



**EXPLORING THE PHENOMENON OF PERIPHERAL AWARENESS AND ITS
EFFECTS ON STRESS AND BURNOUT**

by

Jevon Dangeli

Submitted July 2015

In partial fulfilment for the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in
Consciousness, Spirituality and Transpersonal Psychology

The Professional Development Foundation
Middlesex University

PDF 4860

ABSTRACT

This dissertation documents research in "peripheral awareness", the phenomena thereof and its effects in terms of stress resilience, burnout prevention and psychological health. Peripheral awareness is a particular mode of perception with an accompanying physiological state that is claimed to promote wholesome virtues. This broad, multi-positional and inclusive perception can be established through various means, depending on individual sensory mode preferences and the context in which it is applied. A mixed methods approach was used in this study in order to investigate the effectiveness of peripheral awareness in regard to stress and burnout. The qualitative aspect of this research, involving Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), was of most prevalence. It was utilized to explore the phenomenology associated with peripheral awareness. The methodology also included a quantitative method that involved measuring the participants' level of burnout before a 24 day intervention and then compared this with their burnout levels after the intervention. A preliminary result of this research indicates that peripheral awareness can be compared to mindfulness, as well as to what some scholars have referred to as *bodyfulness* (Ferrer, 2008 & Caldwell, 2014). The overall outcome of this research suggests that peripheral awareness may be a useful approach to enhance mindfulness and improve well-being, while helping one to deal with stress resourcefully, which in turn may help to prevent and treat burnout. This conclusion is supported by the literature that is referred to in this report, covering how distress and the onset of burnout may be associated with tunnel awareness (which peripheral awareness was found to counteract). Five distinct areas of future researches concerning peripheral awareness are proposed.

Keywords

Awareness, consciousness, mindfulness, bodyfulness, perception, states, stress, burnout phenomenology.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to the participants that immersed themselves into a month-long research intervention and then willingly shared their personal experience of it over a period of nearly one year.

I wish to thank my wife for her unwavering support, commitment and reflections during the entire period of this study.

Special thanks to Professor Les Lancaster for supervising me during this research journey and for providing valuable feedback and guidance throughout.

DECLARATION

This thesis and all its content is my own work with the exception of cited references to other research and published work.

Jevon Dangeli

July 2015

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
DECLARATION.....	4
PREFACE.....	7
INTRODUCTION.....	9
The peripheral awareness technique.....	11
The research question.....	12
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	13
Peripheral vision in relation to peripheral awareness.....	13
Soma awareness and bodyfulness in relation to peripheral awareness.....	13
Mindfulness in relation to peripheral awareness.....	15
Mindfulness and peripheral awareness in relation to stress resilience	17
Rationale for this study	19
METHODOLOGY.....	22
Design.....	22
Considering the use of qualitative data analysis software.....	23
Following up.....	24
Sample.....	25
Research participant selection.....	25
Details of the research participants whose transcripts were analysed.....	26
Ethics protocol.....	26
The research intervention.....	26
The interviews.....	27
Procedure.....	28
Data collection and interpretation.....	28
Bracketing.....	29
RESULTS.....	31
The experience of mindfulness - as expressed by the research participants:.....	36
Sub-themes linked to mindfulness	40
Other themes linked to peripheral awareness.....	41
The Burnout Self Diagnostic Tool	44
DISCUSSION.....	46

Interpretation of results.....	48
Conclusion.....	50
Critique of the methodological approach	51
Implications for future research and applications	52
Five areas are being suggested for future research in peripheral awareness:.....	52
APPENDIX.....	55
REFERENCES.....	81

PREFACE

We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.

- Albert Einstein -

A majority of my clients (in coaching and therapy) have suffered from the symptoms of stress and burnout. In listening to how most of these clients have described their personal issues in their most challenging contexts, I consistently detected a particular pattern that was almost always present. After a careful and long-term assessment, I established that this pattern played a crucial role in how these individuals were being negatively effected. The discovery was that this pattern involved a particular way in which these individuals focused on their situations or how they were focusing on a specific object of reference in the challenging context. This focus was always narrowly fixated, thus these individuals were usually unaware of what else was possible or achievable in those situations or contexts. Even if they were aware of other possibilities, their locked in ways of approaching the situation prevented them from establishing more resourceful perceptions and responses. In one sense, their problems remained problems largely because of foveal (tunnel) awareness.

Through learning and integrating peripheral awareness, these individuals have (to varying degrees) been able to shift their perception of themselves in relation to the challenging situation. This was brought about through the establishment of a more expanded sense of self from where the issue could be seen and approached from a more holistic perspective. The experimental process that I used in these sessions (which has become the peripheral awareness technique) would then include guiding the client to embody their broader perspective and from that expanded as well as interconnected sense of self, address the stressful situation as or if required.

Over the past several years, my clients and course participants have reported that peripheral awareness not only enables them to deal with stressful situations more resourcefully, but they are able to establish a calm and mindful state with relative ease, sleep better, concentrate for longer, overcome mental blocks. Additionally, through becoming less identified with a limiting self-concept, they are less controlled by negative thoughts and reactions. Those who have integrated peripheral awareness through practicing it regularly have told me that they feel a deep sense of

connection with other individuals. Some speak of an enhanced connection with nature and the spiritual realm, while others refer more to a sense of oneness in which there is no real separation between self and other (or between subject and object).

The implications of being in peripheral awareness in terms of stress management, burnout prevention and psychological health care, based on what I have found through the work with my clients, is the main motivation behind me wanting to research this phenomenon more in depth. Another motivator to embark on this study was based on the current lack of research in this particular area.

INTRODUCTION

Our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different.

- William James -

Peripheral awareness is a particular mode of perception in which individuals are attentive to both their own thoughts and feelings as well as those of others, including the context that connects them. It is a type of attention that is close to being simultaneously inward and outward focused, thereby making one more conscious of the interrelatedness of phenomena. The earliest tracings of peripheral awareness appear to stem from Buddhist origins (Gunaratana, 1996) and it was possibly first introduced in the West through the teachings of George Ivanovich Gurdjieff in the early nineteenth hundreds (Ouspensky, 1971). These days, peripheral awareness has been integrated into some of the techniques of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (Bandler & Grinder, 1976; Overdurf, 2013) and other forms of personal development, although it has received only nominal attention from the scientific community (Farb, et al. 2007; Hanson, 2011).

The process of peripheral awareness reframes one's current experience of self, placing phenomena within one's field of awareness, as opposed to these being experienced outside or separate from oneself. Peripheral awareness involves the intentional observation of one's thoughts, feelings and sensory perceptions in the present through *opening the aperture* of one's awareness. This type of opening is facilitated by means of expanding one's mode of perception to include the aspects of each unfolding experience that usually occur in or beyond the outskirts of conscious awareness and which are therefore usually unconscious or disregarded. In addition to identifying the subtleties of one's internal experience, peripheral awareness includes becoming receptive to the energetic and relational links between oneself and others and the environment. Depending on the individual and their reason for practicing peripheral awareness, the experience of self fluctuates and is therefore not an ultimate state, but rather one in which the individual experiences a felt sense of

expansiveness and interconnection resulting from dis-identification from their limited self-concept.

Until now, peripheral awareness, especially regarding the technique to establish this type of perception and state (with its resulting cognitive and behavioural components), has barely entered the scientific research establishment. The literature review section of this thesis refers mainly to supportive research, published works and related content to help the reader appreciate that peripheral awareness, as a distinct “psychological tool”, is by no means a fleeting trend, but rather an innate ability that is grounded in human nature, yet it has remained largely unexplored and underutilised. The term “psychological tool” is used here, because the technique of peripheral awareness, as this thesis will outline, has shown to be a learnable and practical skill with applications in a variety of contexts. However, it should be remembered that peripheral awareness is more than a technique, it is a natural mode of being, one that we, as humans, find ourselves in when we are completely free of burdens on every level – physical, mental, emotional and spiritual (Finlay 2013).

The recent work of Olpin and Hesson (2015) suggests that stress is proliferating, with more people being negatively affected by it today than ever before. This points to the probability that we, as a society in general, are far from being free of burdens, which in turn may underlie why peripheral awareness has become a largely forgotten trait or ability. Indeed, in an attempt to deal with the new or intensified types of challenges that the predominantly high-tech and fast paced lifestyles of today demand, we are, to a certain degree, being forced from peripheral awareness into foveal (tunnel) awareness in order to fulfil many of our functions in the workforce. A potential resulting effect on us as a collective may be that we have become tuned out of what was, in past times, a more common state for us, in exchange for being tuned in to the devices that many believe make life convenient in this era. Society has never before had the technical means to capture and narrow our attention, as it does today. With our online broadcasting devices readily on hand, the media and the medium have merged, and the result is, to some extent, that we have become the victims of *attention slavery*. With our attention locked in by the gadgets (smart phones and other media devices, for example) that we have become accustomed to use in order to operate in this world, we may find ourselves unable or less able to release our attention when appropriate in order to relate with each other and our environment in ethical ways. The result may be a rise in inter human, relational and personal problems, as well as elevated stress levels, which if unresolved can lead to burnout (Brühlmann, 2011; Cartwright & Cooper, 1996). This phenomenon may in turn further convince one to retreat into a virtual world and to favour interacting with virtual friends for the sake of convenience, quick fixes and immediate gratification. This hypothesis suggests that as an increasing amount of the world's human population becomes more tuned

into a virtual reality, our ability to tune back out into the rest of reality may become jeopardised. In a mode of foveal awareness, sometimes referred to as *tunnel vision*, one may be less able to think creatively and deal with life's stressors resourcefully (Farb, et al. 2007; Finlay 2013; Hanson, 2011; Overdurf, 2013; Rossi, 1993; Ouspensky, 1971). On the other hand, if one is able to counteract *tunnel awareness*, through applying a means to reopen one's mode of perception, by using the peripheral awareness technique, for example, then one may find that one is better equipped to navigate the multi-dimensional challenges of life beyond the flat screens of our electronic devices (ibid.)

This thesis documents my research in peripheral awareness, covering in particular the phenomenology of the experience through the means of a qualitative investigation. It also outlines how this specific state and mode of perception may be helpful in modern society as an antidote to any negative consequences that can result from long-term tunnel awareness.

The peripheral awareness technique

Peripheral awareness is a particular mode of perception that can be established through various means. These means generally begin by identifying one's present experience of self, through first focusing attention through the senses, then noticing thoughts and emotions, and then bringing awareness to the context or relationship that allows for one's current experience. When learning the skill for the first time, it is useful to first focus on the more apparent experiences and then progress to the more subtle experiences that occur to one in the present. Most often, when learning peripheral awareness for the first time, the process begins through focusing either on the visual, or auditory, or somatic experiences as they unfold moment to moment. One of these three sensory modalities is selected and paid attention to, then that particular sensory field is extended to include more of what is occurring in the background. This process continues as a steady progression until the periphery of that sensory field is extended as far as it can naturally and effortlessly go. For example, if one's intention is to establish peripheral awareness somatically, then a useful starting point is to focus on the rising and releasing of the belly with each inhalation and exhalation. The individual then extends the rising and releasing experience to include their entire torso for a few breaths and then the entire body. After experiencing the rising and releasing of the entire body for a few breaths, as if the entire body was breathing, the individual then extends their awareness to surround their body (like a permeable cocoon) while being aware of how the body feels at the same time. The breathing entity is then felt as both the body and the field of awareness that surrounds it. This breathing field of awareness is then extended progressively

with each inhalation, until it includes other people and objects in one's immediate environment. Following that, one can extend the awareness to include people and objects that are anywhere at any time (past, present or future). While this “extending” of awareness is imagined and therefore subjective, the object here (while learning the technique) is not to pretend that one is having any particular kind of experience, but rather to prime one's consciousness in order to bring forth more of what is present in the background of awareness. In this manner, one's awareness can continue expanding toward the boundaries of space and time until eventually there is no identification with any form at all. Although one's experience at any stage or level remains subjective, the process of establishing peripheral awareness in such a way does seem to have a profound and positive effect on the individual. After extending the awareness outward, it is embodied in the physical form once again through re-focusing awareness back into the abdominal area.

It should be noted that this kind of consciously chosen starting point followed by a progressive extending of the awareness, which denotes a separate interior and exterior to the individual, is only one means of establishing peripheral awareness. As you will read in the results section of this thesis, after some practice people are able to “drop into” peripheral awareness at the mere intention to do so. What is *dropped into* appears (from the findings in this research) to be a calm state where one experiences oneself as fundamentally interconnected with the rest of life.

The research question

How does peripheral awareness affect an individual's experience, particularly in stressful situations and in relation to burnout?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Published literature relating directly to peripheral awareness is largely non-existent. Research in mindfulness appears to be the closest related field where one can find a significant amount of published literature. Included in the results section are outcomes of my research project indicating that peripheral awareness shares common phenomena with mindfulness and has similar applications to mindfulness when one's intention is to establishing a state of psychological well-being. This literature review begins with content that relates most directly to peripheral awareness and then refers to supportive literature, with an emphasis on how mindfulness based practices can be used to develop resilience to stress and burnout.

