humanistic psychologist, Carl Rogers (1902-1987) called a connection of this nature unconditional positive regard, whereby parents accept and love their child for what he or she is (McLeod, 2014). In essence, attunement between a parent and child can be described as a kinaesthetic and emotional sensing of others – knowing their rhythm, affect and experience by metaphorically being in their skin, and going beyond empathy to create a two-person experience of unbroken feeling of connectedness by providing a reciprocal affect and/or resonating response (Erskine, 1998, p. 236).

Bornstien (1995) in Sanford Koester & Lehti-Harper (2010) suggests intuitive caregiving aims not only at “hygienic, autonomic, and emotional needs of infants, but also at the needs to be together with someone, to share experience, to acquire adequate means of communication, and to create novel symbols” (p. 7). The concept of intuitive parenting focuses on the “subtle, non conscious parental behaviours that guides children in the regulation of emotions, language acquisition, and participation in social exchanges” (Sanford Koester & Lehti-Harper, 2010, p. 5) Consequently, parental behaviours are highly adaptive to serve the best interest of their child(ren). The acknowledgement of intuition as a source of knowledge within the parent and child
relationship is further supported through emerging neuroscience research. The understanding of intuition from a neuroscience perspective involves modern brain-imaging techniques that “enable brain activity to be mapped during specific mental activities thus allowing researchers to examine the neural bases of intuitive judgment and its associated processes” (Kang, 2015, p. 292). Intuition comes from a complex system of interconnected processes. This includes the logical left-brain; the emotional, intuitive right brain; the vagus nerve, the heart, the gut, our sensory environments, mirror neurons and their electromagnetic fields (Kang, 2015; Lieberman, 2000). According to Kang (2015), “good decisions will come more easily and naturally if parents balance and integrate all parts of the brain and body to focus on intuition” (p. 291). Research studies reflect a similar sentiment.

A qualitative study by Green (2004) examined the meanings and experiences of parental intuition. The intent of the study was to create more dialogue on intuition and allow people to see the value of intuition as more commonplace in society and parenting, potentially benefitting theories and practice of child rearing. Four parents were selected for this study based on their professional affiliation as family physicians. The reason doctors were selected was “because doctors are often required to make decisions in times of uncertainty, they are professionals who can benefit from an understanding of intuition” (Green, 2004, p. 37). In-depth interviews were used to gather data. The results of this study indicated that the parents interviewed for this study could not initially define what intuition meant to them. Therefore, they did not view intuition as a source of knowledge and chose to rely on empirical data for answers to most parenting concerns. However, the parents did acknowledge that, at times, intuition was present particularly in matters of safety and wellbeing of their child(ren).

Another qualitative study (Wilkins, 2005) explored the support needs of first-time
mothers. The participants identified that through practice, support and knowledge sharing, they experienced an increased level of proficiency within the realm of intuitive parenting (Wilkins, 2005). Faircloth (2011) researched mothers who choose to breastfeed their children for longer than the average of one year. The participants, despite understanding the health benefits of breastfeeding, “‘just knew’ that what they were doing was right – in many senses it was a decision seemingly not based on thought, but on ‘gut feelings’” (p. 295).

Papoûsek (2011) posits, “nature has paved the ground for a precious resource imbedded in the parent–infant system” (p. 30). The concept of intuitive parenting refers to caregivers' implicit communicative competence readily observable when they engage in communicating with a baby (Papoûsek & Papoûsek, 1987, 2002). It includes the “salient modifications in infant-directed speech, facial expression, and tactile behavior that match the infant's perceptual and integrative capacities” (p. 35). Intuitive parenting also includes the moment-to-moment adjustments parents make as they interact with their children and parental sensitivity as defined within the attachment literature (Bowlby, 1979). Intuitive parenting also provides “interactional scaffolding frames in which the baby can test and practice self-efficacy, self-regulation, and other newly emerging skills” (Papoûsek, 2011, p. 35).

Through the introduction of intuitive parenting concepts into early intervention practices, the Munich Interdisciplinary Research and Intervention Program for Fussy Babies (MIRIP) (Hofacker & Papoûsek, 1998) helps parents of infants with serious regulatory disorders “regain confidence in their own parenting skills as well as increase responsivity to their children” (p. 42). Concepts, findings, and methods of infancy research were translated into a clinical program of professional diagnostic assessment and intervention for infants/toddler and their families. One component of the therapeutic approach involves video-supported behavioural observations and
analysis of parent-infant communication, whereby the “attention was focused on infant attributes of regulatory strengths and on any evidence of parents’ intuitive communicative competence, its expression, and attunement to the infants’ fluctuating states and needs” (Papoûsek, 2011, p. 37). This approach to supporting parents through challenging times with their children relies explicitly on

parent-infant communication as a psycho biologically based reciprocal reward system and trust in parents’ intuitive competence that may be disguised or blocked in cases of very obvious insensitive caregiving, interactional failures, and/or neglect or abuse, but is expected to exist as a primary resource in the midst of adversity (Papoûsek, 2011, p. 37).

Video feedback to the taped parent child interactions provides opportunity for the parent to re-experience and reflect on the taped scenarios. The therapeutic sessions that followed highlight the “positive inter subjective relatedness with its intrinsic rewards” between parent and child (Papoûsek, 2011, p. 41). The parent is encouraged to “let themselves in and dwell upon their immediate experience of the moment, and to become aware of their own feelings and those of their infant” (Papoûsek, 2011, p. 41). The therapist’s aim is to reinforce the parent’s “trust in their intuitive competence and trust in their baby and developing relationship” (Papoûsek, 2011, p. 41).

The process of sharing experiences and perceptions of intuition as a source of knowledge within their relationships with their child(ren) requires parents to notice, pay attention to and gain insight into their interactions with their children. Prevalent literature (Lollis, 2003; Neufeld & Maté, 2005; Williams & Wahler, 2010) indicates that parents who engage in a non-judgemental appraisal of interactions and ways of relating with their children leads to an emphasize on the importance of the relationship, whereby the parent and child want to be
willing participants in the interaction lessoning the amount of energy used and the buildup of any resistance” (Singh et al., 2010, p. 168). To this point, the findings from a study that implemented mindfulness-based parenting practices whereby the mothers of adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder learned how to “apply behavioural contingencies with intuitive awareness showed a significant reduction in aggressive behaviour, self injury and non-compliance and considerable decrease in parental stress level” (Singh et al., 2014, p. 655).

Similarly, a study by Sanford Koester and Lahti-Harper (2010) focused on the ways in which Deaf mothers modify their signed communication when it is directed to an infant, and the ways in which mothers in general accommodate to an infant’s hearing status during unstructured play interactions using intuitive parenting. This study analyzed data collected as part of a longitudinal research project. Participants in this study included Deaf mothers with their Deaf infants, Deaf mothers with their hearing infants, hearing mothers with their Deaf infants, and hearing mothers with their hearing infants. Intuitive parenting behaviours were compared at infant ages 6, 9, 12, and 18 months, based on observations of Deaf and hearing mother-infant dyads. The study found that Deaf mothers responded to their children in an equally responsive manner as non-deaf parents suggesting, “intuitive parenting is a useful integrative concept for understanding many of the processes that underlie interactions between parents and infants” (Sanford Koester & Lahti-Harper, 2010, p. 6). Deaf mothers “modified their signed communication when directed to their child” in much the same way that “hearing adults vary their pitch and melodic contours” when speaking to their child (Sanford Koester & Lahti-Harper, 2010, p. 512). According to the authors, “parents whose infants are diagnosed with a hearing loss are likely to have many intuitive and appropriate interactive behaviors within their broad parenting repertoire” (Sanford Koester & Lahti-Harper, 2010, p. 12). Furthermore, Deaf parents
may exhibit an even wider range of subtle communicative strategies that are especially beneficial to the Deaf child who is learning sign language.

Equally important to understanding the concept of intuitive parenting is the role of parent’s intuition when helping their children deal with the aftermath of natural disasters or traumatic events. Studies have been undertaken to gain an understanding of what actions were important and meaningful to help children cope and gain some sense of normality in their lives. A qualitative study explored how Norwegian parents supported their children who were severely exposed to the trauma of the tsunami disaster of 2004. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 51 Norwegian parents exposed to the trauma of the tsunami disaster. The parent’s support strategy in helping their children involved a concept called “watchful waiting” (Hafstad & Haavind, 2012, p. 299). Watchful waiting involves a parent’s careful monitoring and observing of their children. The idea of keeping an eye on their child while at the same time providing a feeling of safety is described as “an intuitive strategy that the parents had not necessarily learned” (Hafstad & Haavind, 2012, p. 299).

Others have studied parent’s perceptions and behaviors in helping their children cope after the 9/11 tragedy. Mowder, Guttman, and Rubinson and Sossin (2006) examined parents’ beliefs and behaviors after the 9/11 terrorist event and investigated perceived changes in parenting perceptions and behaviors utilizing retrospective self-attributions. The study involved 99 parents working in close proximity to Ground Zero. Using a five point Likert-type scale respondents were asked to indicate a level of importance regarding each of the parent role characteristics (i.e., bonding, discipline, education, general welfare and protection, responsivity, and sensitivity). Next, subjects were asked to indicate the frequency of behaviors, using a similar Likert-type scale, related to the same six parent role characteristics and indicate their level of
frequency related to 38 specific parenting behaviors (e.g., being a model for your child and his/her behavior, defining boundaries for your child, encouraging your child academically).

Finally, the questionnaire asked individuals to respond to the questions as they currently felt, as well as their parenting beliefs and practices prior to as well as soon after 9/11. The participants reported perceiving their role as a parent differently after the tragedy, “prioritizing parenting aspects associated with loving, protecting, and being attuned to their children’s needs” (Mowder et al., 2006, p. 741). The parents, as reported by Mowder et al. (2006), perceive changes in their parenting beliefs and parenting behaviors relative to the recent terrorist act. Some beliefs became more important, such as “bonding and being responsive, while others, such as discipline, became less important immediately after the attack” (Mowder et al., 2006, p. 736). One parenting dimension, education, however, stayed relatively stable over time. And, one additional dimension, sensitivity, seems to have assumed a greater level of importance immediately following 9/11 and that level of importance remained elevated over time (Mowder et al., 2006).

2.5 Parenting Influences: Internal and External Considerations

For the purposes of exploring the question, *What are parents’ experience and perception of intuition as a source of knowledge within their relationship with their children?*, a discussion reflecting internal and external influences on parenting is necessary (Garbarino & Bedard, 2001; Nuefeld & Maté, 2005). Internal influences encompass parental belief systems, parental knowledge and resulting behaviours, within the attachment relationship (Bond & Burns, 2006; Greenfield, Flores, Davis, & Salimkhan, 2008; Landesman Ramey, 2002; McGillicuddy-DeLisi, & Sigel, 1995; Neufeld & Maté, 2005). Influences external in nature manifest as personal reflections regarding information obtained outside of oneself such as from books, website and/or professionals.
Identification of the impact of internal influences was the focus of research conducted by Fowler and Lee (2007), exploring the “generational tension that is inflected with the opposition of traditional, scientific and professional knowledge” (p. 186). The intergenerational transmission of values and beliefs in relation to the upbringing of children is performed continuously from generation to generation. Fowler and Lee’s (2007) phenomenological study looked at the transmission of knowledge through the experience of a first time mother, Sophie, intending to breastfeed her child despite having trouble. The research from which Sophie’s account is taken is a longitudinal study in which the experiences of women learning to mother for the first time are investigated over a 12-month period, during the last trimester of pregnancy and the first nine months of their baby’s post-partum life (Fowler, 2000). The study results identified that balancing the mother’s internal belief system, her personal experience, and the knowledge from medical and lactation experts required significant self-reflection and courage to navigate the tension among all three areas (Fowler & Lee, 2007).

Many suggest knowledge, regardless of the source, is acted upon consciously and unconsciously in everyday interactions through subtle and not so subtle messages (Geinger, Vandenbroeck & Roets, 2014; Lerner, 2016). From a generational perspective, the handing down of knowledge reflects an understanding regarding many aspect of parenting including the distribution of authority within a family, methods of parenting styles, understanding of children’s position in a family as well as a parenting framework (Camarata, 2015; Lerner, 2016, Neufeld & Maté, 2005). Overall, a parent’s understanding of their belief system, how it was formed and the importance of the attachment relationship is suggested as the starting point for all experiences parents have with their child(ren) (Learner, 2016; McGillicuddy-DeLisi & Sigel, 1995; Neufeld & Maté, 2005). In doing so, parents are positioned to garner a clearer understanding of what laid
the foundation for many of their beliefs, values, attitudes, and parenting practices, including origins of parental guilt for ‘not parenting a certain way’.

External context reflects many aspects including societal pressures to parent a certain way, adhere to expert knowledge, or information from others professional or otherwise. Historically much of parenting was handed down one on one by the extended family -- grandparents, aunts, uncles, and close family members. As suggested in the previous discussion regarding internal influences on parenting, this approach was often a double-edged sword -- broad concrete advice for particular children and particular situations. The unintended consequence was often unsolicited advice and value judgments. In the 21st century, parenting information has taken a wide range of forms including television programs, the Bible, print materials, books, lectures and workshops. This is duly enhanced by the large-scale penetration of the internet into homes (Godina, 2014; Madge & O’Connor, 2006; Plantin & Daneback, 2009; Porter & Ispa, 2013; Salonen, et al., 2011; Senior, 2010). An online search of parenting resources using the key words ‘parent support’, ‘parenting’, ‘parenting in today’s world’ resulted in over 100,000,000 online options that included books for purchase, websites, blogs, workshops, and parent mentoring/coaching support. Suissa (2006) summarizes the position that parents are in as “an impossibly complex network of tasks, filled with expectations and goals” (p. 72). These sentiments are further echoed by Furedi (2008) in Paranoid Parenting suggesting that a culture exists in the 21st century “that denigrates parental competence and insists that mothers and fathers cannot cope without the help of experts” (p. 16).

Research suggests that external influences, whether they be resource or expert laden, have greater impact on a parent’s perception of internal knowledge, potentially perpetuating an underlying feeling of fear within parents - “fear of not being good enough, knowing enough or
doing enough” (Kang, 2014, p. 10). Others suggest reliance on external sources of parenting knowledge has the potential to undermine parental intuition contributing to diminish perceived parental self-efficacy (Bond & Burns, 2006; Duncan, Coatesworth, & Greenberg, 2009; Grille, 2012; Neufeld & Maté, 2005). Perceived parenting self-efficacy (PPSE) refers to the “beliefs or judgments a parent holds of their capabilities to organize and execute a set of tasks related to parenting a child” (de Montigny & Lacharite, 2005, p. 390). Contributing positively to this set of beliefs or judgements is the enhancement of acknowledging intuition as a source of parental knowledge. Perhaps the more concerning issue is the disconnect parents experience raising their children based on their intuitive knowledge against the external pressures to raise children in a certain way, based on a perceived societal standard. Therefore, the secret to parenting becomes not “what a parent does but rather who the parent is to a child” (Neufeld & Maté, 2005, p. 6). I suggest that essential to this way of being is the acknowledgement of the presence of intuition as a source of knowledge within the parent child relationship.

2.6 Summary

This literature review provided an understanding of the complexity associated with defining and understanding intuition as a source of knowledge. Central to the literature review is the concept that thinking processes in general, and information processing in particular, are frequent daily-life routines. To this point, people are capable of thinking systematically, gathering information, planning steps, and carefully comparing and evaluating various alternatives. Equally as important, is an individual’s ability to think intuitively and make holistic decisions. The literature further suggests it is the rare decision that follows a straightforward path. The combination of the sense of just knowing with a sense of reason provides a far better response.
The literature review first examined the concept of intuition as a useful mental process that plays a vital role in decision-making within many disciplines such as business, medicine, nursing, education and clinical therapeutic settings including social work. Identified were characteristics such as listening to your inner voice, trusting your ability to make sound and reasonable decisions using intuition, becoming attuned to your environment and the people who you care about as well as maintaining a practice of self-reflection. The use of intuition also indicates value within interpersonal relationships. Specific attention was given to the study of intuition within the parent child relationship supported by emerging neuroscience research. Several studies on parenting and parenting behaviours were reviewed indicating that intuition is an integral component of the parent child relationship.