Peripheral vision in relation to peripheral awareness

One means of establishing a form of peripheral awareness is the technique of *peripheral vision* which triggers a state that Hanson (2011), Farb et al. (2007) and Rossi (1993) correlate with the activation of the parasympathetic system, thereby switching on the body's relaxation response and blocking stress reactions. Peripheral vision is frequently taught in NLP courses where it is used as a way of establishing a calm and receptive frame of mind for the purpose of optimising learning. Some therapists and coaches who incorporate NLP interventions utilize peripheral vision as a reliable approach to help clients deal with stressors more resourcefully as well as to "flatten out anxiety and fear" Overdurf (2013). Aside from the effect of peripheral vision on perception, states and behaviours; in Buddhist tradition, during Vipassana (also known as "insight") meditation training, peripheral vision is referred to as a soft and unfocused awareness that contains a very deep sort of knowing that is lost as soon as you focus your mind on one thing (Gunaratana, 1996).

Soma awareness and bodyfulness in relation to peripheral awareness

Peripheral awareness can be established somatically, as in the example of the technique in the Introduction. This version is useful to increase awareness of the body and its signals, which can be

described as *soma awareness* (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). According to Merleau-Ponty, one's body is one's most legitimate point of view on the world (ibid pp.70). In Merleau-Ponty's assessment, perception is largely determined by the situatedness of one's body, which is less an object of judgment, inference, or even conscious awareness than it is a spontaneous, self-correcting and precognitive background of intentionality, or as he suggests: "our body is not the object of an 'I think': it is an ensemble of lived meanings that finds its equilibrium" (ibid, p.153). The value of soma awareness was articulated artfully by Merleau-Ponty:

My body is not only an object among all other objects, a nexus of sensible qualities among all others, but an object which is sensitive to all the rest, which reverberates to all sounds, vibrates to all colours, and provides words with their primordial significance through the way in which it receives them. (ibid, p.236)

Bodyfulness, is referred to by Ferrer (2008) as a calmness and alertness of the psychosomatic organism without the intentionality of the conscious mind. According to Ferrer, bodyfulness reintegrates in the human being a lost somatic capability that is present in panthers, tigers and other big cats of the jungle, who can be extraordinarily aware without intentionally attempting to be so (2008). Caldwell (2014) uses the word bodyfulness to describe a state of being highly aware in the present through paying attention to the body's somatic experience as it manifests moment-by-moment (p.71). Caldwell cites philosophers, scientists, and psychotherapists (Fogel, 2009; Hanna, 1987; Johnson, 1994; Shusterman, 2008) who explicate various bodily states that involve heightened somatic awareness. The word bodyfulness, according to Caldwell (ibid) can "function as a rubric for centralising the body within the intra psychic and social contexts" (p.71) and furthermore, Caldwell suggests that bodyfulness promotes empathy, attunement and bonding (ibid, p.80).

Both Ferrer's (2008) and Caldwell's (2014) descriptions of bodyfulness imply that each individual's experience of this phenomena can vary and may in some cases be ineffable. Thus, semantic descriptions of bodyfulness may not be accurately descriptive of one's subjective somatic experience of it. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty's (1962) description of soma awareness (in the quote above) is arguably yet another, albeit earlier, version of what some modern practitioners refer to as bodyfulness. While differentiating factors in terms of definitions may be debatable, the intention

here is not to list opposing distinctions (should any exist), but rather to highlight the significance of the somatic experience as a starting point in forming perceptions. On this point, one relevant differentiator between bodyfulness and soma awareness is the emphasis that Merleau-Ponty (ibid) places on perception itself: “External perception and the perception of one’s own body vary in conjunction because they are the two facets of one and the same act” (ibid, p.237), therefore, “Every external perception is immediately synonymous with a certain perception of my body, just as every perception of my body is made explicit in the language of external perception” (ibid, p.239). In Merleau-Ponty's view, as human beings, we do not possess bodies, instead “we are our body,” which suggests, “we are in the world through our body, and insofar as we perceive the world with our body.” Essentially then, “the body is a natural self and, as it were, the subject of perception” (ibid, p.239). Perhaps then, self realisation, or to *know thyself* is the process of embodying perception.

Mindfulness in relation to peripheral awareness

Mindfulness as a form of meditation practice originates from the Buddhist tradition and has become increasingly popular in modern society (Wallace, 2008). According to Wallace, in Buddhist texts the word “sampajanna” refers to introspection and clear comprehension being integral in mindfulness. This entails a discerning observation not only of one’s mind but also of one’s physical and verbal activities too (ibid, 2008, p.61). A broadly used definition of mindfulness in the West is Kabat-Zinn's: “paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non judgmentally” (2003). Considering that Kabat-Zinn's definition of mindfulness is based on “paying attention”, one should be aware of the caution given by Wallace, being that when mindfulness is equated with bare attention, it can easily lead to the misconception that the cultivation of mindfulness has nothing to do with ethics or with the cultivation of wholesome states of mind, while inherent in traditional mindfulness is the cultivation of wholesome states and counteracting unwholesome states (2008). Important to note is that the word “mind” in the East (from where the concept of mindfulness originates) does not refer to cognition in the brain, but rather a more somatic phenomenon that is heart centred (Kabat-Zinn, 2007). Some applications of mindfulness in the West are based on cognitive–behavioural approaches that have little to do with the more somatic type of mindfulness from the East (Hartelius, 2015). Hartelius distinguishes between two general forms of mindfulness, these being cognitive–behavioural mindfulness, where attention is seated in the head and directed outward from that location, and neo-traditional mindfulness, where attention

is seated in the belly and is directed outward from there (ibid). According to Hartelius, these two forms of mindfulness represent similar qualities that take place in two different states of consciousness, both reflected by their own discrepant attentional postures (ibid). From the perspective of somatic phenomenological analysis, Hartelius suggests that neo-traditional mindfulness is primarily a shifted state of consciousness that mediates certain cognitive qualities, while cognitive-behavioural mindfulness is primarily a shift in cognitive process with relatively minor changes in one's state of consciousness (ibid). Peripheral awareness has noticeable similarities with both forms of mindfulness, namely, it brings about a significant change in one's state of consciousness, which in turn has cognitive-behavioural effects. Furthermore, even though peripheral awareness may be perceived as a purely attention shifting exercise, it has been found to cultivate virtues similar to traditional mindfulness.

Both mindfulness (in either of its forms or definitions) and peripheral awareness involve establishing present moment awareness and being non-judgemental. There is however one fundamental difference in the two practices that I will outline here. Mindfulness brings deliberate and continuous intentionality to the present moment, while with peripheral awareness the only intention is to *open the aperture* of one's awareness. This kind of opening of one's field of awareness has been found to naturally, in and of itself, calm the mind (Hanson, 2011), enhance one's sensory acuity and cultivate a sense that all things (in one's present experience) are constantly unfolding and interlinked processes within one's awareness, where the boundaries between subject and object seem to dissolve (Overdurf, 2013). This leads to a sense of interconnection with others (which results in compassion) as well as with the world 'around' us (which seems more within us at this stage). In this way, peripheral awareness shares an attribute with traditional mindfulness, which has been found to promote attunement, connection and closeness in relationships (Brown et al., 2007). Furthermore, as indicated in the results section of this report, peripheral awareness generally enables one to feel expanded and peaceful while at the same time reducing the level or impact of negative self talk. Any existing self talk that may be judgmental can be quite easily heard as the voice of one's self-concept (or ego) from which one has disidentified, thus it has no significant influence.

My own observation is that peripheral awareness has more of a *being* nature to it with little intentionality, while mindfulness practice (in the common Western (attentional) approach) has a slightly more *doing* nature to it, with more intentionality. Peripheral awareness can be compared to

an embodied awakening. Through practice over time (and depending on the individual) peripheral awareness can become embodied and therefore become a reasonably enduring state, or at least easily activated as and when necessary. Peripheral awareness is not being advocated as superior to mindfulness, but rather as a helpful method to more easily embody a mindful approach to life in general.

Mindfulness and peripheral awareness in relation to stress resilience

Resilience is referred to by Jacobs, et al. (2011) as a family of connected phenomena that enable one to adapt adequately in challenging situations. According to Siegel, mindfulness practice can develop a long-term state of resilience by enhancing physical, mental, and social wellbeing (2007). Without mindfulness, mental balance cannot be developed, suggests Wallace (2008, p.63). The integration of mindfulness practices is recommended by Meiklejohn et.al. (2012) to enhance self-regulation of one's emotions and focus of attention, whilst cultivating mental flexibility, which in turn promotes resilience. These views have been verified by studies which have shown that mindfulness is associated with resilience toward stress and burnout (Bonanno, 2004; Kelley, 2005; Meiklejohn et al., 2012; Irving, Dobkin, & Park, 2009; Cohen- Katz, Wiley, Capuano, Baker, & Shapiro, 2005; Mackenzie, Poulin, & Seidman-Carlson, 2006). Mindfulness has also been associated with the enhancement of well-being by Ryan & Deci (2000), who found that the practice enables people to disengage from unhealthy and automatic behavioural patterns. Their observations are supported by Brown & Ryan's (2003) research which indicates that higher levels of mindfulness are correlated with lower levels of stress and mood disturbance, therefore it contributes to improving resilience.

Research done by Bonanno (2004) suggests that all human beings with unhampered mental health have an innate capacity for resilience and well-being even while facing adversity (cited in Kelley, 2005, p.265). According to Ciarrochi, Chan, Caputi, and Roberts (2001), difficulty identifying feelings is likely to predispose an individual to poorer mental health. Various studies support the idea that an individual with a greater ability to identify their emotions will be able to regulate those emotions better (cited in Barrett, Gross, Christensen, & Benvenuto, 2001, p.721). In terms of regulating and expressing emotions optimally, Brown et al. have found that mindfulness promotes attunement, connection and closeness in relationships (2007). Furthermore, mindfulness

based approaches have been found to increase the ability to adapt and regulate one's thoughts, feelings and actions according to the situation (Baliki, Ceha, Apkarian, & Chialvo, 2008; cited in Niemiec, Rashid, Spinella, 2012). The mindful approach identifies the impermanent nature of mental and emotional states and treats them as transitory phenomena rather than perceiving them as fixed or unchangeable states. As such, mental blocks, distress and painful emotions can be identified as inherently fluxing and shifting experiences, which in turn enables individuals to be less affected by them (Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Segal, Williams & Teasdale, 2002). A mindful disposition does nonetheless require an ongoing effort for which self-regulation practice in the form of meditation has been recommended by Kabat-Zinn (1990).

Embodiment of the broader perceptions that are associated with peripheral awareness, as well as the automation of their resulting cognitive and behavioural effects, can be promoted through a variety of related practices that stimulate the state of peripheral awareness, for example silent periods in the wilderness (Berry, 1991 & Kahn, 2013). The reader may also consider their own examples of when they experienced an expanded sense of self, or a deep sense of connection in which they felt they were an integral part of a greater whole, and which brought with it a state of well-being. While one's own example may have been a meditative experience, it could just as well have been while having a meaningful conversation, jogging, dancing, painting, falling asleep (the hypnagogic state), waking from sleep (the hypnopompic state), or during sexual intercourse, and other examples where one's sense of self sometimes feels vastly more expanded than normal. Arguably, such examples of spontaneously occurring states may not necessarily promote the virtues that are inherent in traditional mindfulness (for example, ethics and wholesome states of mind), while the peripheral awareness technique does appear to cultivate such virtues. While the peripheral awareness technique may appear to be a meditative exercise to a layperson, an experienced meditator would recognise its unique characteristics (as outlined in the preface).

Describing the psychological characteristics that are associated with the scope (aperture) of one's awareness, Finlay (2013) cites Ratcliffe (2008) and Schmitz et al. (2011), in relation to her comment: "When we feel threatened, the world narrows and constricts, and it feels an unsafe place; when we're happy, the world broadens, expands and becomes bright and light." Here, one's psychological state appears to determine how narrow or broad one's aperture of awareness is. It therefore stands to reason that if one can adjust the scope of one's awareness, one will be able to shift one's psychological state. For this purpose, a working definition of peripheral awareness is: "A

dynamic means to open the aperture of one's awareness in order to illuminate the mind.” This definition presupposes that it is possible to broaden one's level of awareness in order to enhance one's psychological state. This study, in its essence, explores if the above definition is a suitable description for peripheral awareness.

Rationale for this study

This research fills a gap in the research conducted so far, in that peripheral awareness, both as a distinct technique as well as a particular state and mode of perception, has not yet been researched for the purpose of exploring its unique phenomena. Neither has peripheral awareness been studied as a particular approach that may help to enhance stress resilience or prevent burnout.

A mixed methods approach to researching peripheral awareness was chosen. The reason for incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches was to ensure that any potential biases on my own part (for example possible beliefs in the effects of peripheral awareness) that might have influenced the outcomes of the qualitative analysis - could be compared to the results of a quantitative approach, in order to reach a balanced, pragmatic and accurate conclusion. With the primary interest in this research being to study the phenomenology associated with peripheral awareness, the qualitative aspect of this research was of major significance. The quantitative aspect served only as a contributory part that compared the levels of the participants' burnout both before and after the research intervention. This involved the participants completing a self-assessment questionnaire both before and after the research intervention. The primary intention behind including this was to give the participants a sense of how peripheral awareness was affecting them. Furthermore, I was able to cross-check the participants' self-assessment with the results of the qualitative research in order to verify the results, however I am aware that with the sample size being so small it would not provide sufficient data for a proper statistical analysis.