The second theme addressed in the literature review considered internal and external issues influencing parents today. Of significance is the overwhelming amount of parenting information available to parents through various sources including family, friends, literature and the internet. This places parents in, at times, difficult positions as they make sense of the information presented while balancing what they intuitively know about their child. Overall, parents’ abilities to navigate the external pressures while maintaining what they inherently know about their child(ren) are taxed.

However, the literature review did not reveal instances where parents were asked specifically to reflect, in a narrative manner, their experience of intuition within their relationship with their child(ren). This represents a gap in the literature. Therefore, a study of this design contributes to the knowledge base of positive parent child interactions, giving space for the voice of parents. This is significant, given the current trends in parenting and the increasing perceived pressure placed on parents to be the perfect parent. The following chapter outlines the approach
selected to understand the question, “what are parents’ experiences and perceptions of intuition as a source of knowledge within their relationships with their children?”. 
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter maps the trajectory of the research project. The chapter begins by explaining the motivation and rationale behind its conception; this is followed by a description of the theoretical framework used to understand the importance of childhood and the connections children have with their parents or caregivers. Next, a review of the research design, identifying assumptions guiding the research study is presented as well as issues related to trustworthiness. The process of recruitment, data collection, and analysis is explained, exploring issues and questions that arose along the way and providing justification/rationale for decisions and actions throughout the research study.

3.1 Addressing the Research Question and Purpose

The phenomenon of intuition as a source of knowledge within the parent child relationship is a topic that has been under explored. Prevalent literature identifies that intuition is a reliable and accessible source of knowledge within many disciplines. For example, within the domains of business and management, the potential outcomes of acknowledging intuition was attributed to increased profits, better managerial skills, better personal and professional relationships, and enhanced self-efficacy of staff (Khartis & Ng, 2000; Nadel, 2011; Salas et al., 2010). Within the field of medicine and nursing, intuitive knowledge was seen to increase patient connection and deeper understanding of patient needs (Middleton-Green, 2015; Green, 2012). Those in the counselling field expressed that the role of intuition was prevalent when connecting with clients, altering the depth of connection and understanding between counsellor and client (Jeffery & Stone, 2012; Rew, 2000). Thus, intuition is a phenomenon worthy of further inquiry.

A qualitative research approach was selected to explore the research question: “What are
parents’ experiences and perceptions of intuition as a source of knowledge within their relationship with their children?”. Fittingly, as suggested by Denzin & Lincoln (2011), “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 3). They suggest that this approach is multi-method in focus, making use of several kinds of empirical materials, such as case studies, personal experiences, life stories, interviews, observations, and a variety of different texts. Despite the various methodological streams that characterize qualitative research, Denzin and Lincoln suggest that these various methods are all interconnected through a common focus on “problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives” (p.3).

3.2 Theoretical Framework

I have placed this narrative research study within the framework of social learning theory, focusing on Dewey’s (1938) ideas of experience in relation to the study of human beings. Dewey’s social learning theory provides a base understanding of learning and relationship. According to Dewey, experience is both personal and social. Both are always present. People are individuals and need to be understood as such, but they cannot be understood only as individuals. They are always in relation, always in social context. Dewey (1938) posits, “experience is continuity, in that experiences grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences” (p.34). This is key to my thinking about how parents navigate the role of parenting. On the continuum as described by Dewey, each parent has a past experiential base and this leads to an experiential future. How people become what they are depends on what they have experienced, and how they have interpreted that experience, in the social contexts in which they have participated. The social contexts individuals encounter are based on where they are emotionally, physically, psychologically and developmentally at any particular point in time. The
unit of analysis is part of this whole. I argue that the narratives of the parents in the present study, in response to the research question, “what are parents’ experience and perception of intuition as a source of knowledge within the parent-child relationship?”, enable an understanding of the experience of intuition as knowledge that is not static but rather a reflection of ongoing experiences and learning as an individual and as part of larger societal influences. Essentially, I view intuition as one aspect of knowing that blends with the knowing that comes from experience.

I was also strongly influenced by the work of Dr. Gordon Neufeld, developmental and clinical psychologist, and physician, Dr. Gabor Maté. Neufeld and Maté “weave together scientific research, a synthesis of development literature, case histories and their own insights and experience as professionals to help make children understandable” (https://www.ventureacademy.ca/). Their work, as presented in Hold on to Your Kids (2005), provided a framework for me to contextualize concepts important to the parent child relationship.

In addition to my understanding of Dewey’s social learning theory in relation to this research study and the work of Neufeld and Mate, the interplay of three additional theories - attachment theory, ecological systems theory and relational cultural theory - provided the foundation from which I understood the parent child relationship. Research from a range of disciplines including neurodevelopment, developmental psychology and genetics highlight the importance of childhood and the quality of the parent/child relationship and parenting more generally for future mental, social and emotional development of their children (Duncan, Coastworth & Greenberg, 2009; Kang, 2015; Neufeld & Maté, 2005). Multiple theoretical perspectives offer explanations for how supportive parenting facilitates positive outcomes for children. However, the theories related to attachment, ecology and relational cultural theory
closely supported my belief that parenting behaviours do not occur within a vacuum but rather as a collective give and take between parent and child, supported by the ecological system in place.

The first theory informing my thesis is Attachment theory, which focuses on the relationship and bonds between people. Bowlby (1979) postulates, “lasting, psychological connectedness between human beings is fundamental to the child parent/caregiver relationship” (p. 44). Nurturance and responsiveness are considered the primary determinants of attachment. The earliest bonds formed by children with their caregivers have a tremendous impact that continues throughout life. Children are born with an innate drive to form attachments with caregivers. The central theme of attachment theory is that “the primary caregivers who are available and responsive to an infant’s needs allow the child to develop a sense of security. The child knows that the caregiver is dependable which creates a secure base for the child to then explore the world” (Bowlby, 1979, p. 45).

A number of studies that have followed children from infancy to adolescence or adulthood have illustrated that attachment quality is one of the strongest predictors of later development. Attachment patterns established early in life lead to stronger self esteem, better self-reliance, less depression and anxiety, better performance in school, and successful social relationships (Harris, 2009; Neufeld & Maté, 2005; Snyder, Shapiro, & Treleaven, 2012). Further research suggests that these behaviours and self-perceptions become an internal working model that allows children and adolescents to have successful relationships with others and to make pro-social decisions (Grille, 2012; Harris, 2009; McNeedy & Barber, 2012; Wilkins, 2006). The opposite occurs when children and adolescents have negative attachment or who lack attachment.

In my study, I was not measuring the attachment relationship. William and Martha Sears
(2001), who coined the term ‘attachment parenting’, note there is “no checklist of specific practices that parents must follow. What's important, … is that parents strive to be sensitive and responsive -- so that they can learn how to meet their children's needs in an affectionate, effective way” (p. 38). To this point, I was asking parents to reflect on their connection with their child(ren) as they explored the concept of intuitive knowledge. It is my belief that the very nature of the research question facilitated an understanding of attachment, perhaps unconsciously, through the request to be present and observant. In essence, I requested parents to be sensitive to their child(ren), drawing on the presence of attentunement within the attachment relationship, in which the child feels a sense of security and the parent knows their child unconditionally.

The second theory informing my research is Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory. It proposes that, “human individuals are living systems continually interacting with the contexts in which their lives are unfolding, including family, peers, groups, schools and larger systems” (Lau & Ng, 2014, p. 424). This theory explains how a child’s development is shaped by the varied systems of the child’s environment and also by the interrelationships among the systems (Bronfrenbrenner, 1979; Swick & Williams, 2006). Bronfenbrenner identified aspects or levels of the environment that influence children’s development. These levels are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem.

The microsystem is the child’s immediate environment. Children's microsystems will include any immediate relationships or organizations they interact with, such as their immediate family or caregivers and their school or daycare (Bronfrenbrenner, 1979; Oswalt, 2015). How these groups or organizations interact with the child will have an effect on how the child grows; the more encouraging and nurturing these relationships and places are, the better the child will be able to grow. The next level in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is the mesosystem,
which describes how the different parts of a child's microsystem work together for the sake of the child. The exosystem level includes the other people and places that the child may not interact with often but still has a large affect on him or her, such as parents' workplaces, extended family members, or neighbourhood (Oswalt, 2015). The macrosystem, comprises the largest and most remote set of people and things to a child; however, this system still has a great influence over the child (Bronfrenbrenner, 1979). The macrosystem includes the relative freedoms permitted by the government, cultural values or the economy.

Ecological systems theory provides insight into the parent child relationship most notably by illustrating the many internal and external influences that may be encountered. As Bronfenbrenner (1979) states “the process [of development] is affected by the relations...within and between these immediate settings, as well as the larger social contexts, both formal and informal, in which the settings are embedded” (p. 45). Thus, an awareness of the influences present helps to create a better understanding of individuals and families.

In addition to social learning theory, attachment theory and ecological systems theory, I was also intrigued by the concepts presented within relational cultural theory (RCT) and the connection I made to understanding the parent child relationship. I viewed the parent child relationship through the lens of relational theories of development whereby “a sense of personhood is grounded in the motivation to make and enhance relatedness to others” (Miller, 1991, p. 162). RCT views intimate relationships as an integral step toward developing a “sense of self rather than focusing on a more separated sense of self” (Frey, 2013, p. 178). Intrinsic to development within relationships is Surrey’s (1991) concept of relationship authenticity whereby “the challenge of relationship provides the energy for growth – the need to be seen and recognized for who one is and the need to see and understand the other with ongoing
Relational cultural-theory was originally positioned as a theory by and for women (West, 2005). However, Miller (1991) postulates “exploration of new formulations [within RCT] helps us to understand men’s development as well, and therefore enlarges our comprehension of everyone’s experience” (p. 165). This notion resonated with me as I strived to explore the lived experiences of parents not the lived experience of a gender specific parent.

Weaving the theoretical understanding of social learning theory, attachment theory, ecological systems theory, and relational-cultural theory supported my belief regarding the child-parent/caregiver relationship. They also provided the foundation for my understanding of the storied experiences of parent’s knowledge and perception of intuition. Asking parents to collect stories over a two-week period as they reflected on moments of observation and connection with their children accomplished this. The process of collection required the parents to be present with their child(ren) – to be attuned and observant of their interactions with their children and mindful of their connection. Parents were provided with guiding questions not as a directive, but to facilitate an understanding of the research question.

The notion that our perspectives, development, and worldview are inextricably intertwined falls directly within the realm of interpretivism. The blending of theories – social learning, attachment, human ecology, relational cultural - and the interpretivist paradigm also strongly informs the narrative methodology of this research, as I sought to understand parents’ experiences and perceptions of intuition as a source of knowledge within their relationship with their children.

3.3. Epistemological Framework/Rationale for a Narrative Approach

As I reflected on the research question, “what are parents’ experiences and perceptions
of intuition as a source of knowledge within the parent child relationship?”, I thought of the potential richness of the stories waiting to be told, investigated and interpreted to find meaning (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Hence, this research study was conducted within the worldview of interpretivism, following the conventions of a narrative research design. Interpretivists believe that “social reality is socially constructed” (Engel & Schutt, 2013, p. 49). Epistemologically, interpretivism believes that research findings cannot be understood objectively. Rather, research findings are themselves a “construction of reality that has been formulated through the lens of the researcher” (Bailey, 2007, p. 54). The subjective nature of research findings requires that interpretivists proceed cautiously along the research path, “taking into account throughout the research process the injection of their values, beliefs, and worldviews into the social realities of research participants” (Burrill, 2015, p. 20). This process is suggested to increase the trustworthiness of research (Bailey, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006).

The goal of research within the interpretivist paradigm is to develop an understanding of the experiences of research participants and the meaning they make of their social realities (Engel & Schutt, 2013, p. 49). I chose to conduct research within this paradigm to give voice to parents’ experience of intuition, recognizing that significant research exists supporting intuitive knowledge. Interpretivism allows space for the introduction of new stories and realities from the voices of parents’ experience and perception of intuition within their relationship with their child(ren) adding to the literature on the subject of intuition.

Furthermore, it is through my understanding of Connelly and Clandinin’s (2006) definition of narrative inquiry that the stories from participants were shared. Connelly and Clandinlin emphasise the meaning of story within narrative inquiry as “…human experience in which humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives. People shape their daily lives by
stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience” (p. 477).

3.4 Narrative Inquiry

Narrative approaches have been commonly applied in studies analyzing personal, sensitive and intimate issues, such as life or personal stories or life changes (Hänninen, 2004; Hyden, 2008; Riessman, 2003). According to social scientist Vilma Hänninen (2004), for example, “studying life changes through narratives enables us to capture the meanings people give to the most sensitive experiences in their lives” (p. 76). Becoming a parent represents significant change in a person’s life. The implementation of a personal experience approach to narrative inquiry provided space and opportunity for the parents to reflect on this change and share experiences and perceptions of intuition as a source of knowledge within their relationship with their children. Advocates of this approach (Lieblich, et al., 1998; McAdams, 2008; Polkinghorne, 2007; Rosenthal, 2003) postulate that personal experience narratives “are people’s identities, created, told, revised, and retold throughout life” (Lieblich, et al., 1998, p. 7), describing a set of events that exist independent of the telling (Denzin, 1985). When told, narrative experiences create an emotional bond between the listener and teller, “express[ing] a part of the ‘inner life’ of the storyteller” (Dolby-Stahl, 1985, p. 47).

The understanding inherent in the request to share their stories is that “knowledge is subject to differing viewpoints and explanations” (Daly, 2007, p. 638). This understanding is consistent with the epistemological position of subjectivism, whereby “there is no separation between the knower and the known because all knowledge is constructed through a meaning making process in the mind of the knower” (Daly, 2007, p. 626). The opportunity for meaning
making became an interactive and interpretive process between the stories told, the parents as storyteller and myself as the listener (Creswell, 2013; Daly, 2007). Therefore, how the participants choose to narrate their experiences of intuition was as important as the details of their stories of intuition. Chase (2011) refers to this process as the “practice of constructing meaningful selves, identities, and realities” (p. 422).

By the same token, because narrative research methods invite people to talk, write, or share visuals about their experiences in a naturalistic storytelling fashion, the importance of honouring a person’s story and the meaning attributed to that story becomes paramount to the process. As I reflected on the stories shared by parents involved in this study, I was reminded of the concept of being held in another’s mind as articulated by Pawl (1995), stating that “everyone deserves the experience of existing in someone’s mind, time is suspended at that moment you are in another’s mind as we respectfully listen to their story in all its dimensions” (p. 5). The suspension of time is key to the process of listening. To truly listen requires self-discipline and attentiveness on the part of the researcher in order for the “release of mental effort, strategizing, and monitoring” (Daly, 2007, p. 282).

Thus, narrative research was well suited to this study due to its emphasis on human agency, identity, and subjectivity as the stories of intuition are shared through participants’ reflections. There is a fit between narrative method and social work practice. An “important part of both narrative methods and social work practice is the focus on clients’ stories and giving voice” (Larsson & Sjöblom, 2010, p. 2). Integral to story telling is the presence of relationship, and relationship is central to the practice of social work. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) affirm, relationship forms the nexus of what narrative inquiries do: “Narrative inquiry is the study of experience, and experience, as John Dewey taught, is a matter of people in relation
contextually and temporally” (p. 255). The objective of this study was to open space for parents to reflect, feel and share their experiences of intuition, positioning themselves as the experts within their child’s life. Essentially, parents were offered the opportunity to be held in another’s. A narrative methodology framework places the experiences of participants at the center of analysis, and holds space for the possibilities of agency, change and self-awareness (Creswell, 2013; Riessman, 1993).

3.5 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness within qualitative research refers to the “assessment of the accuracy of the findings as best described by the researcher and participants” (Creswell, 2013, p. 250). Pyett (2003) suggests as researchers, we need to ask ourselves the question: How can we have confidence that our account is an accurate representation? Riessman (1993) writes, “a personal narrative is not meant to be read as an exact record of what happened nor is it a mirror of a world ‘out there’” (p. 64). However, there are ways of approaching validation within narrative work.

Persuasiveness asks: is the interpretation reasonable and convincing? (Riessman, 1993). Throughout the retelling of the parents’ stories, I have endeavoured to mirror the theoretical claims as presented within the literature reviewed for this study. I made use of multiple sources to provide corroborating evidence to support themes as they arose throughout the data analysis and interpretation of the data.

As the researcher, I regularly corresponded with the study participants to ensure an accurate depiction of the stories shared. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe this process as member checking whereby the data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are brought back to the participants. Communicating with the participants occurred frequently and at various stages throughout the study. During the initial stage of analysis, my contact was more for
clarification regarding handwritten messages. As I progressed with my analysis, specifically as themes were emerging, contact became more frequent. The development of themes was strongly influenced by the feedback that all participants provided. Engaging in a co-analysis of this nature led to further data collection as participants were prompted through our conversation to submit additional thoughts or photographs. Any suggestions reflecting my interpretations were discussed and included in the final write up, thereby, increasing credibility of the study. I regularly debriefed with my thesis supervisor, discussing concepts and possible options for presenting the data. I was also in regular contact with my thesis committee, who provided feedback and direction when asked.

The coherence criterion requires that the interpretation be as “thick as possible” (Kohler Riessman, 1993, p. 67). As the researcher, I encouraged the participants to story their experience and perception of intuition as knowledge in a variety of forms. The resulting pictures, words and drawings reflected the richness of their experience. I endeavored to mirror these descriptions through my interpretation with the intent to assist the reader in transferring themselves within the stories shared by the participants.

Confidentiality of participants was of utmost importance. Thus, the collection and storage of data was through an online password protected secure data storage system. An email address was created for each participant. For example, joe@whenparentsask.ca” allowed participant Joe to upload their data to the secure server ‘When Parents Ask’. Once the data had been uploaded, the data was encrypted and accessible by only myself, as the researcher. Any conversations between the participants and myself were recorded anecdotally as field notes.

The nature of narrative work requires that the researcher engage in a level of self-awareness and self-discipline in the ongoing examination of text against interpretation, and vice
versa (Creswell, 2013; Daly, 2007; Lieblich et al., 1998). Daly (2007) suggests the process of “learning how to observe, how to situate ourselves in order to see most effectively, and the commitment to return again and again to our observations in order to build confidence in our understandings” (p. 292) is integral to the efficacy of narrative research. In order to ensure that I maintained a stance of subjectivity, inquisitiveness, keen observation, and clear documentation of all research decisions and activities, a reflective journal or field notes was kept throughout the duration of the study (Creswell, 2013; Lieblich et al, 1998; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). Through the process of reflective journaling, I was able to identify my personal thoughts, feelings and stories of intuition, allowing for an increased understanding how I was relationally present with the data and the participants. I was also able to put to words my thoughts as a parent and professional social worker, creating an understanding when those lines were potentially blurred.

3.6 Participant and Recruitment Strategy

Prior to participant recruitment, ethics approval was obtained from the University of Regina Research Ethics Board (see Appendix B). The participants in this research study are parents who are parenting a child(ren) within different developmental stages – young children, middle years, early teenagers and late teenagers. Parent, for the purposes of this study was defined as the “person in relationship with a dependent being in need of being taken care of, an adult assuming responsibility, and an adult in a good working attachment from the child to the adult” (Neufeld & Maté, 2005, p. 54).

Recruitment of participants occurred in Saskatchewan through the process of purposeful sampling. I distributed electronic and hard copies of posters to family serving agencies, childcare centres, counselling agencies and billboards in public areas such as university settings and
libraries. I initially proposed inviting four individual parents to share stories of their experience and perception of intuition as a source of knowledge with their children. It was my intent to recruit two females and two males to participate in this study. To my pleasant surprise, I received twenty-four positive responses to my invitation to participate in this research study. Due to this overwhelming response, I increased the number of participants from four to six. Participants were selected on a first come, first served basis. I responded to initial participant inquiries by phone, outlining further details of the research project and answering any questions. If they were still interested, a time and place to meet in person was arranged. People that volunteered to participate, and who were not selected, received a phone call explaining why they were not chosen and thanking them for their interest. Of the six people who participated in this study, four indicated that they had read the recruitment poster and two had been forwarded the email containing the recruitment poster.

I chose people to participate based on fulfillment of the specific categories consistent with the age of the child being parented. These categories were: young children (0-6), middle years (7-10), early teenagers (11-14), and late teenagers (15-17). Participants contacted me via phone or through my University of Regina student email account, which was included on the recruitment poster.

3.7 Demographics Summary

Five of the participants resided in the province of Saskatchewan, Canada, while one participant’s principal residence was interior British Columbia, Canada. The parents in this study ranged in ages twenty-six to forty-two years, and their children ranged from one to seventeen years of age. The study included two male and four female participants. Further demographic information was not collected as I was conscious of my desire to capture the nuances of the
participants lived experiences, not the demographic details of their lives. However, as the stories were gathered it became apparent that the participants represented a breadth of backgrounds in terms of professions, socio economic status and education level.

Therefore, the selection process I used for this study resulted in findings that reflected differences or different perspectives regarding intuition within the common framework of being a parent. I felt comfortable with six participants, knowing that a sample of this size allowed for the collection of rich, extensive detail about, and with, each participant (Creswell, 2013; Daly, 2007). Further differentiation of perspectives related to intuition was also realized through the selection of both male and female participants. My intention in selecting both males and females reflects research highlighting the importance of many genders in the life of a child. The active presence of both males and females in a child’s life has been shown to have a positive impact on the development of children related to social skills, problem solving abilities, empathy, peer relationships, delay of sexual activity, and adaptability to difficult life situations (Pruett, 2000; Pruett & Pruett, 2009). I was also cognizant of prevailing thought suggesting that the female gender is more intuitive although literature suggests otherwise (Gigerenzer, Galesic, & Garcia-Retamero, 2014). Therefore, the recruitment of parents regardless of gender ensured gender neutrality, not gender specificity.

3.8 Data Collection

Semi-structured, one-to-one meetings were conducted with participants individually, in the location of their choosing. The intent of the initial meeting was thus: to provide a detailed description and purpose of the research study exploring parents’ experience and perception of intuition as a source of knowledge within the parent/child relationship; to clearly explain and ascertain participant consent (see Appendix C, D & E) for the proposed study; to ascertain their
children’s consent if over the age of seven; to describe how data will be collected; and to clearly identify what is being asked of participants, ensuring minimal risk to the participant. Participants were then asked to choose a pseudonym that would be used throughout the research process, including the final thesis publication. All six participants choose to use their given names, not relying on a pseudonym. The participants were reminded of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or to contact the University of Regina Research Ethics Board should they have any questions or concerns regarding the project.

When I first began developing the research design for this project, I knew that I wanted to exert as little control over the narrative as possible. This was consistent with my research goal of opening a space within interviews for stories of intuition within the parent child relationship to emerge. However, Hyden (2008) points out that remaining entirely non-directive does not necessarily always serve the function of creating space for narratives or of allowing the participant to have control over their own stories. With this point in mind, I carefully developed questioning consistent with my desire to create a greater sense of meaning, relying on open-ended questioning, framed within the language of narrative therapy. I relied on the framework of questioning consistent with narrative therapy modality to encourage a reflective stance, and the possibility of creating space for innovative thinking (Morgan, 2000). Furthermore, Riessman (1993) advises “researchers develop a guide that features five to seven broad, open-ended questions about the topic of inquiry” (p. 55). The creation of a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix F) gave greater control to the participants, providing myself as the researcher and the participants with the opportunity to clarify uncertainties with follow-up questions and conversations.

During the initial meeting the purpose of the study was explained in detail and the
consent form was reviewed. At the time of the meeting participants were asked if they felt comfortable being audio recorded using a password-protected device while discussing the guiding questions. However, all of the participants indicated discomfort with this process. I soon realized that talking about intuition in relation to their children required careful thought and observation on the part of the parent. Several participants suggested that the concept of intuition with their children, although intriguing, was not always at the forefront of their thoughts and they really needed time and space to reflect on the guiding questions used during our initial meeting. Subsequently, the guiding questions were left with participants to use as a reflective component or guide to understanding and finding the stories of intuition within their relationship with their children. It was evident in the data collected, and the follow up conversations, that the guiding questions provided a framework for genuine thought and reflection.

Once the initial meeting was completed and consent had been granted, participants were asked to collect data for a minimum of two days over the course of two weeks. This study utilized multiple narrative texts as a method to collect data. Participants were provided with options as to how they collected data– spoken texts, written texts, and visual texts – and provided the appropriate supports such as a journal for recording thoughts or access to a camera if required. I defined spoken texts as individual interviews in conversation format with me as the researcher and or the recordings of participants individually reflecting on their experience of intuition. Written texts created by the participants included journal entries, notes, or messages articulating thoughts, feelings or actions identifying their experience of intuition. The third option, visual texts, relied on a concept called photo-elicitation, which involved participant-generated images. Photo-elicitation as a data collection method “typically focuses on the individual’s experiences instead of community-level concerns”, and “has specific benefits when
collecting data about deeply emotional experiences” (Kantrowitz-Gordon & Vandermause, 2015, p. 1).

A follow up phone call, text or email was scheduled one week after the initial meeting to ensure that the participants were clear on the purpose of the study. A further follow up interview was scheduled three weeks after the data collection week, following the initial analysis of the data submitted. The number of follow up meetings varied from participant to participant, ranging from three to seven. Follow up was most frequently by email. Two participants preferred face-to-face follow-up discussions. As before, any data collected remained accessible only by myself.

3.9 Location and the Importance of Holding Space

The location of the initial interview was a space conducive to confidential conversations and comfort at the discretion of the participant, allowing for the interviewees to have control of the stories that they told to me as the researcher. Cognizant of the suggestion by Hyden (2008) that allowing for participant control is not a straightforward task, I integrated the strategies put forth by Hyden that facilitates such control. These strategies include “conducting interviews in physical spaces that are conducive to storytelling, pursuing topics in a way that does not presume the prevailing discourse on the topic, and opening discursive space by challenging a narrative performance or redirecting the course of the interview” (Hyden, 2008, p. 124).

As a result, I felt participants gave careful thought about the meeting space. Five of the participants choose their own home as a meeting space. The other participant selected a park bench along the riverbank that represented a quiet meditative spot for them. I was honoured and delighted to be invited into the privacy of people’s homes and/or their significant space.

3.10 Data Analysis

Data analysis within a narrative study analyzes the collected data from several
perspectives. The iterative and reflexive process of data analysis begins as data are being collected rather than after data collection has stopped (Creswell, 2013; Josselson, 2011; Lieblich et al., 1998). A multidimensional process to effectively analyze data gathered through multiple narrative texts was employed, relying on the work of Leiblich et al. (1998), reflecting a holistic approach to data analysis. A holistic approach suggests, “the life story of a person is taken as a whole, and sections of the text are interpreted in the context of other parts of the narrative” (Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 12) allowing for the unfolding of the story.

Cognizant of the need to employ a three-dimensional inquiry space as suggested by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), the data analysis process within this study reflected a method of looking backward and forward, inward and outward, and situating the shared experiences within place. These are the steps: begin with the recording of the number and type of texts used by the participants, employ a general and specific reading of the data, and end with a relational reading of the study’s analyzed data.

3.10.1 Text records. The data collected was initially analyzed to identify and record the number of and types of texts provided by each participant. This initial stage of data analysis was referred to as text recording (Keats, 2009; Leiblich et al., 1998). The process of text recording helped identify the type of texts (written, spoken, or visual) the participants chose to use and where their priorities were in terms of constructing the story of their experiences of parental intuition.

3.10.2 General reading of all texts. The second stage of data analysis required a general reading of all the texts provided by the participants. This assisted in identifying the meaning in the texts, identifying initial patterns and themes. During the general reading a record of my initial impressions was recorded. I paid attention to references to other texts submitted by the
participants and cross referenced to other texts to enhance my understanding of the participants experience of intuition with their child(ren). I also cross-referenced the data collected by participants to the reflections recorded in my personal journal. Detailed notes assisted in identifying emergent patterns and themes. The use of coloured markers helped identify various themes within the stories.

3.10.3 Specific readings of written and spoken texts. A more specific reading of the written words helped to explore the parts of each of the participant’s stories of intuition that contributed to shaping the meaning of the whole story. The intent during this stage of data analysis was to focus on distinct aspects of the narratives that are relevant to the research question. Lieblich et al., (1998) suggests the “specific reading of texts is enhanced when areas of focus are identified” (p. 63). The areas of focus during this stage concentrated on the self of the narrator, perspective of the narrator, issues of specific attention, context of interaction, and emotional response of narrator.

3.10.4 Visual readings of photographs and visual representations. Likewise, visual text data was read for similar content as suggested with the written data but included any signifiers such as the framing of an image into the photographic space, the moment captured, the organization of the images, and the viewpoint taken by the narrator. During the follow up conversations with participants open ended questions specific to the images or photos submitted were asked. For example, some of the questions asked included: What was it about this photograph that makes it significant? How does this photograph tell about your experience of intuition with your child? What makes this important for you now? Careful notes, following the colour coding scheme used when reading the written or spoken word text, were taken.

3.10.5 Relational readings. The final step to analyzing the data involved focusing
specifically on the connections, parallels, and differences among multiple texts. This step is referred to as relational reading (Josselson, 2011; Keats, 2009; Lieblich et al., 1998) and involves reading the data intratextually and intertextually (Josselson, 2011; Keats, 2009; Lieblich et al., 1998). The intratextual reading of the data submitted by the individual participants explored the relationships between each participant’s submitted data. This helped me to identify commonalities, despite the vast differences in who the participants were. The intertextual reading of the data explored the relationships of texts across all participants, giving me the opportunity to understand how texts are related and influence each other (Bazerman, 2012). The process of reading the submitted texts intratextually and intertextually helped with the further identification of patterns and the emergence of themes, reflecting the participants’ experiences and perceptions of intuition.

3.10.6 Final analysis. As the researcher, I do not claim that my interpretation of the stories shared is the only possibility in understanding intuition within the parent child relationship. The primary aim in analyzing the narrator’s accounts is “not to discover the accuracy of the stories, but to understand the meanings people attach to those events” (Hammersley, 2008, p. 479). Therefore, my interpretation and understanding of the participants’ stories were shared and discussed with each participant to gain clarification, co-create meaning and ensure understanding. Guba and Lincoln (1989) refer to this process as member checking, allowing for the participants to correct or alter issues arising from their narratives. This occurred informally and continuously throughout the stages of the study as “a preeminent way to insure truthfulness and authenticity” (Reilly, 2013, p. 2). I would often ask, “Did I get the story right?”. Seldom were there blatant differences in my understanding. Small suggestions provided clarity for both the parents and myself. Ultimately, the process of weaving the lived experiences of
intuition together facilitated opportunity for a better understanding, and the stimulation of
dialogue, on the importance of intuitive knowledge within the parent child relationship. To this
effect, the culmination of the stories shared, as so eloquently described in the children’s book,
_The Bone Talker_ (Leedhal, 1999), created a rich tapestry of shared knowledge:

One, three, nine, sixteen...Her children returned with their children and their children’s
children. They brought with them the fabric of their days, and from this the old woman
learned the patterns of their lives.