The qualitative element of my research had an idiographic focus, in order to explore the 'lived experience' of peripheral awareness. Researchers seeking to explicate lived experience explore the phenomenon being studied in depth. In phenomenological research the aim is to uncover patterns and difference within human experience, whilst at the same time conveying its richness and fullness (Valle,

1998). While it has been said that there may be as many styles of phenomenology as there are phenomenologists (Spiegelberg, 1982), phenomenology as a philosophy and method was developed as an alternative to an Enlightenment science which believed that reliable knowledge could be obtained simply by applying the rational mind to the objects of the world (Hartelius, 2015). This oversimplified idea was famously challenged by Kant (1781/2007), who observed that experiences in the mind are inner reconstructions of the world that are built up from sense data called phenomena, rather than the world as it is in itself, called noumena in Kantian philosophy (cited in Hartelius, 2015). Since this placed rational science on unstable ground, Husserl (e.g., 1913/1983; 1917) set out to develop a new type of science that was not based in the inaccessible noumena of the external world, but rather on mental phenomena that are directly accessible within the mind (phenomenology). In his earlier writings Husserl's work was clearly based on the Kantian assumption that regarded mental phenomena as substantively distinct from the noumena they represent, however later thinkers such as Heidegger (1927/1962), Merleau-Ponty (1945/2005), and Levinas (1974/1998) argued that mind and world are even more intimately linked, suggesting that phenomena cannot be radically separated from noumena (on Kantian dualism and its limitations, see Ferrer and Sherman 2008, cited in Hartelius, 2015). In van Manen's view:

Phenomenological understanding is distinctly existential, emotive, enactive, embodied, situational and non theoretic; a powerful phenomenological text thrives on a certain tension between what is unique and what is shared, between particular and transcendent meaning, and between the reflective and pre reflective spheres of the lifeworld... Without this tension, the qualitative research text tends to turn flat, shallow and boring because it loses the power to break through the taken-for-granted dimensions of everyday life. (1997, p.346)

While Husserl's (1970) phenomenology strives to set aside all preconceptions or theories, and to describe rather than explain phenomena, other researchers (Stanley & Wise, 1993) have doubted the possibility of being truly free of preconception and emphasised the importance of including the researcher within the research process as a participant rather than a detached observer. On this basis, a phenomenological approach was appropriate for my research. With peripheral awareness being something that I have personal experience of, cognisance of my own potential involvement has been addressed (see Bracketing section). In order to do the phenomenology justice, research methods should

be responsive to the phenomenon in order to capture something of its 'is-ness' (Giorgi, 2009). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is an example of such a research method. Smith (2007) suggests that "IPA is a suitable approach when one is trying to find out how individuals are perceiving the particular situations they are facing, how they are making sense of their personal and social world" (p.56). This is a precise match with my intention for undertaking this research, thus IPA is positioned as an appropriate research methodology for the purpose of this study.

METHODOLOGY

Research is to see what everybody else has seen,
and to think what nobody else has thought.

- Albert Szent-Gyorgyi -

Design

Phenomenological research can be done in a number of ways as it is a flexible methodology that can be adapted to the topics being researched (Wertz, 2011). Smith (2007, pp. 55/67) emphasises, as is generally the case with qualitative research methods, that there is no single, definitive way to do IPA. He points out that as one proceeds, one may find oneself adapting the method to one's own personal way of working and the particular topic one is investigating. In order to both capture and respond to the authentic expressions that the research participants used, I found that it was useful to not follow a tightly predetermined protocol, but rather keep a flexibility and open perception during the interviews. The way in which I facilitated this, was to use a semi-structured interview protocol as a starting and reference point while following the participant's lead in order to explore the phenomenology of their experiences in a free flowing manner. When the participants accessed their own deeper attributes and meanings that were directly associated with their experience of peripheral awareness, then the interview questions took the form of spontaneous and reflexive prompts to elicit more of the inner experience that the participants were trying to put into words.

Smith et al. (2009) present IPA as a systematic, flexible and multidirectional analytic process. The researchers engage a 'double hermeneutic' whereby participants seek to make sense of a particular experience, while researchers seek to make sense of the participants' sense-making. In order to achieve this, I explored the participants' semantic content and language on three levels: descriptive (taking explicit meanings at face value), linguistic (for example, noting metaphors), and conceptual (taking a more analytic approach). Additionally, I also aimed to identify somatic responses in the interviews in order to calibrate levels of intensity and congruency with the

participant's spoken words. The IPA means of interpreting transcribed interviews operates at a level which is clearly grounded in the text, but which also moves beyond the text to a more psychological level (Smith, 2008 p. 44). The emergent themes were analysed according to the four-phase protocol suggested by Finlay (2013). These are:

1. **'Seeing afresh'**.

This is the foundation upon which everything rests in phenomenological research in order for the researcher to be truly engaged in phenomenological inquiry.

2. **'Dwelling'**.

A systematic, intensive, intuitive and in depth process of engagement with the interview transcripts in order to discover possible meanings.

3. **'Explicating'**.

Further processing of the data and exploring common themes amongst the individual analyses. This phase examines the ways in which particular meanings can be woven into a pertinent description of the phenomenon as a whole. While conceptual thematizing takes place in this phase, exploring and recording the phenomenon is integral.

4. **'Languaging'**.

This phase involves transferring the phenomenon, in all its subtlety and layers, into words that describe it.

Considering the use of qualitative data analysis software

I considered the option of incorporating qualitative data analysis software. The primary interest in using software in my research analysis was to ensure of accurate elicitation of the phenomena described by the research participants. After an extensive search on the internet I decided to look into using "Hyper Research" software. A crucial issue here turned out to be that depending on their nationality and background, the participants used different vocabulary and expressions to describe similar types of phenomena. I therefore became a little sceptical about how a software program would manage to detect crucial nuances. This type of concern is shared amongst

other qualitative researchers who recognise the importance of fidelity to the phenomena. The value of the inter-human approach in phenomenological analysis was suggested by Merleau-Ponty, emphasising that it “must stick close to experience, and yet not limit itself to the empirical but restore to each experience the ontological cipher which marks it internally.” (1964, p.157, cited in Taylor, 1999).

In considering the diversity of the research participants in this study, as well as the resulting perplexity of the descriptions given by them in the interviews, it was concluded that the analysis of the interview transcripts would be maximised in terms of pertinence by adhering to a phenomenological approach that gives credence to the complexities of meanings and the relatedness of the phenomena that were described by each research participant. Based on this crucial point, with support from many qualitative researchers who expressed similar concerns in the internet forums associated with the various qualitative data analysis software programs, it was concluded that a software program would not suffice for the purpose of achieving a thorough data analysis in this study. The only significant benefit (to my knowledge) of using such software, might have been to speed up the process of analysis, although the potential down-side to this may likely have been a lack of depth, in terms of comprehending the richness and relevance of the participant's unconscious and subjective experiences. For this reason, I opted not to utilise software in the data analysis.

Following up

About a month after the research intervention had been completed, I sent an email to all eleven research participants, asking about their current states and general responses to stressful situations. Another follow-up email was sent nearly a year after the research intervention. The participants' responses to both follow-ups is documented in the Results and Conclusion sections below.

Sample

Research participant selection

Research participants were searched for via social media platforms. The main criteria for eligibility was that prospective participants were to be experiencing burnout, since part of the intention behind this research was to calibrate how the application of peripheral awareness might affect one's level of burnout. In order to measure burnout levels, the participants were asked to complete a Burnout Self Diagnostic Tool (Appendix no. 4), for which permission to use was obtained from its copyright owner - The Sacred Space Foundation in the UK. This tool is a type of survey that involves answering 70 questions that relate to one's current experiences (on the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual level). The survey is designed to elicit one's level of well-being in terms of how near or far one is from burnout. Only those who scored high levels of burnout were considered for this research. The only other participant selection criteria was that all participants were to be between the ages of 16 and 60.

Eleven participants (seven women and four men) of varying ages from six countries were the first to be accepted for this research and thereafter I stopped accepting more participants. I settled for eleven participants, knowing that this number already exceeded a sufficient number of participants for an in-depth qualitative study. I allowed for the possibility that not all participants would complete the study or that other issues might arise inhibiting the usability of each case.

All eleven interviews were recorded, however, five of the recordings were of very poor audio quality, due to internet, or computer or microphone issues on the participant's side. This made it difficult to hear what these participants said on the Skype call, or it caused many interruptions in the Skype connection. Additionally, there was a problem of English not being the first language amongst four participants - with heavy accents making it difficult to understand them. The six recordings that were of good enough audio quality were transcribed.

Details of the research participants whose transcripts were analysed

NAME	GENDER	DATE OF BIRTH	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
Carol	Female	13/05/73	Australia
Nigel	Male	07/08/70	Ireland
Prim	Male	08/18/66	USA
Nic	Male	07/02/73	South Africa
Frank	Male	31/01/66	South Africa
Sue	Female	04/10/64	South Africa

(Table 1.)

Ethics protocol

I agreed to and abided by all points in the MSc Ethics Release Form (Appendix no. 3) for this research, which was signed by both myself and my supervisor. All relevant information about the research, (including procedure, participant's role, confidentiality and anonymity) was provided to each individual participant in a Participant Information Sheet (Appendix no. 2). Participant Consent Forms (Appendix no. 1) were signed by all participants.

The research intervention

The participant's first step was to complete the 70 questions of a Burnout Self Diagnostic Tool (Appendix no. 4). This survey was also completed a month after their research intervention began, so that their before and after scores could be compared. The outcome of this survey will be discussed in the results section of this thesis.

The participants' second step involved being taught the technique of peripheral awareness in a single training session, via Skype. Following that, each participant received a copy of the "Mindful Power audio-programme" which also teaches peripheral awareness. They were encouraged to listen to one part of the programme per day for 24 consecutive days. There are 6 parts to the Mindful

Power audio-programme (n.d.) and each part applies peripheral awareness in a different context. All eleven research participants reported that they did listen for 24 days, meaning that each part of the programme was heard four times. This amount of listening to the programme was suggested in order for the participants to have a thorough, yet focussed learning period that could be integrated into their schedules without requiring long term commitment (to avoid the participants deviating from the intervention). The participants were also encouraged to practice the basic peripheral awareness skill regularly and to apply it as much as possible in challenging and stressful situations. The participants were asked to log their experiences with peripheral awareness up until the date of their interview, which was scheduled for a month after the Skype training sessions (where they learnt this skill).

The interviews

All participants were interviewed according to a semi-structured protocol for which there were set questions and prompts, however the primary course of the interview was determined by the ways in which the participants described their personal experiences of using peripheral awareness in their own lives. Although there were unique exceptions in each case, the basic interview questions were constructed around the idea put forward by Smith et al. (2009) that IPA brings insight into an individual's subjective experience of their body and personal identity. The questions were formulated around the intention to elicit the effects of peripheral awareness, namely:

1. Can you relate your experience of peripheral awareness to experiences that you have had before?
2. Has there been any change in your general state since learning and using peripheral awareness?
3. Has there been any change in how you deal with stress since learning and using peripheral awareness?
4. Have you noticed a difference in how you relate to people and/or the environment when in peripheral awareness?

5. Have you noticed a difference in how you relate to yourself when in peripheral awareness?
6. What is your general experience of having learned and applied peripheral awareness?
7. Has there been any change in how you deal with challenging situations since learning peripheral awareness?
8. Has any part of the peripheral awareness technique been ineffective or irrelevant to you?
9. Do you foresee any practical use of the peripheral awareness technique in your life?
10. What kind of a world would we see if more people were in peripheral awareness?

Procedure

Data collection and interpretation

The six transcribed interview recordings were analysed using predominantly IPA method. This involved firstly paying attention to how each participant expressed their experience of peripheral awareness in the interviews, which phenomena were given most emphasis as well as noting the subtleties of each participant's unique way in which they tried to give words to their experiences. Prompts during the interviews were determined mostly by how each individual participant articulated their experience of peripheral awareness as well as the effects of those resulting experiences, in order to explore the fullness of the phenomenology with the participant. Secondly, the transcribed interviews were read multiple times in order to extract all the direct and indirect expressions that the individual participants used, as well as the unique meanings of those expressions. While analysing the transcripts, in an attempt to accurately elicit the authentic meanings of each participant's experience, I aimed to see the world through their eyes and get in touch with their feelings. Concurrent to this, I tried to remain cognisant of the importance of bracketing my previous knowledge of peripheral awareness and any subsequent assumptions. Here, my intention was to avoid arriving at any premature conclusions during the analytical process, while remaining open to how engaging with the participants' experiences could

extract the underlying effects of being in, or experiencing peripheral awareness from the perspective of each participant's lifeworld. Engaging in the lifeworld of the participant in this form, Finlay suggests that “phenomenologists attend to the inter-animation of body and world, always remembering that person and world are intentionally and intersubjectively intertwined” (2013, p.19). The balancing and bracketing of points of view was an ongoing exercise for me during the entire analysis phase of this research.

Bracketing

Bracketing is an important concept in qualitative research. For Husserl, (1936/1970a, 1962/1977, cited in Finlay, 2013), bracketing means putting aside the natural, taken-for-granted everyday world and any interpretations in order to let the phenomenon show itself in its essence. Proceeding by way of essences means exploring the subjective meanings of phenomena accurately by recognising that we (the researchers) may be tightly caught up in the research. Thus one should take measures to ensure that one's point of view and preferences are set aside in order to influence the research as little as possible (for example, Merleau-Ponty, 1962. pp. xiv–xv).