The cloth filled the old couple’s house, and Grandmother Bones waltzed it, yes, waltzed
it – even with her old bones – right out the open front door. It flowed like a stream into
the village, across the bridge and through the woods. It spread like a great cloak to the
next village and the next and the next (p. 10).

3.11 Summary

This chapter began with a description of the rationale for using a narrative methodology
for this qualitative study. The importance of story-based research is explored as well as the
connection between narrative methodology and social work. I then reviewed the participant
recruitment strategy and sample size. An overview of how data was collected was provided,
including the location and structure of meetings.

The next sections provide a description of the analytic process, how the data was received
and the meaning making process that I engaged in my attempt to ‘re-story’ the experiences of
intuition as portrayed by the parents. The following chapter continues the telling of the stories,
describing the themes through the metaphor of making a quilt.
CHAPTER FOUR: THE MAKING OF THE STORY AS A QUILT

Of all the metaphors for stories, one of the most enduring, it seems to me, is the metaphor of a story as a quilt. Put together bit-by-bit, using rather ordinary materials, yet the whole is definitely greater than the sum of its parts. And in the end, it portrays a beautiful story. This chapter describes that story beginning with an introduction to the research participants and their children. Following an introduction of the participants, the pieces of fabric or themes and that which holds the pieces together, as told to me by the participants, is described. I identify five similar, yet distinct pieces of fabric – trust, courage, connection/presence, home/nature and honour – woven tightly together by the threads of relationship. All these components work together to articulate the quilt we call ‘intuition’.

Metaphors within narrative inquiry are common and assist in the telling of the story (Khol Riessman, 1993). The metaphor of a quilt suggests that the interpreter of the data emerges with the interview text as if they were observing the process of the creation of a quilt. The observer approaches and scans the overall design and pattern and attempts, with rigorous attention to detail, to discern and explain the various pieces of cloth or material that were woven together. The pieces of cloth or material that enhance the pattern and flow of the overall quilt design are noticed, as are the complimenting pieces of cloth. These pieces of material are perhaps not so prevalent or important to the overall quilt but still serve a purpose in the overall creation. Throughout the process the observer must stand back and reflect on what aspects of the quilt are most prominent while acknowledging the finer details such as the thread that ties the pieces together. The result is the creation of a rich, encompassing blanket of shared pieces of cloth that are significant and purposeful to the creator, the observer, and the narrator.

Like the quilt itself, the life subjectivity captured in words on a page, reflections in a
journal or photographs consciously selected, is bringing together creatively the stories shared by narrators. And, like the quilt observer, the interpreter envelops him or herself in the “word or picture data”, and endeavours to make sense of the storylines or narratives that run throughout the text. These are the pieces of material that predominate and convey meaning and contextual detail. To discern and explain the storylines, the interpreter studies both their content and their form, making use of information shared on experiences of meaning making, the lived experience of the story and the retelling of the experience.

In the making of this quilt of intuition, the pieces of fabric were provided to me through the conversations, interactions and personal reflections of photographs, drawings and artwork shared in heartfelt ways of deep understanding by the six parents who chose to participate in this study. Leedhal (1999) in The Bone Talker describes the process of how the pieces of fabric were gathered for the Grandmother to once again start quilting. Initially, two bright pieces of cloth were presented, reminding the Grandmother of the needle and thread in her sewing basket. The story goes on to explain what happened next:

Slowly she reached for the pieces of cloth, closed her crooked fingers around it, and rasped, “Bring me my basket!”

Everyone cheered. Each ran home to find another piece. From a curtain. From the patch of a pocket. They brought back small flags of colour and hope (p. 19).

Just like the community members in The Bone Talker (Leedhal, 1999) who brought the pieces of fabric full of “colour and hope” (p. 19), the participants who shared their experience of intuition provided the material for the whole of the quilt to be constructed. The quilt of intuition slowing unfolded as the pieces were presented to me fabric by fabric.

These are the parents who gave voice to the making of this quilt exploring intuition
within the parent child relationship: Kayla, mom to three year old Everett; Sally and McKenzie, parents of Abby (12), August (3) and Ilya (1); Paul, father of four year old Jesmond; Leah, mom to Erica (12) and Kendra (17); and Nick, father to two year old Amelia. As mentioned previously, how the participants collected data was at their discretion. Upon personal reflection, the parents seemed initially taken aback that there was not a prescribed way of submitting data. I found this interesting and noted in my journal that “I wondered if this was an extension of wanting to make sure that they were doing things right, fearful of making a mistake. In many ways similar to parenting”. However, every parent subsequently reported being appreciative of this approach to data collection. Leah specifically indicated, “this approach provided so many opportunities to truly reflect and be in the moment when observing my interactions with my children”.

4.1 Relationship: ‘The Thread that Binds’

Each parent was unique in his or her own stage of parenthood, personality, and stage of life; this provided rich diversity and insight into the understanding of intuition. Specific to this understanding was the concept of interpersonal relationships. This was evident in the words shared by Sally “I really do feel that my children will be my greatest life endeavour – the relationships we build are priceless” and Kayla who ruminated that “it is through relationship that we stay connected to our children”. Others reflected on the importance of relationship as part of the “parenting relationship that they have with their partner” (Paul), while some suggested that relationship with themselves was important, “providing opportunity for intuitive thought and some of my best work as a parent and partner” (Leah). Nick and Mckenzie both reflected on the importance of relationship with family, who are a great source of support and strength. These thoughts resonated as extensions of the theoretical underpinnings of relational theory. One of the
assumptions of relational theory is the inherently social nature of human beings. The relational nature of human beings “drives us to go through and towards relational connection” (Jordan, 2008, p. 2). It is the reflexivity present in relationships that assists us in processing and making meaning of situations. In this context, I began to understand the importance of interpersonal relationships in exploring intuition. The concept of intuitive knowledge as a parent requires the security of relationship with yourself and those you care about in order to be accepted and acknowledged.

Consequently, relationship emerged as the thread that was woven within, around and throughout the conversations, stories, observations and shared memories holding together the stories of intuition. It became apparent that the tapestry of the stories shared by the parents reflected an interconnectedness that warranted consideration of the individual in the larger social ecological context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Connolly & Harms, 2012).

Thus, intuition became the quilt; relationship became the thread stringing, binding or sewing the themes, or fabric, together. Bakhtin (1981) submits “the process of analysing data text requires dialogical listening to three voices – the voice of the narrator as represented by the tape or the text; the theoretical framework, which provides the concepts and tools for interpretation; and a reflexive monitoring of the act of reading and interpretation, that is self-awareness of the decision process of drawing conclusions from the material” (p. 27). Reissmann (2008) encourages narrative researchers to question why a story was told a certain way or, using the metaphor of a quilt, why the quilt was made that way. Through gentle and, at times, emotional conversations and reflexivity, the fabric pieces, or themes, were revealed to be trust, courage, connection, home, and honour. Each piece of fabric revealed provided perspective and understanding to the experiences shared by the participants and myself as the researcher.
4.2 Trust

The notion of trust emerged as a piece of cloth, full of deep intense colour, design and intricate patterns. Trust as articulated by Gottman (2011) is about being present, connecting with rather than choosing to think only of yourself and believing that you can connect. The various shades and intensity of trust was revealed through reflections such as “trust in our selves” (Leah), “trust in our ability” (Sally), “trust in my way of being” (Nick) and “trust in my intuitive knowledge of my child” (Kayla). Repeatedly, trust, in various designs, was described as foundational to the parents’ intuitive connection with their children and acknowledgement of intuitive thought. As Kayla so nicely stated, “the times I have second guessed my gut feeling, it has not turned out right”.

Neufeld & Maté (2005) suggest when parents experience uncertainty, or a lack of trust in their knowledge, they potentially “lose the ability to spontaneously parent” (p. 48). Others propose if we lose our ability to trust in ourselves as knowing our children, then we have lessened our relationship (Faircloth, 2011; Smith, 2010, Suissa, 2012). Gottman (2011) submits that collective moments build trust in those we love and ourselves, “one moment is not that important, but if you are always choosing to turn away [from the relationship or yourself], then trust erodes in a relationship very gradually, very slowly” (p. 34). When I queried the notion of trust further, Kayla suggested that the ability to trust is often compromised as parents’ are faced with what is perceived to be no felt support…the larger, out there environment influences how parents respond to their children more than we know…we have this committee that tends to sit in judgement – the committee of family, peers, society and then we have ourselves – self-judging.

Parenting is now more confusing and complicated than ever before. The pressure to look
outwards and search for external sources of information places “increasing pressure on parents to be the perfect parent” (Paul). Smith (2010) suggests that we now live in a society that perpetuates the notion that “parenting has garnered the status of being a verb” (p. 360). Suissa (2006) in Untangling the Mother Knot further suggests, “parenting has become an impossibly complex network of tasks” (p. 72). Talk of parenting is framed within the context of “inadequacy of parents” (Suissa, 2006, p 72). In the words of Kayla,

There is a flood of parenting material that exists out there, there are lots of dos and don’ts and I think that it is hard for parent’s to keep up – and I have never read a blog or parenting forum that emphasizes intuitive knowledge of their children – IT SHOULD!

However, despite feelings of uncertainty, findings from a narrative study identifying parent knowledge suggest that parents are in tune with and know their children. Through observations and interviews with parents in an elementary school setting, Dr. Pushor (2001) concluded that “…parents expressed an intimate knowledge of many facets of knowledge and ways of knowing their children in a deeply situated, contextualized, and multifaceted understanding of their children’s skills and abilities, emotions and responses, qualities and characteristics, their ways of being in the world” (p. 470). Further to this point, Leah so eloquently reflected on the fabric of trust as a “feeling of connection with herself and her daughters” admitting that “sometimes I am and have been totally lost. I am grateful that during some of the darkest times I have trusted to let my intuition lead the way”. Mckenzie echoed this sentiment by stating that she ‘works hard at trusting her intuition, especially in times of turmoil’.

Thus, it is through the thread and security of a relationship that the recognition and acknowledgement of trusting oneself can be brought forward, gently guided and nurtured thereby creating space for intuition to emerge.
4.3 Courage and Vulnerability to Respond Intuitively: ‘To Know Myself and My Child’

“Have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary” (Steve Jobs, 2005).

Courage permeated throughout the stories shared by the parents, revealing itself as a strong, solid fabric in the construction of this quilt. Initially, I as the researcher reflected on the concept of courage from the perspective of the parents having the courage to share their stories, experiences and wisdom with me. McKenzie openly spoke about having the courage to share her story and how vulnerable that feels at times. As I worked through my own reflections in relation to the depth of the stories shared, I soon realized that for many of the parents, courage was foundational and often disguised as uncertainty or fear. Brown (2012) suggest that “courage is born out of vulnerability, not strength”, defining vulnerability as “uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure” (p. 33).

Although painful to many of the participants, the concept of having courage to “respond in ways that they knew were right for their child or I guess intuitively” (Sally) was frequently stated, particularly in the face of adversity. Leah gently expresses this sentiment as she reflects on parenting a child with cancer:

I have come to realize some things about myself in the last few days. Mostly what I have learned is that in having a child with cancer, you need to have the courage to rely on your intuition more than ever and that there is no outside source of info or manual for that. I have tried not to make this about my daughter’s cancer but it carries a presence through our every day whether I like it or not. You need to learn to have the courage to love in the moment and trust, intuitively - sometimes that is all you have.

Similarly, Sally’s reflection on her relationship with her three daughters exemplifies how
courage evolves in the face of personal crisis “when you know intuitively that this is so important despite anything else that is going on”. Sally spoke very earnestly about mothering each of her three daughters. As the researcher I was struck by the profound example of courage shared by Sally with such intense honesty.

Abby, [who Sally gave birth to at a young age], was held in my heart and mind and physically because I felt strongly that babies needed a slow process of physically being separated – and so I held her. Her dad and I did not have a harmonious relationship & I felt she could feel the stress of it. I left him. As a young single mom who was very committed to her child, I often (always) KNEW what her needs were, but at times struggled to meet them because my own needs being so neglected. I think you really get to know someone in times of stress. And being poor, not having a car, sitting at the food bank, biking the long trek to work together each day…All these things stressful, & we did them together. We were never apart, and as long as we were together, I didn’t need anything else.

As I read this passage and reflected on the images provided by Sally (Appendix A, Figure1), I experienced such an outpouring of emotion. The depth of love, caring and insight expressed by Sally was so raw and genuine. Figure 4.1 illustrates this connection. The words used by Sally to describe this collage of images, “give me something to fight for, and to show me real love exists” reminds me of the words of the late Leonard Cohen in the song Hallelujah, “Love is not a victory march, it’s a cold and it’s a broken hallelujah.” Love is a form of vulnerability. Brown (2012) emphasizes this further but suggesting “if you replace the word love with vulnerability in that first line [of Cohen’s Hallelujah], it’s just as true” (p. 46).

I was also reminded of the work of Harriet Lerner (2009) in her book The Mother Dance:
*How Children Change Your Life* and the importance of speaking of parenting from the perspective of experience. The experience of mothering, as shared by Sally, and supported by Lerner’s reflections relies on holding space for the conversations, thoughts, feelings and understanding to emerge, allowing relationship to supercede all else, knowing that loving a child “beyond words” is possible.

Sally goes on to describe her relationship with her two younger children, August and Iyla, to whom her wife, McKenzie, gave birth. In Sally’s words,

What I regret about the experience with August [her second daughter] is not having the courage to trust in myself and what I knew to be right. A mother knows and loves all her children uniquely…but it’s also primarily different just because I’m her mother but did not carry or give birth to her. I learned a lesson that bond doesn’t come from blood. And I was able to trust my mothering skills from day one with Iyla [her third daughter].

The birth of Iyla (Appendix A, Figure 2) represented the courage to be the mother she knew that she was and is, opening space for intuition to once again emerge.

Sally further describes courage within the realm of intuition as she relayed a story reflecting parenting as a same sex couple. Sally explains,

I always wait for the question – what does your husband do? And then I wait for the subtle shift in physical space as I tell them I am married to a woman. I always make an extra effort to be that extra attentive, ‘good’ parent so they have nothing to comment on.

The discomfort experienced by others reflects aspects of society that are difficult to understand. I was reminded of, and wrote in my journal, the words of Urie Bronfrenbrenner (1979) who adamantly states that “every child needs at least one adult who is irrationally crazy about him or her” and reflected that “Abby, August and Iyla have that ten-fold” but “we, as
parents also need the community to come along side”. Sally further explained that actually intuition somehow plays a role in my actions – I intuitively know that I need to act a certain way in order for the outside world to be kind to my kids because of our relationship and how I think that they are going to be treated because of that and I guess that requires courage.

Likewise, Nick, father to two-year old Amelia, wrote that he “intuitively knows that the love he has for his daughter is so deep that nothing will get in the way”. When asked to explain a little more about what he meant by this statement, Nick replied,

as a Dad parenting on my own the courage to dig deep every day and be the parent I know Amelia needs is always present, as I am for Amelia. I think that is when I parent intuitively, when I have the courage to just be.

Nick also wrote of courage in the context of parenting as a male on his own in a “society that still struggles with the idea that guys can’t do a good job”.

Figure 3 (Appendix A), “Christmas Pigtails”, was uploaded by Nick to illustrating a “very proud parenting moment”. Some suggest that photographs may be considered to be “metaphors for human experience, not simply representations of reality” (Kantrowitz-Gordon & Vandermause, 2015, p. 2) prompting memories, comments and discussions about internal narratives. I asked Nick what he sees in this picture. His response was simple, yet powerful, “that Amelia is happy and that we are together – and her pigtails are straight!”. As I reflected on the sentiments shared by Nick, I thought of the work of Dr. Kyle Pruett. Dr. Pruett has contributed significantly to prevalent literature on the importance of men in the lives of children. As Nick indicated, society can at times be uninformed regarding the caregiving abilities of men, particularly their ability to access their intuitive knowledge base. I asked Nick if making sure
Amelia’s pigtails were straight was an extension of the notion that fathers struggle with those aspects of caregiving. He smiled saying, “maybe, but I worked hard to get them straight. I might have been worried I would be judged on some level – it was important to me as her dad”.