Bracketing conveys an accepted understanding in phenomenological research that the researcher cannot be completely unbiased and objective, that they approach the research with a degree of background knowledge in the area of interest, which may lead to some subjective assumptions. Thus, it is worthy of noting that in IPA analysis the researchers accept that they are not seeking an absolute truth but rather aiming to uncover and explore what the experience means to the participant. The researcher should also be aware of the hermeneutic circle that Heidegger (1927/1962, cited in Smith 2009) considered essential to phenomenological analytic validity, which is to bracket off prejudice, presupposition, and previous knowledge so as to comprehend the meaning behind the words, in order to more fully and transparently reflect the participants' experience (Moustakas, 1994).

In phenomenological studies, like IPA, the researcher aims to stay open to receiving what is given. At all stages the researchers strive to be as present as possible to the phenomenon as it is described by the participants as well as when analysing the transcripts. This stance involves being empathic and genuinely curious while also being reflexively mindful (i.e. being critically self-aware) of one's own position and perspective, given one's particular personal, cultural and historical situatedness (Finlay, 2013). I have been careful to bracket my existing knowledge on the subject of

peripheral awareness as well as my interpretations of the research findings as follows:

When analysing the research participants' responses to the interview questions, attention was paid to both the words used as well as the manner in which those words were expressed. Special note was taken when the participants gave emphasis to their descriptions of the phenomena that they experienced or when these were described with emotion. I also calibrated to the participants' physiological responses as they described their experience of peripheral awareness. The intention here was to identify the amount of congruence (or lack thereof) between the unconscious mind's physical response (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) and the participants' consciously chosen words during the interviews. For example, affirmative head nods and similar gestures coupled with matching vocal tones or emotions were considered to be a congruent response. If the participant's response involved a selected word or phrase that was not supported by a matching vocal tone, emotion or physiological gesture, then it was considered less congruent. In this way I paid attention to and noted the congruent responses as accurate descriptors of the participant's genuine experience of peripheral awareness. These were highlighted and categorised into groups that became the various themes. Focusing on the congruency markers enabled me to bracket my presuppositions, prejudice and previous knowledge about peripheral awareness, in order to gather pure data as much as possible. This approach was also chosen as a way of minimising the influence of any expectancies throughout the interviewing process. Furthermore, I kept an open frame of reference during the interviews and their analysis through intentionally holding peripheral awareness. This helped me to be less influenced by my own thought streams and thereby more present with the participants through the process.

In terms of Demand Characteristics (Soegarrd, 2008), the participants in this research were all in burnout to begin with and as such they were looking for a solution. While this might be considered to be a motivation for them to adhere to the intervention and put an extra effort in, on the contrary, typical of burnout is a lack of motivation and energy to exert oneself (Wright, 2010). Arguably, some participants may have wanted to please me by achieving positive outcomes, however I have been careful to discern between their congruent and incongruent responses (for an example, see 'Critique of the methodological approach'), while not seeking out their positive responses. During the interviews all responses were treated with equanimity.

RESULTS

*But to those who have looked inside themselves this nonsense
makes perfect sense. And for those who put it into practice this
loftiness has deep roots.*

- Dan Millman -

During the first phase of analysis of the transcribed interviews - *seeing afresh* (Finlay, 2013), the main phenomena that each participant described in their own words were highlighted and 19 initial themes emerged. Following that, these 19 themes were ranked according to the amount of emphasis given to each. From most emphasised to least emphasised, these themes are:

1. **Awareness (expressed 31 times by all six participants).**

In this context the participants were referring mainly to having more (sometimes referred to as “greater”) sensory awareness of the environment in which they were, as well as an astute awareness of their thoughts and feelings. Additionally, there was an enhanced awareness of the interrelatedness between the participant's environment and their internal state.

2. **Objective (expressed 31 times by all six participants).**

The participants referred frequently to seeing the "bigger picture" and identifying more interrelatedness, which in turn gave them a sense of being more objective, especially in confrontational and other stressful situations.

3. **Easy to learn and apply (expressed 30 times by all six participants).**

Peripheral awareness was relatively easy to learn for all the participants and became quite automatic to apply in general contexts after a few practice sessions. Applying peripheral awareness in stressful situations became more achievable toward the end of the 24 day practice period.

4. Connected (expressed 27 times by all six participants).

A majority of participants described more of a felt (or deeper) connection with others and the environment, leading to...

5. Compassion (associated with “connection” by all six participants) .

Tenderness, sensitivity and care toward others and themselves. Being receptive to people's needs was also mentioned.

6. Well-being (expressed 19 times by all six participants).

Described on various levels, including physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

7. Resourceful responses in challenging situations (associated with “well-being” and “objectivity” by all six participants).

All participants expressed that peripheral awareness enabled them to deal with stress more effectively. In other words, while in peripheral awareness, they were less reactive and more resourceful in situations compared to how they had been in such situations before.

8. Dis-identification (expressed 18 times by all six participants).

In general, there was less identification with thoughts and a limited self-concept while in peripheral awareness. This was sometimes expressed as being aware of the activity of the mind, without being controlled by it.

9. Non-reactive (expressed 15 times by all six participants).

Most participants described a sense of freedom from negative emotions and “knee-jerk” reactions. “Non-reactive” and “dis-identified” were generally mutually inclusive.

10. Being present (expressed 14 times by all six participants).

The experience of being in a heightened state of awareness, without worrisome thoughts was common. This was sometimes decried as a feeling of “aliveness”. While “being present” may be a descriptor for other themes in this list, it was quite frequently mentioned as distinct phenomenon.

11. Mindfulness (expressed 10 times by all six participants).

In this first level of analysis, mindfulness was mostly described as a state and generally associated with simply being present. Additionally, several participants mentioned that peripheral awareness lead to a more mindful approach to both regular tasks and in challenging situations.

12. Calmness and stillness (expressed nine times by all six participants).

Little or no distracting self-talk was a common phenomenon. While not all participants used the word “calmness” or “stillness” to describe their experience of peripheral awareness, it was largely presupposed in the language used by all participants.

13. Inner peace (expressed six times by all six participants).

Some participants used the term “inner peace” interchangeably with “calmness” and “stillness”.

14. Relaxation (expressed 16 times by all six participants, but usually in relation to phenomena already listed above).

For some participants physical relaxation was the most prominent phenomenon resulting from being in peripheral awareness when practicing the technique in uninterrupted contexts.

15. Clarity (expressed eight times by all six participants).

This phenomenon was often associated with having a more objective perspective, or seeing the “bigger picture”, while sometimes it was referred to more as a level of knowing or

certainty that helped the participants have a clearer sense of direction in uncertain circumstances.

16. Performance and flow (expressed eight times by all six participants).

While some participants described being able to perform better, as in being creative and productive when in the state of peripheral awareness, others emphasised that it helped them to be in the “flow”.

17. Communication (expressed eight times by all six participants).

Relating to people optimally was relatively common amongst the participants, while in peripheral awareness, as was presenting a topic with greater ease in front of others and expressing themselves more openly in social contexts.

18. Resilience (expressed six times by all six participants).

Peripheral awareness, whether stated directly or implied, played an integral role in helping the participants bounce back or recompose themselves in stressful situations. Mostly, it was the participant's more mindful orientation that served in this regard. A greater level of resilience was also frequently presupposed in the descriptions of the other phenomena (listed above).

19. Intuition and receptivity.

Being more in tune with their *gut feel* was not frequently stated explicitly, however it was extensively implicit in the participants descriptions of peripheral awareness.

What follows is a word cloud depicting the phenomena that the participants expressed to be their experience of peripheral awareness:



(Figure 1.)

These initial themes are the words that the research participants used to describe their experience of peripheral awareness based on their own *map of reality* and vocabulary. Further analysis included looking for patterns across cases in order to build a thematic structure as suggested by Smith et al. (2009). Multiple themes were abstracted and one superordinate theme with sub themes was identified. In this case the superordinate theme represents the experience of peripheral awareness that some of the participants were not able to articulate consciously, but which can be abstracted from their descriptions as central to their experience of peripheral awareness.

Mindfulness was not the most used word amongst the participants, but it showed up unanimously as a superordinate theme. I took two definitions of mindfulness into consideration. The first one by Jon Kabat-Zinn (1990) is, "mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non judgmentally." Secondly, mindfulness in the Buddhist

tradition has been referred to as a "softly flowing moment of pure experience that is interlocked with the rest of reality, not separate from it" (Gunaratana, 1996). Additionally, Gunaratana also refers to mindfulness as non-conceptual, non-egoic, non-judgmental, non-attached awareness that involves goal-less, participatory and wakeful observation in the present (ibid).

Further analysis of the interview recordings involved paying careful attention to each participant's individual experience of peripheral awareness. This revealed that in all cases mindfulness was established in varying degrees, depending on the context in which peripheral awareness was applied. Although the exact words used by the two mindfulness practitioners in the above paragraph are not necessarily the words used by the participants in this study, as can be seen in the following transcript extracts, the correlations are evident.

The experience of mindfulness - as expressed by the research participants:

Carol:

I'm a lot more mindful before I speak, I guess, um before entering a situation I tend to have a much more mindful approach. (50-51)

I'm more aware of, of my universe, of what's around me. (68-69)

Frank:

...feeling really present in the moment you know noticing everything that is happening around me and being able to make um assessments from uh almost a non judgmental state, so very much a feeling of heightened awareness and connection to the present moment. (24-28)

Using the technique (peripheral awareness) almost allows you to stop and enter the present moment in such a way that uh the situation that you are in at that point in time um becomes observable. (35-37).

I felt a really deep connection with the group of people that I was uh presenting to and almost a heightened awareness of how

they were responding... (44-46).

...there was more focus on what was happening than an attachment to the emotions that I was experiencing. (5-51)

I felt a really rally deep connection with uh other members of the group and almost uh as if it really promoted a state of flow where um there was just connection and feedback and it was almost like for me it certainly felt like I was connecting with the energy of the others in the group. (53-56)

...very deep connection with who I am and why I am here. (61)

...when I was in the state of peripheral awareness um it was almost like I was more interested and I wanted to see deeper into the opinions and what they were talking about than I would be otherwise. (89-90)

...the state of peripheral awareness allows you to become a much better observer of what was happening and um not necessarily to, you know, get in the habit of jumping to conclusions and forming obedience but where ever; rather to assess the moment and um experience the moment for what it is rather what you think it is. (137-141).

...it brings it very quickly to a state of, of quiet reflection. (166).

Nigel:

...conversations may be slightly slower but it's more thoughtful, if that makes sense. Yeah more thoughtful and in relation to the other person. (70-71)

I'm listening and, and a little bit more objective to it, a little bit more open to what it is they are saying and, and certainly, you know certainly I might get my opinion back or may say something back to them but I would give them more space to say what is it that they had to say first (116-118).

Nic:

I'm just more aware of everything around me, um which then sort...changes my focus I think to the bigger picture of where I

am and what's going on around me. (24-25)

...you've got a better focus sort of on what you're doing but you've also got less of a focus on the things that you don't want to focus on (174-176)

Much more openness to observe, to receive whatever there is in front of me from whatever and whoever is in front of me. (244-255)

...it also opens up a connection. (260)

it's a deeper experience for me, it's, it's a change, as I think about it, it's, it's under another other level when I, when I do meditate or pray or just go to that spiritual space, and I ha, I have an expanded awareness state, it is, it is simply a, a different level of experience, uh you could call it deeper if you want you can call it a higher or another level. (343-347).

I think it's, it has to do something with the being completely present in terms of what is going on around you. So, obviously you are engaging your senses in a, in a deeper uh more of vivid way when you are in an expanded awareness state. But it seems to me that it's not only your senses that, that's, more attentive, uh but it's, it's also your... let's call it spiritual um antennae or your, your spiritual awareness that, that is expanded, so you become aware of I think, more than just the physical world around you, but you also aware of this region much more that you usually do. (transcription 2, 23-30)

Prim:

I feel more relaxed and open and connected. (15)

I'm tracking more my internal representation of how I stress out and have narrow focus. (41-42)

I'm much more present and connected and uh integrate to people's experiences so I think there is, people are just feeling better around me, they're feeling more connected to me and there is more appreciation and connectivity there which is really nice. (138-141)

It feels like my, my aliveness and my awareness feels full contact so that it's connected to myself, to others and to the broader environment and that feels like um there is another level of restedness and being in that. (189-192)

Sue:

...enabled me to see my tension. (58)...acknowledging, seeing it and responding to it. (68)

I became more pertinently aware or more effectively aware of my tension when I was holding it subconsciously. (93-94)
my thoughts were then less fuzzy which means I could think more clearly, I could respond more clearly. (127-128)

I could engage with it more or I could be essentially more present with what I was busy with rather than chewing and rehearsing on my irritation. (231-232)

...a greater sense of tolerance. (238)

...valuing the person despite the action. (264)

...my response would probably be close to my body, and I'll be able to look at it from better perspective. (277-288)

...being able to see the action for what, for what it is. (328)

... easy to connect to changes in my body. (356)