Pruett (2009) postulates that men are capable of parenting very effectively. In Dr. Pruett’s words “children come into the world not only with needs for a parent: they also have motherneeds and fatherneeds” (p. 23). Furthermore, men who parent children in respectful, caring, nurturing ways show positive outcomes for both the children and fathers (Pruett, 2009). Studies suggest that children who feel closeness to their fathers are two times more likely to go to college or find stable employment, are 75% less likely to create a baby in their teens, are 80% less likely to spend time in jail, and half as likely to experience depression (Fatherhood Institute, 2010). I shared this information with Nick. His response was a smile that seemed to start from his heart, as he gently kissed Amelia on the top of her head. These thoughts resonated with Paul as well as he “pushes against the stereotypical father, courageously doing things different than other men in his life”.

Courage and vulnerability as integral components to the making of the quilt of intuition was evident throughout the shared experiences of the parents. Stories of facing and overcoming adversity, going against perceived societal norms, and understanding the complexities of love revealed a depth of courage to be vulnerable and accept intuition as knowledge. Solid and strong in colour, yet always reflective of a deep understanding of their child(ren), courage revealed itself as integral to understanding and making sense of intuition.

4.4 “Daddy, You Can Go Now”: Connection and Presence

Sifting through the fabrics, the concept of connection emerged. The subtle, yet at times lively colours of connection created a wondrous opportunity for intuition to emerge. To be
connected on an intuitive level requires understanding “when to watch, when to let go” (Leah) and “loving your child for the unique individual that they are” (Sally). Author and researcher, Brene Brown (2012), suggests “connection is why we’re here: it is what gives purpose and meaning to our lives” (p. 59).

To this point, Jesmond’s dad Paul describes a beautiful story of connection situated firmly in knowing his daughter intuitively. Paul wrote:

Jesmond was invited to play with other children whom she knew but had not seen in awhile. One of the children approached Jesmond and said hello, as did the person in charge of looking after the kids while the parents were attending a meeting. Her hesitation was evident. Jesmond tightly hung on to my hand, at one point clung to my side and stood very close to me, reluctant to join the other children. I tried to reassure her but she was still hesitant. I quietly spoke with the person who was in charge, not about anything in particular. I felt Jesmond’s grip on my hand lesson as she slowly moved away from me, turning to say with utmost confidence and maturity, ‘Daddy, you can go now’.

As Paul and I talked about this story, I asked how he knew not to force Jesmond to join the other children. He hesitated, then replied, “I guess intuitively it just felt like the right and safe thing to do for Jesmond”. Proponents of attachment theory suggest that in order for children to engage in an unfamiliar activity, a certain level of comfort and security must be felt from the person to whom the child is in a secure attachment relationship with. When Paul’s story is reflected on through the lens of attachment theory, Jesmond required the comfort and knowledge that the connection she had with her dad was present in order for her to join the other kids or, for her, an uncertain situation. Neufeld and Maté (2005) use the phrase ‘passing the attachment baton’ to describe the process of giving the message to your child that a new situation is okay
through preservation of the connection to you by drawing attention to what stays the same. In essence, Paul provided Jesmond with the attachment baton in a subtle and kind way.

When I shared my observations of this story, Paul met my gaze with a look of pride and presence. We talked about how he is deeply committed to his family, working hard to be a patient father. As I thought about our exchange, I drew an unending spiral of circles in my journal underlined with the words, “our conversation just kept evolving into a deeper exchange reflecting the unending journey of parenting”.

Figure 4 (Appendix A) is a picture of Jesmond and her dad, Paul. Paul included this picture because for him, “this picture represents their connection not only physically but emotionally”. He is a fierce protector of “who Jesmond is and what the world has to offer her”. He is “proud of the spirit of his daughter as he navigates the role of fatherhood”. Figure 5 is a perfect example of Jesmond’s spirit. According to Paul, “her creativity is endless, and more is always better”.

Paul spoke about working hard at “being present, connected and responding intuitively” to his daughter. I asked what it felt like to be “talking like this and hearing these observations?” and Paul replied with a smile, “it is so validating for me as a parent, especially as a dad”. I later wrote an entry in my journal capturing my thoughts: “the work of Pruett on fathering is so fundamental to the wellbeing of children – all parents, moms and dads, should feel validated – why can’t we look for the strengths in everyday interactions???”.

In like manner, Leah shared the experience of connection and understanding when a relationship can withstand letting go. The image, Figure 6 (Appendix A), created by Leah’s daughter Erica, is titled “Let Her Draw, Let Her Lead”. Leah captures the experience as, …the quintessential way of being and relating, specifically with our daughter who faces
the reality of having Cancer everyday. This was a drawing left for us while her dad and I were out for supper after a particularly difficult realization for me.

The difficult realization as storied by Leah reveals the intense sense of connection that occurs between a child and parent and the overarching need to provide protection within this connection. In Leah’s words,

My daughter lost her arm and almost her life to Cancer when she was ten years old. In ten days she will have completed grade seven, her first full year of school since grade four. Two weeks ago she attended a camp for students who would like to try out for the “Let’s Lead” program, a special program for interested grade 8 students. 65 students out of 100 applicants were invited to attend the camp and 28 would be selected to attend this program for grade eight. She was chosen. Her dad and I had many reservations; there would be a lot of expectations of her. The program promotes independence and had a lot of physical activities like camping and biking, which are very challenging for her. We don’t talk much about her Cancer. She disassociates when we broach the subject. I have worries, many of them but when she told me what her response was to the question the leaders asked each student, something inside me said everything is going to be ok. LET HER LEAD.

The questions was:

“What is the reason you feel you would be good a good fit in the Let’s Lead program?”

Her response:

“I have had to face many challenges in my life. A lot of people think that I can’t do things and I want to show them that I can.”

**Intuition** is telling me to have the courage to let my daughter lead.
Upon reading this excerpt from Leah, I wrote in my journal, “the reality of comprehending a child’s diagnosis of cancer would be unbearable”. Leah and I spoke not about, but around her daughter’s diagnosis. I was curious as to why she choose this particular story to share. Leah spoke so eloquently about “knowing she needs to balance being connected, to both her daughters, yet separate and how painful that is for her as a mom sometimes”. As tears welled up in both our eyes, we reflected on Leah’s words “about the power of connection when you are not there, how the good parts stay with you based on the connections you make when you are together. And how you have to believe in your gut that this will sustain both of you”.

In a similar way, the feeling of connection in the context of understanding a child emerged for McKenzie as she shared her experience of parenting a child who, for three years, was the single focus of her biological mom, Sally. McKenzie and Sally met when Abby was three. Shortly after meeting they “became a couple and I [McKenzie] cautiously and respectfully entered the sacred circle of Abby and Sally” (Mckenzie). McKenzie describes Abby as “a great kid with a kind heart and I love her to death. I couldn’t imagine a life without her. When she goes to her dads on Saturdays, the house has such a different feel”.

My initial conversation with McKenzie was a mirror of her description of her daughter Abby. She quietly listened to my description of the research project while nursing her youngest daughter. Following our meeting, I wrote in my journal “McKenzie had such a quiet, peaceful presence about her, she is so calm, confident and pragmatic in her love and caring for her partner and her children”. This observation was enhanced in McKenzie’s initial paragraph of her journal, “so I’m not a great writer and this pen sucks. But I totally see the benefits in this and I’m excited to take the time to reflect on those that I love”. It is through the desire to care and the need to care that connections occur. Thus, connections flourish in environments that exude caring and
acceptance.

McKenzie, in her love for her partner and her partner’s child allowed space for connection. Her ability to “know Abby” intuitively emerged as they settled into the comfort of each other. McKenzie describes intuitively understanding Abby through the following story about creating a bedtime routine for Abby that celebrated her unique way of being.

Abby’s brain does not turn off. It goes and goes and goes. It’s always thinking, worrying, pondering and talking. When she is sitting quietly I know that she is super busy. During the day you wouldn’t notice it unless you watched but come nightfall and the house quiets, her brain does not. She needs to work her brain out before bed, and use her favourite skill – art. Otherwise it is headed for a night of her calling out till midnight about a bad thought or a noise or something else. But if her brain can be calmed she doesn’t call out.

Woven throughout this story is a sense of deep caring and concern McKenzie feels for Abby as well as beautiful description of attunement between parent and child. MacNamara (n.d.) so eloquently suggests “the act of being present and knowing your child provides them with an invitation to exist in another’s presence, to be seen and loved for who one is, and to feel a sense of belonging, loyalty, and similarity to those they are connected to”. The result is the creation of a safe, secure environment for relationships to flourish in a naturally harmonious way (Neufeld & Maté, 2005). A child is reassured whom to trust. In essence, the relationship is right. Developmentally, the need to be known to another person does not diminish. The relationship becomes enhanced, ebbing and flowing to meet the needs of both parent and child.

Further to this, Kayla expressed amazement watching her son, Everett, grow.

Not only am I witnessing my little boy getting bigger every day (outgrowing his clothes...
as evidence), I am hearing it from my toddler himself. This makes me feel excited yet scared at the same time. It makes me think, is this how fast life is supposed to go? As much as I would like to know what the future holds for him, he is the one to create his future. As he would say to me "I drive mommy - I do it myself". He is the conductor of his path, journey, and I will help him along the way if (or when) he falls.

Connection as described by the parents was an extension of who they were in the context of their attachment relationship with their children. As a piece of fabric, the presence is felt, nurtured and sometimes just there. MacNamara (n.d.) maintains the critical piece that often gets missed in understanding attachment is that “its role is to render a child dependent on those around them. This means children are dependent on someone for their care taking and well-being – an incredibly vulnerable and overwhelming position to be in for both child and parent”. The shared experiences of Sally, Paul, Kayla, Nick, Leah and McKenzie identified the fabric of connection to be integral to intuitive knowledge as a deep underpinning of knowing just how much is enough, and listening when they say “I do it my own self”, because intuitively they know that connection will never go away if the relationship is right.

4.5 Home/nature: ‘A Place to Be’

*Our residence is where we live, but our home is how we live.* (Ginsburg, 1998 in Mallett, 2004)

The fourth piece of cloth revealed was home and a connection to nature, providing the place and space for intuition to flourish and for participants to rejuvenate. This piece of fabric represented a collage of vibrant, muted, bold and subtle colours. Mallett (2004) suggests, home is place but it is also a space inhabited by family, people, things and belongings – a familiar, if not comfortable space where particular activities and relationships are lived. A repository for memories of the lived spaces. It locates lived time and space, particularly
intimate familial time and space (p. 72).

Each of the parents I spoke with reflected, in some way, on the importance of home as more than a physical structure. Home for five of the participants was chosen as their meeting place. Upon first meeting, there was a level of comfort that immediately emerged between the parents and myself. I was grateful and honoured to be invited into people’s homes. Greenspan and Wieder (1984) speak of the honour of being invited into a person’s home within the context of building relationships and one not to be taken for granted. I personally felt a sense of connection and ease as our conversations evolved. Frequently, I was introduced to other aspects of the participants’ lives such as a brother, pets, specific decorating or renovating projects. I reflected on these shared moments as an extension of the relationship created in a relatively short time and as a reflection of the intimacy of the nature of our conversation. From a human ecology perspective, I viewed this level of sharing as part of the ecological structure that is in place to provide a sense of security, similar to the enveloping of a quilt. Greenspan and Wieder (1984) suggest an invitation to a person’s personal space should be honoured and revered for the gift that it represents. Greenspan and Wieder (1984) further articulate that the ability to connect with people follows certain levels – introduction to a person’s space being the highest, allowing for deep conversations and connection.

The conversations that I had with the participants during the initial meeting, and subsequent meetings, began with ease, lasting at times up to two hours. Woven throughout the conversations were insights into all aspects of the participant’s life ranging from renovation plans, art projects, and general life discussions. The depth of our conversations provided the foundation for the collection of rich and diverse data. I frequently reflected in my journal that I felt that the process and experience of connecting with the participants mirrored the premise of
the research project which was to “understand parents’ experiences and perceptions of intuition as a source of knowledge within their relationships with their children?”. In this sense, the ability to collect rich, meaningful data was enhanced.

With this in mind, I reflected on my conversation with Leah. Leah and I met while drinking coffee on her front veranda. As we discussed the research project the birds were chirping, the air smelled fresh and clean, and beautiful flowers were blooming in a nearby container. At the close of our conversation, Leah invited me to tour her garden, describing the stories of connection and love that went into the design, construction and plant selection. Thus, I was pleasantly surprised when Leah uploaded this picture from her back deck, titled “A Place to Call Home” (Figure 7).

Understanding the restorative qualities of home as described by Leah are echoed in the words of Gurney (2000) who describes home as “an emotional warehouse wherein grief, anger, love, regret and guilt are experienced as powerfully real and, at the same time, deposited, stored and sorted to create a powerful domestic geography, which, in turn sustains a complex and dynamic symbolism and meaning to rooms and spaces” (p. 34). Thus, home is more than a physical space but a space of connection. Viewing home in this context, particularly in relation to intuitive thought, emerged not just for Leah. Home became the “landing spot” (Sally), a “place to just be” (Paul) and “an opportunity to connect with myself, amongst the sometimes chaotic happy mess” (Kayla).

A connection to nature represented a similar sentiment for some of the participants, suggesting nature provided opportunity for connection and rejuvenation. Leah writes,

It is pouring rain!

I hurriedly get a sweater on and move out to the veranda with a cup of tea. I know
without a doubt that I do my best work in taking care of me, a mom when I can take advantage of the peaceful outdoors even on a rainy evening. I think my intuition plays a huge role in showing me the way to best take care of myself as a "mom" this way.

Kaplan (1995) and others (Berman, et al., 2012; Howell, Dopko, Passmore, & Buro, 2010) posit nature works on human wellbeing primarily through its restorative qualities. Restorative environments provide necessary refuge from the need for focused attention because nature experiences do not require direct psychological attention. For an environment to be restorative it must include limited effort, a temporary escape from usual settings, personal satisfaction and a sense of being part of something larger that yourself (Kaplan, 1995).

Additional thoughts include those of Segal (1997) who believes “natural settings enhance our self-awareness by acting as a mirror whereby the events of the natural world allow us an opportunity to reflect on our thoughts and feelings” (p.33). In sharing the perspective of Kaplan and Segal with Leah, a beautiful smile emerged on her face. She later sent me this note as a reflection of our conversation. She delightfully exclaimed that the “calm of nature draws me to my true self. And it is within that true self and sense of calm that intuitive thought emerges”.

Similarly, Sally and Mckenzie spoke about intuitively knowing the sense of comfort that a connection to nature brings not only to their children but also to themselves as partners, parents and individuals. Nick spoke about “Ameilia’s love of playing outside, being free to roam”. Paul reflected on the time spent with Jesmond “just being in nature and exploring, giving him the opportunity to see a little girl so connected to nature”. Greenleaf (2014) suggests, “we seem to be biologically programmed to seek kinship and connection with nature” (p. 166). From an ecologically perspective, home and nature as described by the parents represent a sphere of support. The connections made to home and nature allow “space for exploration and an
opportunity be who we are at the core of our essence – intuitively knowing that this is the right way to be with our children” (Leah). This is further supported by the thoughts of Clayton (2003) who describes people’s experiences with nature as integral to one’s sense of self.