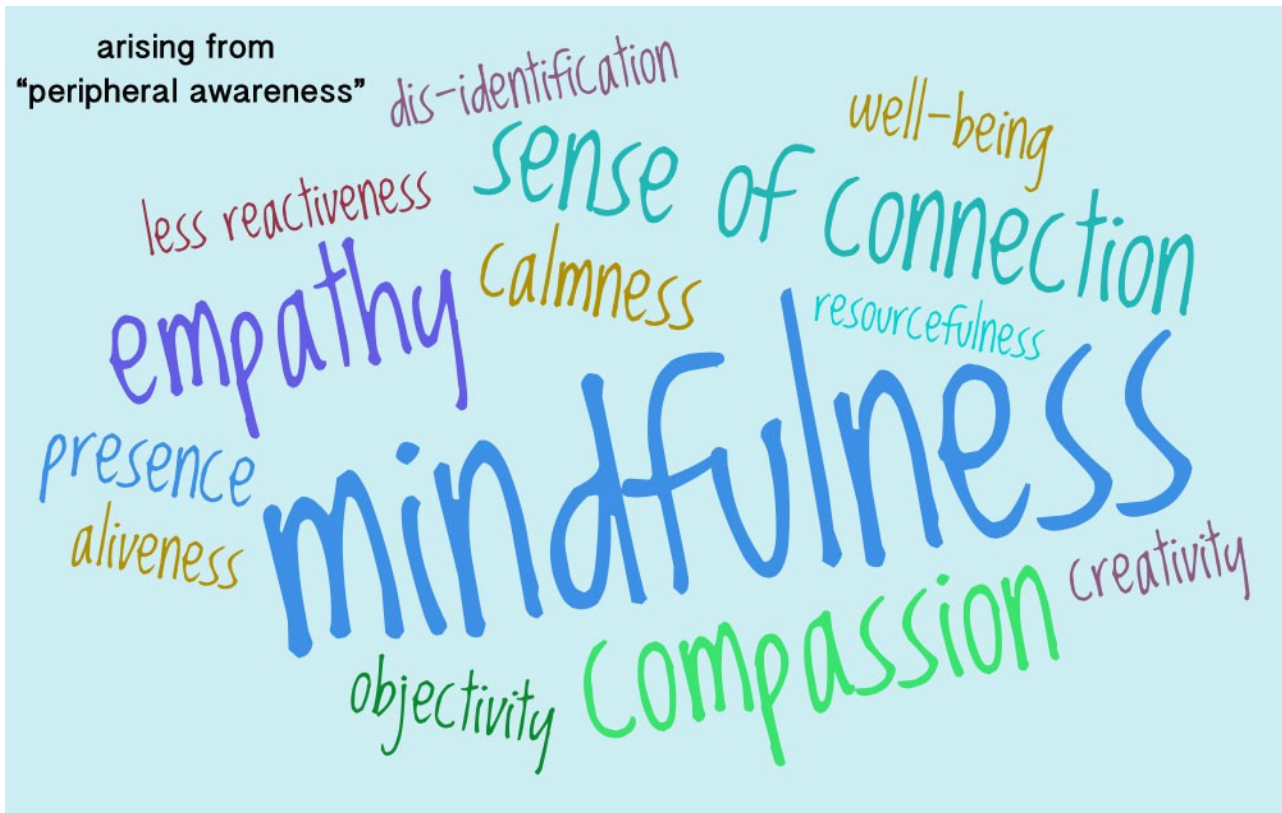
...compassion towards myself. (399)

...less judgmental. (403)

...I'm more present. (483)

...the connections are real again and at least can... feeling that I'm being respectful of people when I'm within their space and not that I was there physically with my mind somewhere else. (518-521)

What follows is a word cloud indicating the phenomena that arise as a result of being in peripheral awareness according to how the participants described their experience:



(Figure 2.)

Sub-themes linked to mindfulness

The emergent themes were analysed according to the four-phase protocol suggested by Finlay (2013). After a lengthy “dwelling” (ibid) phase of this analysis, sub-themes relating to mindfulness were explicated. Here, Smith's (2008) suggestion that the analysis moves beyond the text to a more psychological level came into play, as particular qualities of the participants’ experience became apparent through allowing their deeper meanings to take form. While these sub-themes describe characteristics of mindfulness itself, for some participants they were distinct phenomena that had a pertinent impact by themselves. Since the descriptions of these sub-themes have already been incorporated into how the participants expressed their experience of the main theme (mindfulness), they are only being listed with a brief commentary here.

The following five sub-themes arose out of exploring what mindfulness meant to the participants as well as from their descriptions of mindful states and mindful approaches in various situations that resulted from being in peripheral awareness.

1. A deep sense of connection with others, the environment and spirit.
2. Well-being and calmness.
3. Empathy and compassion toward others and oneself.
4. A sense of objectivity, as well as less identification with thoughts and emotions (thus less negative reactivity).
5. Being highly present, centred and grounded (sometimes described as aliveness).

Transcript extracts for each of the above five sub-themes can be found in the Appendix (no. 6).

It can be seen from this list that the sub-themes of mindfulness themselves, are characteristics of traditional mindfulness. These were the most articulated phenomena for some participants in certain contexts, which in turn provides validity for the existence and centrality of mindfulness when it is cultivated through the practice of peripheral awareness.

Other themes linked to peripheral awareness

“Performance”, “resourcefulness”, “creativity” and “flow” were four other themes that emerged in the interviews. The initial interview questions were designed to elicit the phenomena associated with peripheral awareness, however some characteristics were also described in terms of uses and benefits. Aside from mindfulness and its related phenomena, performance, resourcefulness, creativity and flow were either directly stated or presupposed in the participants’ answers. While these four themes could have been explored for their own worth as four distinct phenomena, this might have diverged from the intention of this study, therefore distinguishing

between them was avoided, especially since the research participants described their experiences in terms of these four characteristics interchangeably, depending on the context of their examples. This can be seen in the following transcript extracts:

Carol:

I'm more in control of my emotions, um which in turn people respond differently because I'm responding differently. So I have a much more effective result in, in, in a confrontational environment or in a stressful, stressful situation. (59-62)

Frank:

I felt a really really deep connection with uh other members of the group and almost uh as if it really promoted a state of flow where um there was just connection and feedback and it was almost like for me it certainly felt like I was connecting with the energy of the others in the group. (53-56)

Nigel:

In conversations and um things like that its, its, it will be easier. Yeah it's easier.(58)

It gives you light at the end of the tunnel. (205)

you can look at things um you know as your own, (short laugh) I don't want to say as your own psychologist but as your own, you know, as your own mentor and sort of thing, with your own, your own life through different eyes I think. (265-268)

more confidence in my own self, more conviction that I'm on the right path ; I'm living the life I'm, I'm supposed to be living (376-377).

Nic:

it's given me better results I'm still doing it consciously though on the bike but um it definitely enhanced my performance. (155-157)

it's definitely being in a better zone for me. (205)

this state really improves the quality of a session. (299)

It's like starting on the 50 meter line uh running against guys that started on the 100 meter line. (363-365)

Prim:

my relationship to the task is much more dynamic. (97)

feel much more empowered to innovate, to generate a solution. (107-108)

It feels like my, my aliveness and my awareness feels full contact so that it's connected to myself, to others and to the broader environment. (189-191)

It's better work and more effective performance because it's more interconnected. (212-213)

Sue:

...acknowledging, seeing it and responding to it. (68)

I've actually experienced better sleep because I've often done it in the evening before I go to bed and I've had fewer headaches last while. (77-79)

my thoughts were then less fuzzy which means I could think more clearly, I could respond more clearly. (127-128)

I'm responding differently to small irritations (155)

I could engage with it more or I could be essentially more present with what I was busy with rather than chewing and rehearsing on my irritation. (231-232)

...more useful response...(350)

There's more flow. (557)

As can be seen from the extracts above, an enhancement in terms of performance, resourcefulness, creativity and flow was apparent, in one or more forms for each of the participants. Since each of the participants applied peripheral awareness in different contexts, their examples give varying emphasis that includes at least one of these four characteristics. The complete interview transcripts (Appendix no. 7) reveal many other examples that provide significant support

for the probability that these four qualities are commonly associated with peripheral awareness. It should be noted that each of these four characteristics arose from an ethical and wholesome state of mind, as the mindfulness related extracts show. Thus it can be concluded that peripheral awareness may enhance performance, resourcefulness, creativity and flow in a manner that does not deliberately cause harm to people or the environment. On the contrary, peripheral awareness, based on the outcome of this research, may foster these four qualities in a way that is positive, constructive and useful, not only to that individual, but also for the others with whom that person engages in their current context.

The Burnout Self Diagnostic Tool

(see Appendix no. 4)

The Burnout Self Diagnostic Tool (Write, 2005) was included as an element of quantitative research to compare with the qualitative method that comprises most of this study. It was used as a means to investigate if practicing peripheral awareness influences one's level of stress and burnout. All eleven participants completed the survey prior to commencing the programme and they completed it again one month later. The outcome of this exercise was that the eleven participants experienced on average a 26% reduction in their stress and burnout levels after 24 days of practicing peripheral awareness. This can be considered as a 26% improvement in their baseline level of well-being or in their ability to respond to stress more resourcefully (see Table 2., over page). Whilst the small sample size precludes any definitive conclusions, this 26% reduction in burnout levels may be viewed as suggestive that peripheral awareness has the potential to provide participants with a significant ability to enhance their psychological state. A *paired t-test* indicated that these data suggest a significant difference: $t = 4.8705$, $p = 0.0007$ (see t-test result in Appendix no. 9). The major limiting factor in this element of my research is clearly that eleven participants do not suffice as a sufficient volume to qualify for quantitative data. Nonetheless, this additional quantitative aspect does support the outcomes of the qualitative aspect of this research.

NAME	BURNOUT SCORE BEFORE INTERVENTION	BURNOUT SCORE AFTER INTERVENTION	REDUCTION IN LEVEL OF BURNOUT	PERCENTAGE OF BURNOUT REDUCTION
Sandy	54 (out of 70)	11 (out of 70)	43	61.42%
Frank	32	10	22	31.42%
Carol	20	11	9	12.85%
Kate	17	5	12	17.14%
Sue	22	16	6	8.57%
Nigel	57	44	13	18.57%
Nancy	9	4	5	7.14%
Trish	45	20	25	35.71%
Nic	39	12	27	38.57%
Jo	14	6	8	11.42%
Prim	40	5	35	50.00%
<u>AVERAGE</u>	349	144	205	26.62%

(Table 2.)

The above participant burnout scores were provided by email, which has been kept on record.

DISCUSSION

*The universe and the human psyche have no boundaries
or limits. Each of us is connected with and is an expression of
all of existence.*

- Stanislav Grof -

The objective of this thesis is not to compare peripheral awareness with mindfulness, however the correlations may be worthy of noting, especially in relation to how both approaches are useful when it comes to dealing with stress. The result of this study shows that the peripheral awareness technique is a mindfulness-based approach with practical applications in the context of stress management and care. Stress can take many forms, and as such, there will be many other suitable ways of resolving such issues. The participants in this study all experienced burnout prior to the research intervention and an alleviation of their burnout symptoms after the intervention. Therefore, the following discussion elaborates on the role of stress in relation to burnout and how peripheral awareness can be a useful resource in this context.

Burnout has been referred to as a “soul sickness” (Wright, 2010, p.8), where one reaches a point of *being sick and tired of being sick and tired*, but oblivious of any solution. A pervasive cause of burnout is believed to be unwavering and persistent stress (Cartwright & Cooper, 1996; Selye, 1950) that results in dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours that are disengaged from the present moment (cited in Dierendonck, Garsen & Visser, 2005). Therefore, since mindfulness involves the cultivation of present moment awareness that can in turn help to reduce one's stress levels (cited in Malinowski, 2008), it is most likely helpful to alleviate burnout too and might even serve as a preventative measure. McKnight & Kashdan suggest that people with access to a large set of self-regulatory tools (like peripheral awareness, for example), with an ability to flexibly apply them, are in an optimal position to navigate the challenges of life and sustain high levels of healthy functioning (2009). Peripheral awareness, in its simple form, is activated through intention and sustained reasonably effortlessly by focusing attention in a way that does not require one to assume any particular posture or pursue a task, thus it may serve as a practical self-regulatory tool. Inherent

in mindfulness is self-knowledge, realizing larger patterns of meaning, and taking a wider view (Niemic, Rashid, Spinella, 2012). This research has identified that similar qualities are associated with peripheral awareness too.

Mindfulness offers a "metacognitive perspective" (Teasdale, 1999) which makes it possible to see the aspects of any experience as temporary phenomena rather than creating an identity from them. This phenomenon, as well as an improved ability to cope with stress, has also been attributed to meditation (Katz et al. 2005). Additionally, Niemic, Rashid & Spinella, (2012) point out that the integration of mindfulness through meditation may well be a formula to cultivate productive engagement in work, an expanded sense of meaning and purpose, enhanced physical and psychological well-being, and improved relationships. The achievement of mindfulness may counteract the effect of stressors that can lead to burnout, thus mindfulness practices probably will contribute to the alleviation of burnout symptoms and possibly even play a significant role in burnout prevention. Similarly, as outlined above, peripheral awareness is in some respects a form of mindfulness practice that may provide similar benefits in terms of stress and burnout.

A general conclusion that can be substantiated from this research is that tunnel awareness might be a mode of perception that identifies separateness between self and others, as well as between subject and object. On the other hand, peripheral awareness is potentially a mode of perception that identifies the deeper connection and interrelatedness between self and others, as well as between subject and object. Merleau-Ponty's comment, "The theory of the body schema is implicitly a theory of perception" (ibid pp.239), in the context of this research, suggests that how we perceive ourselves, others, and the world, as well as our relationship with others and the world is, to a certain degree determined by whether we are in tunnel awareness or peripheral awareness. This point raises the issue that a sense of separateness between self and others is typically involved when one experiences distress. For indeed, in 'fight or flight' mode one has to confront or escape the 'other', while on the contrary, feeling deeply connected with any object of reference, especially when that is a sentient being, may, as this research has demonstrated, promote feelings of calm and well-being while cultivating the virtues of non-judgment and compassion. It is not being suggested that tunnel awareness is inherently problematic or the cause of distress, but rather that a narrowly focussed perception is often one's operational mode in stressful situations. As such, the ability to shift into peripheral awareness in such situations may be a useful resource.