The collage of colours that represented the fabric called home/nature cleverly brought the whole of the quilt together, gently highlighting the significance of each of the other fabrics – trust, connection, courage and relationship. Fabric of this design gives the quilt a subtle texture, although not otherwise decorative, serving a very important purpose - to keep the quilt layers together, keeping the individuals centered and always reflective.

4.7 Bound by Honour

"The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honours the servant and has forgotten the gift" Albert Einstein

Honour, although similar to trust and courage, represents the fifth and final piece of fabric. The fabric of honour is solid and grounding, neutral in design and colour yet fluid and soft in texture. This piece of fabric appeared as fundamental to identifying the experiences and perceptions of intuition as a source of knowledge within the parents’ relationship with their children, thus completing the quilt of intuition. The finishing step when making a quilt is often the addition of a border, providing a sense of containment or structure to the stitched together pieces of fabric. Warren and Cheney (1996) in Stephens (2013) suggest, “the borders of a quilt provide spatiotemporal dimensions in one’s pattern and design and this can be likened to the boundary conditions that creates borders around knowledge that is to be contained (p. 32). As I reflected on the many pieces of fabric shared with me– trust, courage, connection/presence, home/nature – held tightly together by the threads of relationship, honour encapsulated the experiences of intuition as knowledge. Honour in the context of love is so eloquently described
by Brown (2010) as cultivating “love when we allow our most vulnerable and powerful selves to be deeply seen and known. …we honour the spiritual connection that grows from that offering with trust, respect, kindness and affection.” (p. 33).

As a mother of two daughters, Leah expressed her need to be “mindful of when to honour who her daughters are together as sisters”. In Leah’s words,

Here is a picture (Figure 4.8) of my girls getting ready for school. My oldest rarely ever spends this kind of quality time with her sister and her sister is always desperate for it. I wanted nothing more than to go climb in and be a part of this morning moment but stopped myself because something was telling me that I needed not to interfere and that they needed to be together.

Honouring the individuality of a child was the lens through which Sally introduced her middle child, August. The collected images of August depicted in Figure 10 are titled “August, Full of Life and Love”. Sally provided the following words reflecting on the presence of intuition within her relationship with August.

August-Claire!! A name which rings out of my mouth often. She is my sweet, sensitive plow-wind. A force of nature. August is a deep inward processor. With Gissy I have to rely on my intuition heavily as she isn’t likely to tell me what she’s feeling or what her needs are. I have to trust my own instincts when it comes to her because it’s all we’ve got.

Similarly, I was captivated with how intensely Nick intuitively knows his daughter, Amelia, honouring her natural way of being in the world and relating to the world. In Nick’s words,

Amelia needs boundaries set for her. Sometimes she is slow to warm up. She is cautious
and she really likes her own people – the people she knows she can count on. I know that about her and I need to make that happen for her.

The intuitive knowledge to honour children is further illustrated by the words of Leah as she explains a situation whereby her daughter is feeling some discomfort and uncertainty. As suggested by Leah, it is her intuition that “tells me [her] that I need to question further”. The story unfolds as such.

In the privacy of her room and when it's just her and me she confesses that she had been a little uncertain at the beginning of the week. Apparently everyone has been talking in her current class about how much fun and memories they will have next year in their grade 8 year. No one likes to miss out, but I can tell you no one more than the critically ill child who has had to spend a long time being hospitalized.

Following this, one pre-teen thing after another came out, each accompanied with tears. The final issue was that, she has no clothes that she thinks look good and that she feels she looks "unbalanced." I asked if she felt one shoulder was higher than the other and she simply said "no mom, I have one side with an arm and one side without." ...more tears. After she calmed down somewhat she asked me if we could do some shopping.

Normally all outside sources would have told me not to follow through with this and that it was not helping her by indulging her. But something inside me, some inner knowing, intuition told me it would be ok. We had a great night together, laughed and had fun. A new top and some new shoes and in her heart she now looks and feels “Balanced”

As Paul and I discussed the concept of individuality, Paul reflected on coming to an understanding of his role and purpose as a parent and the importance of acknowledging his own upbringing and how that experience melds with that of his partners.
Returning to parenting style, I think my intuition plays a large role in how I parent differently than my partner. I think any young parents struggle with parenting and navigating different perceptions of how this should play out. My partner and I both have wonderful, active, loving parents and were raised in stable, supportive environments. I feel like intuition is different than, but related to things like comfort and emotion, as intuition is often the doorway to these things (Paul).

Paul further described intuition in the context of play, referencing the photograph titled “The Sweetest Look” (Figure 12) and honouring the importance of play as such.

I think that intuition is a part of the process of relating to the imagination of my daughter. It requires me to put myself in her situation and try to feel what she might be feeling. This is how I try to co-construct our imaginative play together. I think about the things that she might find interesting or exhilarating and bring them into our imaginary world. Through this we are able to create vast imaginary scenarios with heroes and monsters and everything in between. This is a dynamic process, and here intuition is important again. The world will change rapidly and I have to know my daughter’s mind intuitively to make sure I am not spoiling the world she is creating as we play (Paul).

Kayla describes honouring her son as “the little man that he is and the sensitive beautiful soul that is emerging, celebrating his generous spirit”. MacKenzie and Sally both reflected on intuitively understanding what their daughters need in terms of schedules, the freedom to express themselves, play and be who they need to be – all within the sphere of honouring them as individuals.

The fabric of honour also emerged through the shared wisdom of Kayla who so nicely stated, “connections are more than words”. The words of Paul, “who you are is as important as
what you are”, reflected the peaceful presence and demeanour of all the participants. Brown (2012) so eloquently suggests that “what we know matters, but who we are matters more. Being rather than knowing requires showing up and letting ourselves be seen” (p 16).

Reflecting on the words, pictures and observations shared by the parents I was reminded of the work of Raffi, as shared by Leah as a “reminder of how to be”. Singer, songwriter and children’s advocate, Raffi (2006), developed a holistic philosophy and vision addressing the universal needs of children called Child Honouring. One of the nine principles of Child Honouring speaks of respectful love. Respectful love is

love that accepts us as we are and helps us to be our very best. We all want to be heard, to be respected and loved for who we are. It’s love that just feels right. Respectful love fosters self-worth—it’s the prime nutrient in human development. Children need this not only from parents and caregivers, but also from the whole community (Raffi, 2006, p. xxii).

The final piece of cloth provided the border for the quilt of intuition. Honour resonated with stories of respect, reciprocity, genuine caring, attunement and concern as fundamental to understanding and honouring stories of intuition as knowledge. In essence, respectful love.

4.8 The Quilt as a Whole: ‘The quilters and The Co-quilter’

Sleep my child and peace…peace…covered in love and keep…keep…

A quilt makes us feel safe and warm. The rows of stitching showing the passing of time, a meditative rhythm – like quieting and rocking a child. It takes time and patience. I wanted the quilt and the rocking to be one. The sentiment reveals this rhythm also – lullabies don’t have to make literal sense…but the cadence of the words is lyrical and soothing. The warmth and coziness of a sleeping child – the tender connection – these
quiet memories exist in anyone who has ever rocked a child in their arms (Lordi, 2017).

As I reflect on the making of this quilt of intuition, I was taken to a nostalgic place where the warmth and comfort of being wrapped in a quilt felt safe and secure, often curled up beside my mom in the car driving home late at night from my Uncle and Grandparent’s place after Sunday dinner. The feeling of safety, warmth and love had no words. Artist Susan Lordi (n.d) writes so movingly about this feeling of safety and warmth describing it as the rhythm and pattern of sameness – something to trust. As my experience is unique to me, the parents’ stories of intuition reflected feelings of safety, warmth and love in ways unique to them and their children. Through the beautiful fabrics of trust, courage and connection, I came to understand these concepts as congruent with the theoretical framework of relational theory. As Miller (2015) suggests, “there is powerful force behind the movement toward connection, a yearning for connection, a desire to contribute to others, to serve something larger than ““the self”” (p. 45). Relational theory provided opportunity to view the participants as individuals in the context of their environments, yet also attending to the processes through which individuals internalize experiences of self, other, and environment.

All the parents – Leah, Kayla, Paul, Sally, McKenzie, Nick – silently demonstrated connection through actions, words and demeanor with themselves, their children, and in some ways, each other. Through a genuine sense of curiosity and a deep desire to know their children, each parent took the time to stop, reflect, and share his or her experiences of intuition. The something larger was their relationship and the societal impact of that relationship – understanding how I intuitively know my child is bigger than our relationship, it is about going forward (Leah).

Vaughn (1979) postulates “intuition as a source of knowledge can present itself at four
levels of awareness: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual” (p. 10). The experiences shared by the parents revealed that the process of uncovering intuition is often realized through action, language and a physical response. Leah identified that often “tears will come, there is a softening in my physical demeanor when I know that I have connected with my child”. Neufeld and Maté (2005) refer to this as a softening of the heart, or attunement, situated firmly in the security of the attachment relationship. Others such as Teti & Gelfand (1991) describe an exchange of external validation to an internal response as contributing to the enhancement of parental self-efficacy.

As an outsider to the experiences shared by the parents, I witnessed what seemed to be an increase in parental confidence with subsequent submissions. When discussing a picture or scenario, parents would frequently make a comment reflecting how they trusted their intuition but were not afraid to solicit advice when required. As the conversations evolved, I reflected in my journal, “there seems to be a take charge way of being, a sense of being comfortable with following through with decisions based in intuition, even when others give their opinion – how refreshing!”. The reflections of Henney (2016) considers this an aspect of parenting confidently, whereby parents are able to “receive advice in such a way as to retain those items which will benefit the child or the parenting endeavour and are not worrisome about discarding advice that is not useful” (p. 2). I thought of my own experience as a parent and the times I have been able to ‘discard advice that was not useful’ and the confidence I was awarded feeling I really knew my children best.

This reflection reminded me of the position I held as the researcher, one of being both an insider and outsider to the participants’ stories. My role was multidisciplinary - researcher, social worker and parent. I thought of the ways that my personal and professional roles added to the research, and how much I learned personally and professionally through the research. Fay (1996)
notes, “there is no self-understanding without other understanding” (p. 241). I came to see my position as occupying the space between insider and outsider. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) speak of the intimacy of qualitative research and suggest as researchers’ we are “firmly in all aspects of the research process and essential to it” (p. 61). The thoughts of Dwyer and Buckle provided a framework for me to understand and make sense of my roles proposing that the stories of participants are immediate and real to us; individual voices are not lost in a pool of numbers. We carry these individuals with us as we work with the transcripts. The words, representing experiences, are clear and lasting. We cannot retreat to a distant “researcher” role. Just as our personhood affects the analysis, so, too, the analysis affects our personhood. Within this circle of impact is the space between (p. 61).

Accordingly, as the fabric of the quilt was intricately sewn together, the opportunity existed to listen carefully to the stories and experiences of others; in addition I learned to question/validate my own knowledge as a professional and parent. Suggested by Dewey, experience is an interaction between objective or external conditions and internal conditions. Dewey (1938) posited, “…any normal experience is an interplay of these two sets of conditions. Taken together, or in their interaction, they form what we call a situation” (p. 42). Dewey’s (1938) understanding of interaction is signified in the idea that “all human experience is ultimately social, that it involves contact and communication” (p. 38). I came to understand the importance of entering into the parents’ “lives in the midst of living their stories, knowing that their lives did not begin the day I arrived nor did they end as I left. Lives continue” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp. 63-64).

Thinking of Bronfrenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, I realized that the use of personal experience as a method highlighted the meaning of connection within each sphere.
Although not explicitly stated, the stories reflected interaction as part of a supportive family environment, within a larger system that works together, connected to a larger system of people and places. As articulated by Linde (1993), life or personal experience stories express a sense of “who we are, of identity in the making, the where we have ‘come from’ to the where we have ‘got to’. … stories are revisable and tell a great deal of our connections or group-self, to those sustaining others and networks upon who we depend” (p. 3). The participants’ stories reflected a sense of togetherness – with their children, themselves, a partner, family, home and nature. It was through the connection that intuitive knowledge was able to emerge.

I also reflected on the interactive nature consistent with narrative as a methodology. The shared conversations helped both myself as the researcher and the participants “make meaning for ourselves, learn about the world and who we might be in it” (Paul). This was evident throughout my journal entries and the conversations with parents. When speaking with many of the participants, I often would comment on a certain look or tone of voice that revealed itself when they spoke of their child or described a moment of connection. The observations were frequently met with an element of surprise by the parent, “I didn’t know I was looking like that” (Sally) or as with Paul, a broader smile, and a questioning “yeah?” When asked how it felt to hear some of my interpretations of their shared stories the response was consistently a smile and a softening of the eyes. It was during these moments that I felt tremendous honour and gratitude to be part of this experience. It was also during these times that I would reflect on my own experiences as a parent, “understanding and appreciating in those moments the commonalities of being a parent regardless of who you are”.

Part of this reflexive process involved reviewing a diagram I had created with key concepts, words and images – essentially planning the pattern that would become the quilt of
intuition. It was clear to me that intuition was present for each of the parents. However, I had a 'gut' feeling that there was something else going on. I reread the written entries and my journal entries. I looked at the photos shared by the parents. I then stopped for a moment and let the logical, data driven part of my mind slow down. It was then that I began to understand my gut feeling. I decided to ask the parents pointedly, what was this experience like for you?

Creswell (2013) refers to epiphanies or turning points within a story. This question prompted an epiphany for the parents and myself. Unanimously, the response was, in various versions, “the opportunity to be heard” – a simple yet powerful statement to a simple yet powerful question. Underlying the richness of the data collected was an element of validation, which was evident in the looks, smiles, nods of the head, softening of the eyes as we talked about their experiences as a parent. The conversations were in their purest form – not about accomplishments, successes or advanced child development. The stories were about who their children were to them, as individuals. Through allowing space to be present for the telling of the story, the tapestry of the story unfolded, enveloping each of us in the warm and comforting quilt of intuition. The story emerged when all the pieces - trust, courage, connection, home/nature, and honour - were brought together through the interconnectedness of relationship between parents and children. The words of Patrice Karst (2000), author of the children’s book, The Invisible String, provides the perfect summation.

People who love each other are always connected by a very special string, made of love.

Even though you can’t see it with your eyes, you can feel it deep in your heart, and know that you are always connected to the ones you love.

4.9 Summary

The making of a quilt requires time and patience. A sense of unity is experienced as the
pieces of fabric are gathered, coming from many places with many stories, and sewn together piece by piece. The many hands that bring a quilt to life unify the sense of connection, community, shared memories and stories. This chapter began by introducing the parents who thoughtfully shared their experiences and perceptions of intuition as knowledge with their child(ren). The telling of the stories revealed several themes or pieces of fabric. The fabrics emerged as trust, connection, courage, home/nature and honour, held together by relationship. Once the quilt of intuition was pieced together, the opportunity presented itself to stand back and view the quilt and make observations. The final portion of this chapter examined those observations. Fittingly, as described by Richardson (2016), viewing a quilt as a whole creates images “of being seen and being connected, and those images are full of vibrancy, and most importantly, hope” (p. 60). The following chapter will continue this conversation by discussing how the themes that emerged add to the existing base of literature, how this study adds to the knowledge base of working alongside parents and provides suggestions for future areas of research.
CHAPTER 5: THE CONVERSATION

In this chapter, I begin by providing a brief synthesis of the goals and findings of the study, revisiting some of the themes that emerged in the literature review and how those themes echoed the stories of the participants. I will also suggest what new insights this research has to offer into understanding the experiences of parents recognizing intuition as a source of knowledge within their relationship with their child(ren). The key contributions of this study will be explored, including how the study findings are supported by and add to the current literature on the subject of intuition and, more specifically, parenting and intuitive knowledge. Lastly, a discussion on the implications for practice in the field of social work, as well as consideration of possible policy implications and future suggestions for research, is followed by a final summary.

In this study, I have looked to address a specific research question: “What are parents’ experiences and perceptions of intuition as a source of knowledge within their relationship with their children?” To achieve this, I engaged with the stories of six parents with children of varying ages who participated in this research study. Analysis of data suggests confirmation of themes that emerged from the literature review. First, the opportunity to explore an internal feeling of knowing as supported by research related to intuition within diverse disciplines such as business (Akinci & Sadler-Smith, 2012; Johnson & Daumer, 1993; Kharti & Ng, 2000; Shirley & Langan-Fox, 1996; Sinclair & Ashkansay, 2005; Williams, 2012), education (Brown, 2013; Koksvik, 2013), medicine (Green, 2012; Middleton-Green, 2015; Woolley & Kostopoulou, 2013) and nursing (Green, 2012; Hassani, Abdi, Jalali & Salari, 2016; Middleton-Green, 2015; Rew, 2000) and counselling (Bove & Rizzi, 2009; Chudnoff, 2013; Dodge Rea, 2001; Jeffery, 2012; Jeffery & Stone, 2011; Tantia, 2014) was identified through the participant stories of intuition. The responses congruent with the literature suggest intuition is a useful mental process
and plays a vital role in decision-making. The responses further reflect the notion that intuition is immediate and quick and assists in navigating the space between logical rational thought and a unique way of knowing. The words of Jonas Salk (1991), as shared by Leah, Paul and Kayla summarized the parent’s experience of accessing intuition as knowledge in a balanced way. Paul specifically referenced Salk’s words when he reflected on the “importance of taking into consideration all forms of knowledge”. Salk’s words are as follows:

"Reason alone will not serve. Intuition alone can be improved by reason, but reason alone without intuition can easily lead the wrong way. They both are necessary. The way I like to put it is that I might have an intuition about something, I send it over to the reason department. Then after I've checked it out in the reason department, I send it back to the intuition department to make sure that it's still all right. For myself, that's how my mind works, and that's how I work. That's why I think that there is both an art and a science to what we do. The art of science is as important as so-called technical science. You need both. It's this combination that must be recognized and acknowledged and valued (pp. 7-8).

Secondly, as suggested by Neufeld & Maté (2005) and Papousek (2011), the provision of space and time to reflect, allows for what nature intended, paving the way for a precious resource imbedded in the parent-child system – the ability to intuitively know. The participants’ stories emerged as a reflection of knowing their children and the capacity to see their children as who they are as unique individuals. In addition, the participants were able to see themselves for who they are as individuals and parents in right relationships with their child(ren). The request to be present to intuition was never met with disbelief or negativity by the participants, but it was welcomed as an extension of their integral role as a parent."
Further to the literature regarding attunement, which is positioned as an extension of the attachment relationship, the parents’ stories reflected a greater sense of knowing and overall level of confidence, or self-efficacy, as parents (Erskine, 1998; Neufeld & Maté, 2005). McKenzie frequently commented how positive the experience of reflecting on her intuition as a parent was for her and her relationship with her girls and how this opportunity has increased her confidence as a parent. Henney (2016) discusses parental self-efficacy emerging from a parent’s ability to balance intuitive knowledge with outside or external knowledge. It is the opinion of this researcher, that through giving space and voice to the presence of intuitive knowledge, the balancing of knowledge was achieved. Lieberman, a social psychologist employing a social cognitive neuroscience approach (2000) states, “intuition is a phenomenological and behavioral correlate of knowledge obtained through implicit learning” (p.110). As the themes of relationship, trust, courage, connection, home/nature and honour emerged through the stories shared, the recognition of intuitive knowledge in collaboration with rationality was apparent. The story of Leah, mom to Erica who is living with cancer, shared the wisdom of balancing her intuitive knowledge of connecting and courageously knowing when to trust her intuition with the rational, medical reality of supporting her daughter. Leah expressed with confidence, “my intuition allows me to possibly see what is going to happen in the future with my daughter, see the missing pieces of information that will make life better for her emotionally, not just physically”.

What is new and revealed by engaging with the participants in this manner is the opportunity to experience the participants’ relationship with their child(ren) through their eyes. The parents in this study were given the opportunity to be the authors of their own stories rather than objects of research, providing context to understanding intuition as a source of knowledge.
within the parent-child relationship. Despite the diversity of backgrounds and stage in parenting of the participants, the ability to intuitively know their child was present, once space for conversations of this nature was provided. Perhaps, in some way, this research study gave voice to something that was present at the center of the parent’s relationships with their child(ren) all along – attunement, connection and a desire to share.

5.1 Key Research Contributions

The parents participating in this study were prepared for and willing to engage in this research study by the mere fact that they volunteered to participate. Each of the participants expressed enjoyment in reflecting on their experience of intuition with their children, concentrating on ‘what is working well’ (Leah) within this relationship. This implies the importance of engaging with parents from a strength-based approach as opposed to a deficit-based approach, which potentially communicates that there is failure or helplessness. Stories such as those articulated by Sally who chose, based on her intuition not her upbringing, to respond to her daughters in ways that she knew to be the best for them and understanding intuitively what her first born daughter needed, despite feeling the world was stacked against them. Others, like Nick and Paul, challenged the notion that intuition is gender specific. Both fathers firmly planted themselves in the lives of their children, relying on a combination of intuition, logic and love to navigate their relationships with their daughters, lending support to the research of the importance of healthy, connected men in the lives of children.

Likewise, the findings from this study created opportunity for reflexivity within the parent and child relationship. The process of sharing experiences and perceptions of intuition as a source of knowledge within their relationships with their children required parents to notice, pay attention to and gain insight from their interactions with their children. The literature
reviewed (Lollis, 2003; Neufeld & Maté, 2005; Williams & Wahler, 2010) indicates parents who engage in a non-judgemental appraisal of interactions and ways of relating with their children leads to an emphasize on the importance of the relationship, whereby the parent and child want to be “willing participants in the interaction lessoning the amount of energy used and the build up of any resistance” (Singh, N, et al., 2010, p. 169). This study enabled autonomy of agency within the realm of parenting by drawing attention to and acknowledging that intuition is an integral component to knowledge within the parent child relationship, present within each of the participant’s relationship with their child(ren). As suggested by Sigel, et al., (2012), a sense of agency is essential for parents to feel in “control of their life, to believe in their capacity to influence their own thoughts and behavior, and have faith in their ability to handle a wide range of tasks or situations” (p. 54).

5.2 Implications for Practice

*To speak is one thing, to be heard is another, to be confirmed as being heard is yet another*

*(Martin, 1998, p. 9)*

The process of co-constructing parents’ experiences and perceptions of intuition as a source of knowledge within their relationships with their children allowed for increased awareness of the depth needed within the provision of support for parents. Firstly, creating an understanding of this nature provided the potential for dialogue amongst practitioners. Integral to the field of any helping relationship is the need for reflexive practice. This study, as supported by the literature on intuitive knowing within therapeutic counselling relationships (Bove & Rizzi, 2009; Chudnoff, 2013; Dodge Rea, 2001; Jeffery, 2012; Jeffery & Stone, 2011; Tantia, 2014), further highlights the need for awareness of intuition as practitioners through the act of being reflective. Just as Palmer (1998) reflects on this concept within the teaching relationship by stating “when I
do not know myself, I cannot know who my students are” (p. 2). The relevance to the practice of social work, regardless of the area of interest, is equally as imperative in striving for meaningful connections with clients. The art of connecting as a social worker is in essence an experience between two people. The “‘art’ comes largely by reflective practice and intuition – intuition called forth by concern” (Hollis, 1968, p. 143).

Second, the findings from this study also create the potential for enhanced training in conjunction with professional reflexivity to reflect an awareness and acceptance of parents’ intuitive knowledge. A report from a forum on Parenting Education and Support (2006) suggests there is clear evidence that the “level of skill of those delivering parent support has a demonstrable and direct relationship with the outcomes achieved” (p. 28). A study of this nature presented the opportunity to challenge how people who support parents are trained. This includes the need to develop a training framework of parent support that comes alongside the vast amount of knowledge/resources that are available without excluding the importance of parents’ intuitive knowledge of their child(ren). Training that encourages exploration of options that support practitioners to avoid being prescriptive and implying that the interveners have ‘the answers’ about how to parent effectively would open space for discourse reflecting intuitive knowledge. Persons in a support role need to help parents work together to become the kinds of parents and partners that they were hoping to be. In essence, programming that enlists parents in their children’s development – physically, emotionally and psychologically encouraging sensitive responses as well as acknowledging the intuitive capacity of parents - has the potential to influence the parent child relationship in significant and meaningful ways. As suggested by Quention (2004), “it is not what is offered to parents but how it is offered that engages parents” (p. 48). Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire (1970), challenges us by stating that being willing to
listen and learn from each other requires an approach where practitioners are able to identify with others and recognize the fact that ‘naming the world’ is not the task of an elite. Value the contribution of others and listen to them with humility, respecting the particular view of the world held by different people (p. 178).

To some degree, the present study opens the dialogue related to supporting the concept of universality of parent support. Drawing on the metaphor of making the quilt of intuition, the pieces of fabric – trust, courage, connection, home/nature and honour – emerged in some capacity for all participants, regardless of gender, stage of parenting or life circumstances. The universality of connecting with their children through relationship became the common denominator. As Jung (1993) suggests, “interest in how people are similar to each other than what makes people individually different from one another creates opportunities for connection both individually and within community” (p. 54).

Lastly, this study highlighted the need to involve fathers in purposeful ways as individuals who have the capacity and ability to care for their children in kind and loving intuitive ways. As emphasized by the fathers engaged in this study, the potential exists to engage fathers in meaningful ways with their children by merely asking and acknowledging the integral role they play in the lives of their children. The research supports such endeavors as highlighted by Pruett (2009), who acknowledges that “fathers and mothers parent in different ways stressing how fathers’ involvement in children’s lives benefits children and fathers themselves in a variety of ways, including economic success and emotional wellbeing” (p. 45).

5.3 Implications for Future Research

There is much to learn from research that explores what is going on narratively in environments “when individual, groups, or communities marshal ordinary resources in their
everyday lives to strengthen their relationships and their communities” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012, p. 431). Traditional authoritarian forms of parenting appear to be more questioned now either because of general normative changes or rapid societal modernization, requiring re-adjustments in family and parenting practices and how supports are provided. Most often support programs are pre-designed, and while they usually allow some leeway for parents to affect them, in general they tend to treat parents as recipients of information rather than as leaders. Integration of the intuitive knowledge within the parent-child relationship can only enhance the discourse between practitioners as well as within parent support settings.

Further to the point of exploring what works within the parent child relationship, the stage is set to figure out what facilitates an understanding and acknowledgement of intuition as knowledge within the professional audience, leading to potential research on “what it looks like when the audience is listening and influenced” (Chase, 2011, p. 430). Engaging with children to gain an understanding of their experiences within the parenting relationship would further enhance the understanding of the parent child relationship. Brannen, et al., (2000) endeavoured to understand children’s views in relation to family. In their study, most children said, “that parental love, emotional security and affective support were the most important things about being a family” (p.98). Further research articulating the experiences of children would provide an important and needed view on ‘what works well’ within the parent-child relationship. As well, further research that highlights the intricacies of the parent-child relationship in terms of ‘what works well’ will continue to expand the knowledge base of agency and self-efficacy as it relates to the ever important role of parent, ensuring that the conversation continues.

A potential inquiry could include the exploration of intuition as a source of knowledge within the parent child relationship when a parent has experienced a very tumultuous or
traumatic upbringing. Courtois (n.d) suggests “some individuals who were traumatized as children manage to escape relatively unscathed at the time or later (often due to personal resilience or to having had a restorative and secure attachment relationship with a primary caregiver that countered the abuse effects), the majority developed a host of after effects, some of which were posttraumatic and met criteria for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)” (p. 4).

Victor Frankl (1962, 1969), in his influential works Will To Meaning and Man’s Search for Meaning, embraced the thought that people are motivated by a psychological need to find a sense of meaning and value in their lives, and when committed to these things a person is able to overcome traumatic experiences. Of interest would be the potential role of intuition within situations of trauma and the impact within the parent child relationship.

Cooper (2010) proposes, “parenting has a more significant impact on children’s achievement than social class or level of education” (p. 489). Research that further contributes to an understanding the significance of parenting exists to potentially influence policy decisions reflecting how parental support is structured. Building on the work of Kane, Wood & Barlow (2007), who studied the importance of listening to the voice of participants in developing support programs, provides a further starting point for influencing policy. Using the meta-ethnographic method, information collected was used in order to sensitize policymakers and practitioners to the key factors that parents perceive to be of value, thereby increasing parental engagement (Kane, Wood & Barlow, 2007).

Further to this, Papousek (2011) submits that intuitive parenting is likely “affected by all extrinsic and inner psychic regulatory factors that interfere with a parent’s attentional and emotional availability to their children” (p. 35). Thus, policy that helps to addresses those factors that attenuate intuitive parenting such as excessive demands and stress and mere exhaustion
would serve parent, child and society at large in striving for an overall community of support.

5.4 Limitations of Narrative Methodology

There are limitations to the use of narrative methodology. The storied lives of narrators can sometimes be difficult to interpret in terms of the relationship between storytelling in the interview and the story making in the presentation of data. As the researcher, I was constantly aware of whose story it was and how it was being interpreted or re-storied. Savin-Baden and Van Niekerk (2008) suggest it is important to “acknowledge that disagreement between participant (narrator) and listener (researcher) can add depth of understanding – or at least highlight potential misinterpretation that might not otherwise be discerned” (p. 462). Disagreement for me came more in the form of not understanding certain phrases or context of stories and descriptions of pictures. The depth of understanding came through an inquisitive stance, asking questions, and seeking to know more.

Within this study, the sample size and the commitment to discuss participant stories as well as be reflective of my own personal story allowed for a rich description of intuition as a source of knowledge within the parent/child relationship. I am also aware that the concept of intuition is not a universally accepted way of knowing within some aspects of society. However, the purpose of the study was to ultimately support parents in their ways of knowing and connecting with their child(ren) and exploring how intuitive knowledge is part of that relationship.

5.6 Summary

This study aimed to address the research question: “What are parents experiences of intuition as a source of knowledge within the parent child relationship?”. The findings as depicted in the themes that emerged from the data, are consistent with the current body of
knowledge in the area of intuition as a form of knowledge as well as the importance of the parent-child relationship in terms of positive childhood outcomes. Parenting does not occur in a vacuum. Many factors can promote or impede supportive parenting, such as financial stability, mental health, marital quality, social support, and neighborhood safety and cohesion.

Acknowledging intuition as a source of knowledge is not intended to be a cure-all, but rather, as one component of supporting parents to give voice to the uniqueness of their child and experience the endless possibilities of connection within the attachment relationship. As identified through the stories, themes or pieces of fabric emerged that essentially made it possible for intuition to be known as a source of knowledge. Relationship was identified as the thread that holds the fabrics of trust, courage, connection, home/nature and honour together making space for intuitive knowledge to emerge. When I think of parenting and supporting parents, I often reflect on the African Proverb, Ubuntu meaning each “individual’s humanity is ideally expressed in relationship with others and in relationships individuality is truly expressed” (Le Grange, 2012, p. 61). In essence, intuitive knowledge is revealed within these wise words, suggesting that harnessing the pervasive power of relationship can add value to existing approaches to address parent support. Parenting is a developmental, dynamic process. Who one is as a parent and how one parents, changes over time.