Interpretation of results

My existing preconceptions about peripheral awareness were explicitly stated up front, and as such the important role of bracketing in this research was emphasised. However, as pointed out by Smith, one may only realise the full extent of their preconceptions once the interpretation is underway (2009). Bearing this in mind, I have remained cautious in order to avoid misinterpreting the results of this research. Nonetheless, as the analysis progressed, I immersed myself as fully as possible into the lifeworld of the participants, seeking to comprehend their experiences in relation to peripheral awareness from, as much as possible, their point of view. In contemplating the sometimes fragmented, but clearly complimentary phenomena across all themes, and then exploring what might underlie the individuated meanings expressed by the participants, a central phenomenon became apparent. What arose is not characteristically different from mindfulness and perhaps even intrinsic to it. The phenomenon that appears to be at the core of peripheral awareness is one of an expanded sense of self and a felt connection with life on both a macro and micro scale, that is benevolent in nature. While not all the participants used the same vocabulary (due to their different backgrounds) to describe this experience, it was evidently present for all participants, albeit at varying degree. The resulting states and behaviours were generally positive and desirable to all participants, as well as noticeably beneficial to those with whom they interacted.

In order to check if there was validity in the above conclusion, about a month after the research intervention had been completed, I sent an email to all eleven research participants, asking about their current states and general responses to stressful situations. I received replies from all participants, with the exception of one. Each reply stated that the participants were less triggered by what used to cause them stress and negative emotional reactions, as well as that they were experiencing more well-being and resourcefulness in their life. Almost all of them also reported that they were finding it relatively easy to access peripheral awareness whenever they wanted to, including in challenging situations. This was summed up concisely by one participant who stated: "I can now drop into the state of peripheral awareness very quickly, like I decide to go into it and there it is" (Frank).

Furthermore, nearly a year after the interviews, upon completing the final draft of this thesis, I sent another email to the participants with the following question: "Has peripheral awareness continued to be useful to you since learning it? If so, please mention how." The following feedback

was received:

“The peripheral awareness practice continues to support me in making quality choices, feeling and being relaxed and ready during stressful and non stressful work. It continues to enhance my performance. It's been an invaluable contribution to my well being.”

Prim (Email correspondence 08/06/2015)

“Peripheral awareness has helped me to become calmer and more relaxed in times where I felt extremely tense, to the point where I could not sleep. I would lie in my bed and practice PA, using my breath to release the tension throughout my body. Secondly, PA definitely has helped me to silence the self-talk (mind chatter). I now continuously remind myself that my core "way of being" is peace, love, acceptance for "what is" and I am filled with gratitude. Having an expanded awareness creates the natural state for me with no judgement and brings me back to my grounded centred self.”

Nancy (Email correspondence 10/06/2015)

“The peripheral awareness techniques have been of immense use to me personally and when helping others. I now stop and take my surrounding circumstances in before reacting. Wonderful. With others, showing them this technique has also helped them with anxiety issues and general anger management.”

Carol (Email correspondence 11/06/2015)

“I use PA to access my meditative state and to enter the “healing” space when I am working with my clients.”

Jo (Email correspondence 14/06/2015)

“Peripheral Awareness has continued to be a great tool to use and state to be in. It has certainly assisted me in living

through stressful situations with more composure and effectiveness. I even use it consciously to calm down before I fall asleep at night!”

Nic (Email correspondence 14/06/2015)

“Peripheral awareness has created a calming practice that gives me the quiet time of the day. The last year has also been a year of upheaval for me on many levels and I have also practiced peripheral awareness at times when I felt miserable and overwhelmed by circumstances and events. The way I adapted it over time went beyond just practicing the exercise as taught, but I started using it as almost an induction into a longer and more spiritual meditation (the loving kindness meditation). Practising it as an inductive intro into the meditation creates a space where I can focus on the meditation in much more clarity.

It helps with calming my mind and body and connect to a place of spiritual openness.”

Frank (Email correspondence 15/06/2015)

The above participant feedback suggests that the simplicity and practicality of peripheral awareness may help to make it an enduring state, or at least one that is to access as and when desired. Notable in this feedback is a clear absence of burnout symptoms. Also, the participants appear to be generally better prepared to deal with the causes of burnout, which they had all been negatively affected by prior to learning and applying peripheral awareness. Thus, this feedback also suggests that peripheral awareness may be a useful approach to help prevent burnout and might add value to burnout treatments.

Conclusion

The overall result of this research indicates that peripheral awareness shares similar characteristics with mindfulness. Additionally, whether directly stated or prepossessed in the research participants’ responses to the interview questions and later feedback, peripheral awareness

also played a positive role in relation to performance enhancement and stress resilience. Thus, peripheral awareness may be a useful and practical approach to helping people establish both resourcefulness and resilience in stressful contexts. To sum up, the outcome of this research suggests that peripheral awareness may be a useful approach to enhance mindfulness and improve well-being, while helping one to deal with stress resourcefully, which in turn may help to prevent and treat burnout.

Finally, earlier in this thesis a working definition of peripheral awareness was proposed, being that *peripheral awareness is a dynamic means to open the aperture of one's awareness in order to illuminate the mind*. With this definition presupposing that it is possible to broaden one's level of awareness in order to enhance one's psychological state, I believe that the outcomes of this study support the validity of this definition.

Critique of the methodological approach

Based on the time frame of this research project and on the fact that I'm currently living in a country where English is not widely spoken, I relied on social media as a way of interesting participants from abroad to enrol in my study. This meant having a diverse group of participants, which was interesting for me, although a more homogenous group, for example - studying a group of executives working in a high stress environment, would have contextualised the research more.

During the interviews and the analysis of them I have explored (where possible) the participant's experience of both somatic and transpersonal perceptions when they are in peripheral awareness. In this regard, using Skype as our communication medium was somewhat limiting due to the lack of being able to visually calibrate to the participant's full body responses to the interview questions. To this end, the analysis of my interviews pays careful attention to the expression of the participant's physical experiences through identifying (in addition to their verbal report) the points that were difficult to articulate as well as unconscious sounds (like "um" and "aah", for example), including their non-verbal communication (like pauses, for example) in order to 'give voice' to the felt experiences and bodily phenomena that might be associated with peripheral awareness, but which were not always easy for the participants to identify or put into words. Being in peripheral awareness myself during the interviews enabled me to feel with the participants and these feelings or intuitions prompted spontaneous follow-up questions that in some cases enabled the participants

to explore pertinent aspects of their experience that might not otherwise have arisen. Were we sitting in the same room, I believe that this highly relevant part of the research might have been more effective. Kabat-Zinn refers to mindfulness as a way of becoming aware of our lived experience (2011). When it comes to a qualitative study, I believe mindfulness is a practical tool for researchers.

Implications for future research and applications

Five areas are being suggested for future research in peripheral awareness:

Firstly, a mindfulness based lifestyle has been suggested by Niemiec, Rashid & Spinella, (2012) to cultivate productive engagement in work, an expanded sense of meaning and purpose, enhanced physical and psychological well-being, and improved relationships. Unfortunately too few people take the initiative to integrate mindfulness into their life and one potential reason for this might lie in the assumption that a mindfulness based lifestyle means maintaining a regular meditation practice. While the value of meditation is not to be underestimated, peripheral awareness, being a relatively simple and versatile skill, may be of particular use to busy people who don't have time to formally meditate, or for those who are sceptical of Eastern practices, but who would nonetheless like to reap the stress reducing benefits of such practices. The outcome of this research project suggests that peripheral awareness may serve as a useful tool for people who are “on the go” but seek a way to be more mindful in their endeavours, while reducing stress levels. Further research exploring the usefulness and impact of peripheral awareness in the workplace may be of value to people and organisations in this context.

Secondly, through experiences in sessions with my own clients, assimilating world news, as well as conversations with diverse people from different countries, there appears to be a rise in the number of youths and young adults who experience burnout. The utilisation of mindfulness approaches aimed at treating burnout may offer hope for our next generations. A quantitative study, measuring the effects of peripheral awareness amongst individuals with burnout in this age group may be potentially constructive.

Thirdly, although this study did not explore applications of peripheral awareness in the contexts of learning and performance disorders, based on the findings in this study, there is reason to believe that applications of peripheral awareness may be beneficial to people (including

children) who are challenged in this context. In considering the descriptions like “highly present”, “more aware”, “reduced self talk”, “sense of connection”, “more objective” and “mindful” being expressed by the participants in this study, researching the role of peripheral awareness regarding learning (especially in the cases of ADD and ADHD) as well as performance enhancement is recommended.

Fourthly, the increased use of mobile electronic devices (including smart phones, tablet computers and others) might, through classic conditioning, contribute to the onset of an enduring state of tunnel awareness, that may in turn be one of the reasons behind why many individuals do not cope very well with stress. Research is recommended to explore, firstly, the validity of the hypothesis that such electronic devices might be the cause of an enduring state of tunnel awareness, and secondly, that such a condition might limit one's ability to be in a state of peripheral awareness when the latter mode of perception would be more ethically and constructively suited to the context.

Finally, the practice of peripheral awareness had a spiritual impact for a few of the participants in this study, for whom the experience was difficult to put into words. Nonetheless, there were examples of normal consciousness being transcended, states of inner peace and wellbeing were identified, and a deep connection, not only with other people, but also with a spiritual realm was expressed. Two participants stated:

“Peripheral awareness helps with perspective and the way I fit into, call it the universe, where I am now, what I want, even I've noticed my self talk changes when I'm there. It's a much calmer, much more measured almost thinking things through without thinking them through but dealing with the things in a much calmer way.” (Nic. 323-326)

“It [peripheral awareness] deepens experiences, it makes your responses to situations much more meaningful and coherent.” (Nic. 334-335)

“...it's also your... let's call it spiritual um antennae or your, your spiritual awareness that, that is expanded.” (Nic . 358-359)

“[Peripheral awareness] helps with calming my mind and body and connect to a place of spiritual openness.”

Frank (Email correspondence 11/06/2015)

On this basis further research could explore how peripheral awareness might serve as a potential 'bridge' between the personal and transpersonal levels of consciousness.

APPENDIX

1. Participant Consent Form.....	58
2. Participant Information Sheet.....	60
3. Ethics Release Form.....	62
4. The Burnout Self Diagnostic Tool.....	64
5. The interview questions.....	66
6. Interview transcript extracts for sub-themes linked to mindfulness.....	68
6.1 A deep sense of connection with others, the environment and spirit.....	68
6.2 Well-being and calmness.....	69
6.3 Empathy and compassion toward others and oneself.....	70
6.4 A sense of objectivity, as well as less identification with thoughts and emotions....	72
6.5 Being highly present, centred and grounded.....	77
7. Complete interview transcripts <i>See attached folder containing all six interview transcripts</i>	
8. Checklist.....	81
9. T-test result.....	82

1. Research Participant Consent Form



Research purpose:

To study how the technique of “peripheral awareness” influences one’s thoughts (including perceptions), feelings (including motivations) and resulting behaviours.

Who is behind this research?

This research is being done by Jevon Dängeli as part of his MSc studies in Consciousness, Spirituality & Transpersonal Psychology. It is a collaborative project of ITA Professional, the Professional Development Foundation and the Scientific and Medical Network, which is validated by Middlesex University, UK.

Further details about this study are outlined in this link. Read about the research participant involvement in this link.


I confirm that I understand the information provided for the above research project (including what is outlined on the following two web pages: <http://jevondangeli.com/consciousness-research-participants-required> and <http://jevondangeli.com/consciousness-research-participant-resources>). I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that my participation is voluntary. I commit to taking part in this research - involving an initial training session via Skype with Jevon, learning the peripheral awareness technique from the audio-programme that will be provided to me (through listening to the recordings for a minimum of 12 consecutive days), practicing the technique diligently during the month of the research, and participating in a recorded interview by Skype about one month after the initial Skype session. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and that this will not affect my legal rights.

I understand that any personal information collected during the research will be anonymised and remain confidential.

I agree to take part in the above research project.

By signing your name below, you agree to all of the above statements.

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature
<u>Jevon Dangeli</u>	<u>11/08/2014</u>	

Please email your signed Research Participant Consent Form to info@jevondangeli.com

2. Participant Information Sheet

Name of researcher:

Jevon Dangeli

This research project forms part of Jevon Dangeli's MSc studies in Consciousness, Spirituality & Transpersonal Psychology. It is a collaborative project of ITA Professional, the Professional Development Foundation and the Scientific and Medical Network, which is validated by Middlesex University, UK.

The research is supervised by:

Les Lancaster - Emeritus Professor of Transpersonal Psychology at Liverpool John Moores University; Honorary Research Fellow in the Centre for Jewish Studies at Manchester University; member of the Adjunct Research Faculty at Sofia University (formerly the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology), and the California Institute of Integral Studies. He is Chair of the Transpersonal Psychology Section of the British Psychological Society and President of the International Transpersonal Association.

Research topic/question:

How does applying the awareness expanding technique of "peripheral awareness" affect an individual's experience, particularly in stressful situations?