Unfortunately, one does not know the long term effects of a study of this nature given the intent of qualitative research to study the specific. However, it is the hope through the analysis of the narratives shared a gateway is opened to better understanding the role of intuition as a source of knowledge within the parent child relationship. As such, we may never know the extent purposeful reflection of this nature affects parents’ ways of being. Nonetheless, as I reflect on the words of Leedahl (1999) in The Bonetalker, describing the old woman’s commitment to sewing
the pieces of fabric together, I am hopeful the impact is longstanding, possibly for generations to come. Leedahl writes:

No one knows when she stopped or when the giant cloth stopped growing. But, if you fly through the prairie sky on a clear blue day and look way, way down, you’ll see the old woman’s work stretched across the land (p. 23).
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parents/


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Figure A1

Figure 1. “I believe you were sent into my life to give me something to fight for, and to show me real love exists”

Figure 1. A photo collage of Abby, illustrating courage and vulnerability. [Photograph]. Copyright 2017 by Sally.
Figure A2

Figure 2. “Even though I'm unsure about most things in life, I am certain that I love you and will continue to love you forever”.

Figure 2. A photo collage of Iyla on finding a mother’s courage to be the mother she knew she always was. [Photograph]. Copyright 2017 by Sally.
Figure A3

Figure 3. “Christmas Pigtales”.

*Figure 3. A photo of Nick, Amelia and Santa depicting connection and pride. [Photograph]. Copyright 2017 by Nick.*
Figure A4

Figure 4. “The Same, But Different”.

Figure 4. A photo of Paul and daughter, Jesmond reflecting connections emotionally and physically. [Photograph]. Copyright 2017 by Paul T.
Figure A5

Figure 5. “More is Better”.

Figure 5. A photo of Jesmond, Paul’s daughter as she proudly displays her ability to be herself. [Photograph]. Copyright 2017 by Paul T.
Figure A6

Figure 6. “Let Her Draw, Let Her Lead”

Figure 6. A photo of a drawing expressing Erica’s need to lead despite adversity. [Photograph]. Copyright 2016 Leah.
Figure A7

Figure 7. “A Place to Call Home”.

Figure 7. A photo showing a place of rejuvenation, and connection to intuitive thought. [Photograph] Copyright 2016 Leah.
Figure A8

Figure 8. “Getting Ready”

*Figure 8: A photo of Erica and her sister spending precious time together. [Photograph]. Copyright 2017 by Leah.*
Figure A9

Figure 9. “Full of Life and Love”

Figure 9. A photo collage of August-Claire depicting the intensity to which she lives life. [Photograph]. Copyright 2016 by Sally.
Figure A10

Figure 10. “Unbalance to Balanced”

*Figure 10.* Photos of Erica expressing her happiness after spending time with her mom and feeling heard. [Photograph]. Copyright 2017 by Leah.
Figure A11

Figure 11. “The Sweetest Look”

*Figure* 11. A photo of Jesmond observing the world through her eyes. [Photograph]. Copyright 2016 by Paul.
APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT POSTER

Department of Graduate Studies, Social Work
University of Regina

RESEARCH IN PARENTING

Would you be willing to share your experiences of intuition in parenting?

Are you over 18 years of age, parenting a child(ren) within one of these age categories - young children (0-6), middle years (7-10), early teenagers (11-14), and late teenagers (15-17).

We are looking for volunteers to take part in a study of parents' experiences and perceptions of intuition as a source of knowledge within their relationships with their children.

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to: participate in an interview (approximately 45 minutes), observe and reflect on your interactions with your child(ren) (2 days over the a 2 week period), and submit visual, written or spoken data describing your experience. Access to the internet is required.

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study, please contact:

Beverley Digout
MSW Graduate Student
p: 306-230-0113 or e: digout2b@uregina.ca

This study has been reviewed and received approval through the Research Ethics Board, University of Regina.
APPENDIX C: UNIVERSITY OF REGINA RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD APPROVAL

University of Regina
Research Ethics Board
Certificate of Approval

Investigator(s): Beverley Digout
Dr. Darlene Chalmers and Klaus Gruber

Department: Social Work
Funder: Unfunded
Supervisor: Dr. Ailsa M. Watkinson

Title: Many Ways of Knowing: A Qualitative Study of Parents’ Experience and Perception of Intuition

APPROVED ON: April 20, 2016
RENEWAL DATE: April 20, 2017

APPROVAL OF:
Application For Behavioural Research Ethics Review
Recruitment Poster
Initial Contact Guide
Consent Form
Data/Transcript Release Form

FULL BOARD MEETING DELEGATED REVIEW X

The University of Regina Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named research project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this research project, and for ensuring that the authorized research is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol, consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS
In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month of the current expiry date each year the study remains open, and upon study completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: http://www.uregina.ca/research/for-faculty-staff/ethics-compliance/human/forms1/ethics-forms.html.

Dr. Larena Hoeber, Chair
University of Regina Research Ethics Board

Please send all correspondence to:
Research Office
University of Regina
APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM

Participant Consent Form

**Project Title:** Many Ways of Knowing: A Qualitative Study of Parents' Experience and Perception of Intuition

**Researcher(s):** Beverley Digout, Graduate Student, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina, 306-230-0113, digout2b@uregina.ca

**Supervisor:** Dr. Ailsa M. Watkinson, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina, 306-664-7374, ailsa.watkinson@uregina.ca

**Research Advisory Committee:**
Darlene Chalmers, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina, 306-664-7379
Klaus Gruber, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina

**Purpose(s) and Objective(s) of the Research:**
The purpose of this study is to better understand parents’ perception of intuition as part of their relationships with their children. Intuition, for the purposes of this study, will be defined as “a unique way of knowing where one comes to some knowledge without evident rational thought or interference” (Jeffery & Stone Fish, 2011, p. 349). Building on the idea that parents know their children best, this study attempts to explore and understand experiences of intuition through the eyes of parents. The stories of four parents in various stages of parenting will be shared. Parents will be asked to share pictures, stories or photographs that are meaningful to them, helping show when intuition was present for them. This research project will be conducted in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

**Procedures:** If you agree to participate in this study after attending an information session with the principle researcher, the following will occur:
• A meeting will be arranged with yourself, your child and the principle researcher, Beverley Digout. The meeting will be held at a time convenient for you and in a space conducive to confidential conversations and comfort at the discretion of yourself. Access to private meeting space will be available through the Saskatoon Community Service Village (506, 25th Street East) if required.
• During this meeting the consent and assent form(s) will be carefully reviewed with you and your child.
• Once consent and assent has been given, the research questions will be discussed with you. This portion of the interview will be audio recorded on a password protected device and the results transcribed. The style of the interview will be conversational in nature. This will take about 45 minutes.
• The questions are presented as a reflective component or guide to understanding and finding the stories of intuition within your relationship with their child(ren). You will be given a copy of these questions.
• You will be asked to collect data using spoken words, written words or photographs that reflects your experience and perception of intuition in your relationship with your child(ren). During this time participants are encouraged to create an awareness of when intuition is present as a source of knowledge when interacting with their children. You are welcome to use one or all three methods of data collection to record your reflections. Data will be collected for two days over a two-week period.
• You will be asked to upload your data to a secure site that is accessible only by the principle investigator, Beverley Digout.
• You will receive a phone call one week into the two-week period allocated for data collection. The purpose of this phone call is to remind you of the deadline for data submission and to check in with you to see if you are fine with the process, or require support related to your experience in participating in this study. This phone call will take about 15 minutes, or more if required.
• You will be provided with a journal should you choose to record your reflections manually. You will also be provided with a camera if you do not have access to one.
• The data collected from the four participants will be analyzed as it is received. Prior to the data being included in the final report, you will be given opportunity to provide feedback to ensure that the analysis of the data submitted is accurate. At this time you may add, alter, or delete information from the analysis as you see fit. I will check in with each participant separately through a phone call. This check in will take about 30 minutes.
• The data will be reported anonymously in an aggregated form. At times, direct quotations from the data collected might be included in the final report. The final report will be used to complete a thesis for a Masters in Social Work.
• If you choose, a copy of the final product will be made available for you.
• Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the procedures and goals of the study or your role.
Potential Risks:
• While it is not anticipated that you will experience distress, some people find discussing parenting difficult particularly if their childhood experiences were not positive. If issues of a sensitive nature arise as a result of participating in this study, you will be provided with referrals to low or not cost counselling agencies in your community.
• A detailed listing of support agencies (The Incredible Parent Directory) offering counselling will be provided to each participant as well as a web based listing of supports (www.211.sk.ca) in the event that participation in this project raises strong emotional reactions requiring outside support.
• Through concerted efforts such as member checking, participant wellbeing will be monitored in respect to participation in this study.
• Given the nature of this research project, if information is revealed that has the potential to harm a child or is presently harmful to a child physically, emotionally or sexually, I am required by law to communicate this information to the Ministry of Social Services.

Potential Benefits:
Although not guaranteed, the possible significance of this research project includes:
- a better understanding of the concept of intuition as a source of parental knowledge within the field of social work and the parent child relationship
- an opportunity for people working with parents to understand the role of intuition within the parent-child relationship
- an opportunity to reflect on your role as a parent. The design of the study requires parents to pay close attention to their interactions with their children.
- increased confidence as a parent
- the potential, through an increased understanding and acceptance of intuition, to influence policy decisions that may impact how parent support is provided.

Compensation:
• Participants of this research project will not be provided compensation of any kind.

Confidentiality:
• The data for this study will be reported in a Master’s thesis, with the possibility of being submitted for publication in academic journals, and presented at conferences. The researchers will make every effort to ensure that the information that you share in this study is confidential.
• At the beginning of this study, you will be asked to choose a pseudonym (an alias or fake name). All written records in the study, including transcripts, will refer to you only by your pseudonym. When reporting the findings, the researcher will attempt to identify common themes to reduce the potential for you to be identified by others based on what you have said. When reporting the characteristics of the participants in the participant’s section of the thesis document, the researchers will only include those characteristics that are essential to the purpose of the study.

• If you choose to provide photographs, only participants that have provided consent will be identified. The faces of individuals who have not provided consent will be blurred out so they are not recognizable.

• Although the researcher will report direct quotations from the individual interview and data upload, you will be given the opportunity to review the transcripts, to alter your quotations as you see fit, and give permission for these quotations to be used.

Storage of Data:
All data reported as aggregate themes and data records, including the interview transcriptions, and all data submitted electronically (written, spoken and/or visual) will be stored separately from the signed consent forms in a locked cabinet in Dr. Ailsa Watkinson’s office at the University of Regina, Saskatoon Campus. The data will be stored for five years after the study is completed upon which time they will be destroyed. This will be done to ensure your privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity.

Right to Withdraw:
• Your participation is voluntary and you can answer only those questions or upload data that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort.

• Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on how you will be treated.

• Should you wish to withdraw, your data will be deleted from the research project and destroyed, if desired. If you withdraw from the research project, any data that you have contributed will be destroyed at your request up until the point at which the data/transcript release form has been signed.

• Your right to withdraw data from the study will apply up to seven days after you have uploaded your data. After this date, it is possible that some form of research dissemination will have already occurred and it may not be possible to withdraw your data.
Follow up:
• To obtain results from the study, please email Beverley Digout at digout2b@uregina.ca.

Questions or Concerns:
• Contact the researcher(s) using the information at the top of page 1;
• This project has been approved on ethical grounds by the UofR Research Ethics Board on (insert date). Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the committee at (585-4775 or research.ethics@uregina.ca). Out of town participants may call collect.

Consent to Participate:
Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the description provided; I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my/our questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the research project. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

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<th>Name of Participant</th>
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___________________________ ______________________________
Researcher’s Signature Date

My child is under the age of 7. _______ yes _______ no
If yes, I give consent for my child to participate in this research study as an indirect participant.

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Visually Recorded Images/Data: Participant or parent/guardian to provide initials:

• Photos may be taken of me [my child] for:
  Analysis _______ Dissemination* _______

• Videos may be taken of me [my child] for:
  Analysis _______ Dissemination* _______

*Even if no names are used, you [or your child] may be recognizable if visual images are shown as part of the results.

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.
Assent for Younger Child (7-10 years old)

Project Title: Many Ways of Knowing: A Parents’ Experience and Perception of Intuition

Principal Researcher: Beverley Digout

I want to tell you about a research study I am doing. A research study is a way to learn more about something. I would like to find out more about being a parent. I want to learn about how special you are to your mom/dad. You are being asked to join the study because your mom/dad thought it would be good idea to learn more about being a parent.

If you agree to join this study, you will be asked to let your mom/dad take pictures of you. Your mom or dad will then share those pictures with me. This will happen for two days.

If you join this study, nothing will happen that will any different than what you do everyday. Nothing will happen to make you uncomfortable.

This study will help me learn more about parents and their children.

You do not have to join this study. It is up to you. You can say okay now. You can also say no. If you say okay and then you change your mind later that is okay. If you want to stop, then all you have to do is tell me you want to stop. No one will be mad at you if you don’t want to be in the study or if you join the study and then change your mind later and stop.

Before you say yes or no to being in this study, we will answer any questions you have. If you join the study, you can ask questions at any time. Just tell me that you have a question.

You can talk this over with your parents before you decide.
If you have any questions about this study please feel free to contact Beverley Digout at 306-230-0113 or at digout2b@uregina.ca

Would you like to be in this research study?

______ Yes, I will be in this research study.  ______ No, I don’t want to do this.

______ Yes, I am okay with my picture being used.

______ No, I do not want my picture used.
Assent for Older Child (11 – 17 years of age)

Project Title: Many Ways of Knowing: Parents’ Experience and Perception of Intuition

Principal Researcher: Beverley Digout

What is a research study?

A research study is a way to find out new information about something. Children do not need to participate in a research study if they don’t want to participate.

Why are you being asked to be part of this research study?

You are being asked to take part in this research study because I am trying to learn more about parents and children by asking parents to think about when they use intuition with their kids. Intuition is sometimes described as a knowing something without knowing why. I am asking you to be in the study because I would like parents with children your age in the study. About 4 children of different ages and their parents will be in this study.

If you join the study what will happen to you?

I want to tell you about some things that will happen to you if you are in this study. Your mom or dad might take pictures of you doing something or they might write something about you that they thought was really neat. You will not be asked to do anything special – just be yourself. I am asking your mom or dad to think about how important you are to them and then tell me about it.

Will any part of the study hurt?

There is nothing about this study that will cause you harm, hurt you or make you uncomfortable.

Will the study help others?
I am trying to learn more about how parents and kids are together. This study might help me find out things that will help me do that.

**Do your parents know about this study?**
I will talk to your parents about your participation in this study as well. You can talk this over with them before you decide.

**Who will see the information collected about you?**
The information collected about you during this study will be kept safely locked up.

**What do you get for being in the study?**
You will get not receive anything for being in this study.

**Do you have to be in the study?**
You do not have to be in the study. No one will be upset if you don't want to do this study. If you don't want to be in this study, you just have to tell us. It's up to you. You can also take more time to think about being in the study.

**What if you have any questions?**
You can ask any questions that you may have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn’t think of now, either you can call or have your parents call 306-230-0113. You can also take more time to think about being in the study and also talk some more with your parents about being in the study.

**Other information about the study.**
If you decide to be in the study, then please write your name below. You can change your mind and stop being part of it at any time. All you have to do is tell the person in charge. My number is 306-230-0113. You are welcome to call me to ask questions about the study at any time. You can also call me to tell me you do not want to be part of the study anymore. It’s okay. I will not be upset. Your parents won’t be upset.

You will be given a copy of this paper to keep

Would you like to take part in this study?
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APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW GUIDE

This narrative study asks the question: What are parents’ experiences and perceptions of intuition as a source of knowledge within their relationship with their children? For the purposes of this study, intuition is defined as “a unique way of knowing where one comes to some knowledge without evident rational thought or interference” (Carson, 1999, p.333).

Guiding Questions

What are your thoughts regarding intuition as a source of knowledge?

What stories of intuition come out of your experience as a parent?

Where is intuition present in your relationship with your children?

What indicators do you notice within yourself that you are in touch with your intuition?

What are the ways in which you are able to honour intuition as a source of knowledge in your relationship with your children?