Purpose of study:

To study how the technique of peripheral awareness affects one's thoughts (including perceptions), feelings (including motivations) and behaviours.

Procedures and Participants Role:

Participants will be taught the technique of peripheral awareness in an initial Skype meeting. Additionally, the participants will receive an audio recording where Jevon teaches the peripheral awareness technique. Participants will be encouraged to listen to the recording regularly until such time that they are able to use the technique with ease, as well as in stressful situations.

About one month after the initial Skype meeting the participant is expected to meet with Jevon once more by Skype for an interview about their experience of using peripheral awareness. This semi-structured interview will be recorded and transcribed and then analysed using predominantly the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis method.

Confidentiality:

Research participant details will be kept completely confidential and the only people having access to their information will be Jevon and his supervisor Les Lancaster. Participants will not be required to give full names for this project if they choose not to. Jevon will be allocating participant numbers to ensure anonymity.

Please Note:

All participants have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without prejudice to access of services which are already being provided or may subsequently be provided to the participant.

3. Ethics Release form for MA/MSc Projects

All candidates planning to undertake research are required to complete this Ethics Release Form and to submit along with their Research Proposal. Please note the following.

It is essential that you have an understanding of ethical considerations central to planning and conducting research.

Approval to carry out research does not exempt you from Ethics Committee approval from institutions within which you may be planning to conduct the research, e.g. Hospitals, NHS Trusts, Local Education Authorities, HM Prisons Service, etc.

Please answer all of the following questions:

Has the project proposal and ethical considerations in draft been completed and submitted to the advisor or consultant?	<u>Yes</u>	No
Will the research involve an intervention or change to an existing situation that may affect people and/or an evaluation of outcomes of an intervention?	<u>Yes</u>	No
If yes, have participants been given information about the aims, procedure and possible risks involved, in easily understood language? (Attach a copy of any info sheet you may have provided)	<u>Yes</u>	No
Will any person's position, treatment or care be in any way prejudiced if they choose not to participate in the project?	Yes	<u>No</u>
Can participants freely withdraw from the project at any stage without risk or harm of prejudice?	<u>Yes</u>	No
Will the project involve working with or studying minors (i.e. <16 years)?	Yes	<u>No</u>
If yes, will signed parental consent be obtained?		
	Yes	No
Are there any questions or procedures likely to be considered in any way offensive or inappropriate?	Yes	<u>No</u>
Have all necessary steps been taken to protect the privacy of participants and the need for anonymity?	<u>Yes</u>	No
Is there provision for the safe-keeping of written data and video/ audio recordings of participants?	<u>Yes</u>	No
If applicable, is there provision for de-briefing participants after the intervention or project?	<u>Yes</u>	No
If any specialised instruments, for example psychometric instruments are to be employed, will their use be controlled and supervised by a qualified practitioner e.g. a psychologist?	<u>Yes</u>	No
Will you need to put your proposal through an ethics committee related to your professional work?	Yes	<u>No</u>

If you have placed an X in any of the bold boxes, please provide further information:

**Professional Development Foundation
And,
Institute for Work Based Learning
Middlesex University**

Student's name: Jevon Dangeli

Award Programme: MSc

Title of Your Project: Burnout research

Name of Adviser: Les Lancaster

I confirm that the information provided is correct: Yes

Signature of Student:



Given the information provided, I support the approval of this proposal on ethical grounds:

Signature of Adviser:
.....

Signature of Chair of Programme Approval Panel
.....

Date:

Any further comments:

4. The Burnout Self Diagnostic Tool

Used with permission from Stephen Write of the Sacred Space Foundation in the UK.

Published in the Nursing Standard vol. 19, no. 6 (2005)

<http://journals.rcni.com/userimages/ContentEditor/1373365517540/Burnout-a-spiritual-crisis.pdf>

The following statements apply to your life in general, including work and home. Don't try picking away at them and analysing, just allow your responses to surface spontaneously and for an overall picture to emerge and answer "yes" or "no" to each:

1. I find myself feeling stressed or irritated when others make even simple demands of me.
2. Work always seems to exhaust me.
3. I seem to get angry more easily than I used to.
4. I have this feeling of being in the "wrong" place a lot of the time.
5. I worry about things a lot more than I used to.
6. When I go to sleep, I wake up feeling tired.
7. I often can't sleep because of thoughts/worries racing through my mind.
8. I don't feel a sense of peace.
9. I feel disconnected from normal life.
10. Everybody seems to be OK but me.
11. I seem to move from one job to another and nothing really satisfies.
12. I seem to move from one relationship to another and nothing really satisfies.
13. I feel stuck and going nowhere in my current main relationship(s).
14. I feel stuck and going nowhere in my work.
15. I am more suspicious of people than I used to be.
16. I feel unhappy a lot at home.
17. Work no longer satisfies me.
18. I feel weighed down by responsibility.
19. Changes or demands at work feel like a threat.
20. I feel I'm in the wrong job.
21. I feel I'm in the wrong marriage/partnership.
22. People seem to be avoiding me.
23. I avoid other people.
24. I feel helpless at work.

25. I feel helpless at home.
26. I seem to be running just to stay still – doing more but achieving less.
27. I seem to be helping everyone else, but no-one seems to see my suffering.
28. I get sick a lot.
29. I seem to get a lot of aches and pains.
30. The thought of going to work makes me feel sick.
31. The thought of going home makes me feel sick.
32. Doing ordinary things like shopping seems to take a monumental effort.
33. I seem to forget things more than usual.
34. Normal conversation seems to take more effort than usual.
35. I feel ashamed that I am not coping.
36. I feel no one really understands what life is like for me.
37. People trying to help just make things worse.
38. The future seems hopeless.
39. I've lost confidence in myself.
40. I feel like I'm on my own.
41. Whatever's wrong, it's all my fault.
42. Whatever's wrong, it's because others are getting at me.
43. Things I once believed in don't seem true any more.
44. The world seems a place of horror and despair.
45. I've sometimes thought that death would be better than life.
46. I'm taking more time off work than I used to.
47. At work, I feel like I am under attack a lot of the time.
48. Sometimes I burst into tears for no apparent reason.
49. I have inexplicable feelings of deep sadness.
50. I can explode with anger at things I would once see as trivial.
51. When I'm talking with people, it's sometimes like we're using different languages.
52. I've lost interest in my pastimes or hobbies.
53. I seem to be making a lot more mistakes than usual.
54. People I love seem to be getting more angry with me.
55. There seems to be no time for anything but work.
56. I've no time for people, even those I love.
57. I seem to indulge in more drink, drugs, food, casual sex, junk TV or whatever.
58. I feel exhausted and drained of energy a lot of the time.

59. At home, people's demands on me can feel like an attack.
60. I feel mentally paralysed and don't know which way to turn.
61. I've lost interest in sex.
62. I spend more time in bed than usual.
63. When things go wrong I tend to blame me.
64. I've put on/lost weight.
65. I've had more of the following of late – headaches, vomiting, diarrhoea, tummy ache, constipation, breathlessness, fainting, dizziness.
66. I seem to be making a lot of mistakes with even the simplest of things.
67. I'm easily irritated by things I would normally ignore – background noises, people speaking, loud TV etc.
68. I seem to be taking more careless risks e.g. at work, while driving, household jobs, etc.
69. I've become more cynical.
70. I feel a lot of the time like I just want to curl up in a ball and the world to go away.

In general, answering “yes” 35 times or more would indicate a state of serious challenge in your life. If you answered “yes” 50 or more times you are probably in burnout right now. There is no fixed score, but clearly the higher the number of “yes” answers in this case the closer you are to being in burnout. On average, answering “yes” more than 35 times would suggest that you are very close to if not actually in burnout and this is a wake up call to do something about it.

5. The interview questions

1. Can you relate your experience of peripheral awareness to experiences that you have had before?
2. Has there been any change in your general state since learning and using peripheral awareness?
3. Has there been any change in how you deal with stress since learning and using peripheral awareness?
4. Have you noticed a difference in how you relate to people and/or the environment when in peripheral awareness?
5. Have you noticed a difference in how you relate to yourself when in peripheral awareness?
6. What is your general experience of having learned and applied peripheral awareness?
7. Has there been any change in how you deal with challenging situations since learning peripheral awareness?
8. Has any part of the peripheral awareness technique been ineffective or irrelevant to you?
9. Do you foresee any practical use of the peripheral awareness technique in your life?
10. What kind of a world would we see if more people were in peripheral awareness?

6. Sub-themes linked to mindfulness

1. A deep sense of connection with others, the environment and spirit.
2. Well-being and calmness.
3. Empathy and compassion toward others and oneself.
4. A sense of objectivity, as well as less identification with thoughts and emotions (thus less negative reactivity).
5. Being highly present, centred and grounded (sometimes described as aliveness).

Transcript extracts for each of the above five sub-themes follow:

A deep sense of connection

As sense of connection with people and life as a whole is defined in Buddhism as a "softly flowing moment of pure experience that is interlocked with the rest of reality, not separate from it" (Gunaratana, 1996). As such, I have included descriptions of this phenomenon (where applicable) in the transcript segments related to mindfulness in the results section of this thesis.

Well-being and calmness

Carol:

I noticed... um a sense of mm, deeper relaxation and inner peace. (31)

Frank:

...being really calm, feeling really peaceful, feeling really present in the moment. (24-25)

...it brings me a lot quicker (than meditation) to that same space where uh not only where I'm relaxed but also where the mind becomes still. (169-170)

Nigel:

You don't forget where you are but you definitely sink into uh a

sort of more comfortable space. (19)

It's almost like a lucid state kind of like a um very content, very relaxed. (47)

Nic:

It's been a positive experience. (99)

It helps make the situation better. (102)

I got less irritated or irritable. (223)

my self talk changes when I'm there. It's a much calmer, much more measured almost thinking things through without thinking them through but dealing with the things in a much calmer way. (234-236)

Prim:

I feel like it's similar to meditation where I begin to relax and let go of my parts. (10)

I'm um becoming more aware that my eyes are relaxed, um my neck has more ease, my back feels more supported, my chest is open and I feel much more whole body connections, so I feel grounded. (82-84)

Sue:

I've actually experienced better sleep because I've often done it in the evening before I go to bed and I've had fewer headaches last while. (77-79)

my thoughts were then less fuzzy which means I could think more clearly, I could respond more clearly. (127-128)

...a greater sense of tolerance. (238)

... the atmosphere is more relaxing. (533)

Empathy and compassion toward others and oneself

Carol:

I feel a deeper sense of connection whereas before I felt more of a separation. (125-126)

Frank:

I felt a really really deep connection with uh other members of the group and almost uh as if it really promoted a state of flow where um there was just connection and feedback and it was almost like for me it certainly felt like I was connecting with the energy of the others in the group. (53-56)

When I was in the state of peripheral awareness um it was almost like I was more interested and I wanted to see deeper into the opinions and what they were talking about than I would be otherwise. (88-90)

Nigel:

conversations may be slightly slower but it's more thoughtful, if that makes sense. Yeah more thoughtful and in relation to the other person. (70-71)

I would sort of take more time and listen to what you are saying and, um you know in all in all for me it will be a better conversation, I think a much better conversation for them, and then, the conversation will last longer. (87-89).

when you are more attentive to what they are saying rather than, rather than um letting what you are feeling and what you want to say interfering with whatever they say so I feel that, that they feel that they will be heard, that what they are saying is more important than possibly I would have previously, previously given it credit for. (101-104).

I would give them more space to say what is it that they had to say first. (117)

I think it opens up changes the relationship with, with people. (129)

You can look at things um you know as your own, (short laugh)

I don't want to say as your own psychologist but as your own, you know, as your own mentor and sort of thing, with your own, your own life through different eyes I think. (265-268)

Nic:

I understand better where the boss is coming from, and I understand better where I fit into the bigger system. (76-77)

We are part of the same team... I experience less anxiousness, less apprehension, I think so and openness to deal with what we need to deal with for the greater good of the business. (94-96)

Much more openness to observe, to receive whatever there is in front of me from whatever and whoever is in front of me. (244-245)

It helps me to, to get what's going on, uh quicker... it also opens up a connection. We talked about rapport... it's more than just that word, there is a...it's called an energy connection that's, just different and open and it's, as far as I can understand, noticeable for clients as well, where I am just more there for whatever they are busy dealing with, umm so, so it helps in terms of the work that the two of us do together in a session to, to get us closer together... that it makes me more approachable. (259-267)

There's more trust, more openness from, from clients sides and, and sharing of, of events and feelings and difficulties in a, in a much more willing open way. (274-275)

They (therapy clients) are working with someone who is, let's call it committed, who's there, engaging in their story now. It's real, it's there, uh, it's alive. (288-290)

It (peripheral awareness) deepens experiences, it makes your responses to situations much more meaningful and coherent. (234-235)

Prim:

I think there's just uh more appreciation coming towards me

because I'm much more present and connected and uh integrate to people's experiences so I think there is, people are just feeling better around me, they're feeling more connected to me and there is more appreciation and connectivity. (137-140)

Sue:

A greater sense of tolerance. (238)

There's a greater sense of separation between the action and the person. You know that the action is not the person. (251-252)

...valuing the person despite the action. (264)

Your attention is actually with the person (310)

an acceptance of the things that you can't change, and becoming aware of the futility of being aggravated by things you can't change. (332-333)

compassion towards myself. (399)

The connections are real again and at least can... feeling that I'm being respectful of people when I'm within their space and not that I was there physically with my mind somewhere else. (519-521)

A sense of objectivity, as well as less identification with thoughts and emotions (thus less negative reactivity).

Carol:

my mind becomes still and I become very connected to my environment. (25-26)

It (peripheral awareness) has taught me to um, open my, my view on the situation so I look at it with a more clarity uh which allows me to respond rather than react to situations. (43-45)

I'm more in control of my emotions, um which in turn people respond differently because I'm responding differently. So I have a much more effective result in, in, in a confrontational environment or in a stressful, stressful situation. (59-62)

It keeps me, um it keeps me humble, and it keeps me um mindful. So it makes me more mm less reactive. (86-87)

Frank:

...being really calm, feeling really peaceful, feeling really present in the moment you know noticing everything that is happening around me and being able to make um assessments from uh almost a non judgmental state, so very much a feeling of heightened awareness and connection to the present moment. (23-28)

Using the technique almost allows you to stop and enter the present moment in such a way that uh the situation that you are in at that point in time um becomes observable. (35-37)

I also use this in stressful situations and the most noticeable um observation I can make about that was how emotions were diminished, where there was more focus on what was happening than an attachment to the emotions that I was experiencing. (48-51)

It also gave me some space be. (83)

The state of peripheral awareness allows you to become a much better observer of what was happening and um not necessarily to, you know, get in the habit of jumping to conclusions and forming obedience but where ever; rather to assess the moment and um experience the moment for what it is rather what you think it is. (137-141)

...it (peripheral awareness) brings it very quickly to a state of, of quiet reflection. (166)

It brings me a lot quicker to that same space where uh not only where I'm relaxed but also where the mind becomes still. (169-170)

Nigel:

It seems to calm your mind. (27)

The self talk, and it seems to uh almost vanish. (41)

More objective, I think will be a good term there. Yes you sort of stand back a bit, sort of stand back a bit for your own take on it. (76-77)

I'm listening and, and a little bit more objective to it, a little bit more open to what it is they are saying. (115-116)

...to step away from that and look at the things you're actually thinking about. (159)

...you're looking up on a regular basis from object...objective point of view, so when it changes things, because you're, you're not only thinking about all these things, you're thinking now about the things you're thinking about. You're, you're a step away from every one yeah, to how many steps are we away from them, but you're definitely looking at them, um you know from a distance in a way. (177-181)

It (peripheral awareness) gives you light at the end of the tunnel so I think every day sort of thing and if you re-evaluate the situation on a regular basis, then you know I think you can apply changes that, that take you through that, that light at the end of the tunnel. So I think it's, it's...sort of helps me with my stress, um because you're not looking it as yourself, you're looking at it as a, almost as a third party. (205-209)

You sort of step back from your own issues (248)

You're in uh a much more um content instead and um you can look at things um you know as your own, (short laugh) I don't want to say as your own psychologist but as your own, you know, as your own mentor and sort of thing, with your own, your own life through different eyes I think. (265-268)

In peripheral awareness looking at things as a third party all the time. You know almost as your own, as your own coach. (294)

You can evaluate these things yourself. (300)

Nic:

...the added perspective on, on life and situations and things.

(16)

It sort of helps to just get the big picture. (330)

It gives me perspective. (42)

I get moved out of this specific situation and as if I'm well known and fly on the wall, I can see where it fits in into the bigger picture and because of this expanded awareness, um I then also become aware of other situations and other possibilities but also the other side of the story which... especially when it's a frantic crisis kind of thing. (56-60)

Expanded awareness helps me to have an expanded view on this multiple views let's say, which I find really helpful to, to deal with in a, in a resourceful and practical positive way. (61-63)

You've got a better focus sort of on what you're doing but you've also got less of a focus on the things that you don't want to focus on. (174-176)

I got less irritated or irritable. (223)

Much more openness to observe, to receive whatever there is in front of me from whatever and whoever is in front of me. (244-245)

My self talk changes when I'm there. It's a much calmer, much more measured almost thinking things through without thinking them through but dealing with the things in a much calmer way. (324-326)

It deepens experiences, it makes your responses to situations much more meaningful and coherent. (334-335)

Prim:

I'm tracking more my internal representation of how I stress out and have narrow focus. (41)

I'm more oriented in terms of you know different assessments, different possibilities, I feel more relaxed in my system therefore my thinking is more fluid, my relationship to the task is much more dynamic. So it's there is just more aliveness,

resourcefulness and possibility within the whole context, um so therefore you know the issue has been transformed or re-contextualized. (95-100)

There is a different sense of agency in authority and creativity so I can feel much more empowered to innovate, to generate a solution and it doesn't feel so uh connected to like a life-death thing. Um so it relaxes me to you know bring more of myself to the situation and I can see more so I can you know have more agility with the situation. (106-102)

...a lot more choice in terms of how I represent what's happening and it feels much more dynamic. (121-122)

there is a sense of being settled in it so I'm clear, the ground of, sort of where I am feels more solid more grounded more centred.(148-150)

...my leadership is clear. (155)

being more aware of how I'm being in my environment. (169)

I feel like it, it influences my intentionality so that it's not myself in isolation but it's myself in the context of um you know something larger or um you know a broader context. (203-205)

Sue:

(Peripheral awareness) enabled me to see my tension. (58)

Whatever the feeling is um or it was a lot more effective in um in acknowledging, seeing it and responding to it. (67-68)

My thoughts were then less fuzzy which means I could think more clearly, I could respond more clearly. (127-128)

I'm responding differently to small irritations (155).

able to connect with the bigger picture. (162)

The compassion was then to um acknowledge that as part of the person rather than being irritated by the action or the event. (202-203)

I could engage with it more or I could be essentially more present with what I was busy with rather than chewing and rehearsing on my irritation. (231-232)

being able to be more aware of um looking beyond the action.

(260)

I'll be able to look at it from better perspective. (278)

...looking at it from a different perspective. (308)

...being able to see the action for what, for what it is. (328)

...an acceptance of the things that you can't change, (332)

Being highly present, centred and grounded (sometimes described as aliveness).

Carol:

mind becomes still and I become very connected to my environment. (25)

it has taught me to um, open my, my view on the situation so I look at it with a more clarity uh which allows me to respond rather than react to situations. (43-45)

I'm more in control of my emotions (59)

I'm more aware of, of my universe, of what's around me, of the space around me. (68-69)

Frank:

Feeling really peaceful, feeling really present in the moment you know noticing everything that is happening around me. (24-26)

... a heightened awareness...(45)

there was more focus on what was happening than an attachment to the emotions that I was experiencing. (50-51).

...created a very deep connection with who I am and why I am here. (60-61)

the state of peripheral awareness allows you to become a much better observer of what was happening and um not necessarily to, you know, get in the habit of jumping to conclusions and forming obedience but where ever; rather to assess the moment and um experience the moment for what it is rather what you

think it is. (137-141)

it brings me a lot quicker to that same space where uh not only where I'm relaxed but also where the mind becomes still. (169-170)

Nigel:

you don't forget where you are but you definitely sink into uh a sort of more comfortable space. (19)

the self talk...it seems to uh almost vanish (41).

it's almost like a lucid state kind of like a um [inaudible segment] very content, very relaxed. (47-48)

...more attentive to what they are saying. (101)

... listening more closely. (110)

... to step away from that and look at the things you're actually thinking about. (159)

You sort of step back from your own issues. (248)

when you go into peripheral awareness, you find that you are, um, the, the past and the future there they're just not, they're , they're not of, of concern (261-263)

More confidence in my own self, more conviction that I'm on the right path ; I'm living the life I'm, I'm supposed to be living (375-377)

Nic:

added perspective on, on life and situations and things (16)

I'm just more aware of everything around me, um which then sort...changes my focus I think to the bigger picture of where I am and what's going on around me. (24-25)

...it's not such a big deal if you want. Um it just becomes a situation that you've got to deal with, it's not the end of the world (46-47)

I understand better where I fit into the bigger system. (177)

Much more openness to observe, to receive whatever there is in front of me from whatever and whoever is in front of me. (245-246)

it's real, it's there, uh, it's alive (290)

peripheral awareness just a-gain helps with perspective and the way I fit into, call it the universe, where I am now, what I want, even I've noticed my self talk changes when I'm there. It's a much calmer, much more measured almost thinking things through without thinking them through but dealing with the things in a much calmer way. (323-326)

it deepens experiences, it makes your responses to situations much more meaningful and coherent (334-335)

being completely present (354)

...it's also your... let's call it spiritual um antennae or your, your spiritual awareness that, that is expanded (358-359)

Prim:

It's similar to meditation where I begin to relax and let go of my parts. It's similar to my embodied centring practice... (10-11)

I feel more relaxed and open and connected (15)

I feel grounded and there is a lot of awareness. (84)

my relationship to the task is much more dynamic. So it's there is just more aliveness, resourcefulness and possibility within the whole context. (97-99)

can you know have more agility with the situation. (110)

in peripheral vision it feels much more dynamic, fluid and a lot more choice in terms of how I represent what's happening and it feels much more dynamic. (120-121)

There is a sense of being settled in it so I'm clear, the ground of, sort of where I am feels more solid more grounded more centred. (149-150)

Sue:

whatever the feeling is um or it was a lot more effective in um in acknowledging, seeing it and responding to it. (67-68)

I became more pertinently aware or more effectively aware... (93-94)

my thoughts were then less fuzzy which means I could think more clearly, I could respond more clearly. (127-128)

...valuing the person despite the action. (264)

being able to see the action for what, for what it is. (238)

So it was easy to connect to changes in my body (356)

I'm more present (483)

ability to connect beyond yourself (572)

8. Checklist

Indicate that each of the following steps have been/will be taken by placing a tick in the adjoining box.	
This project was approved by my supervisor	Yes
Informed consent of participants was obtained	Yes
For studies involving children or other individuals unable to give informed consent, the consent of a responsible adult was obtained (e.g., parent or teacher)*	N/A
Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the procedure at any time	Yes
Confidentially was maintained at all times	Yes
Participants were properly debriefed	Yes
Participants were protected from harm	Yes
This project was conducted in accordance with the conditions specified by the University Ethics Committee (applies to those projects requiring the approval of the Committee)	Yes

9. T-test result

Group	Group One	Group Two
Mean	31.73	13.09
SD	16.47	11.38
SEM	4.97	3.43
N	11	11

REFERENCES

- Baliki, M. N., Geha, P. Y., Apkarian, A. V., & Chialvo, D. R. (2008). Beyond feeling: Chronic pain hurts the brain, disrupting the default-mode network dynamics. *Journal of Neuroscience*, *16*, 1398-1403.
- Bandler, R. and Grinder, J. (1976). *The Structure of Magic, Vol. 1*. Science and Behaviour Books, Palo Alto.
- Barrett, L. F., Gross, J., Christensen, T. C., & Benvenuto, M. (2001). Knowing what you're feeling and knowing what to do about it: Mapping the relation between emotion differentiation and emotion regulation. *Cognition & Emotion*, *15*(6), 713-724.
- Berry, T. (1991) *The Ecozoic Era presentation* at the E. F. Schumacher Society. Retrieved from The World Wide Web, May 2, 2014: https://archive.org/details/ecozoicera_berry
- Bhikkhu, T. (2010). *Satipatthana Sutta: Frames of reference (MN10)*. Retrieved July, 3 2013, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.010.than.html>
- Bishop, S.R., Lau, M., Shapiro, S., Carlson, L.E., Anderson, N.D., Carmody, J., Devins, G. (2004). Mindfulness: A proposed operational definition. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, *11*, 230–241.
- Bonanno, G. A. (2004). Loss, trauma, and human resilience: Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events? *American Psychologist*, *59*, 20-28.
- Bower, J.E., Low, C.A., Moskowitz, J.T., Sepah, S., Epel, E., (2008). Benefit finding and physical health: positive psychological changes and enhanced allostasis. *Soc. Personal. Psychol. Compass* *2*, 223-244.
- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *84*, 822–848.
- Brown, K.W., Ryan, R. M. & Creswell, J. D. (2007). Mindfulness: Theoretical Foundations and Evidence for its Salutary Effects. *Psychological Inquiry*, *18* (4), 211-237.
- Brühlmann, T. (2011). Open Forum at *The World Economic Forum* in Davos, Switzerland. Retrieved April 4, 2013, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77Fy7kKHAFa>
- Caldwell, C. (2014). *Mindfulness & Bodyfulness: A New Paradigm*. THE JOURNAL OF CONTEMPLATIVE INQUIRY. ISSUE 1. Naropa University.
- Cancer Research UK. Retrieved July, 3 2013, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-help/about-cancer/treatment/complementary-alternative/therapies/meditation?script=true>
- Cartwright, S. and Cooper, C.L. (1996). 'Coping in occupational settings', in Zeidner, M. and Endler, N.S. (Eds.), *Handbook of Coping*, New York: Wiley, pp. 202–20.
- Cohen-Katz, J., Wiley, S., Capuano, T., Baker, D., & Shapiro, S. (2005). The effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction on nurse stress and burnout. *Holistic Nursing Practice*, *18*(6), 303–308.

- Ciarrochi, J., Chan, A., Caputi, P., & Roberts, R. (2001). Measuring emotional intelligence. In J. Ciarrochi, & J. P. Forgas (Eds.), *Emotional intelligence in everyday life: A scientific inquiry*. Philadelphia: Psychology Press. pp. 25–45.
- Davidson, R. J. (2010). Empirical explorations of mindfulness: Conceptual and methodological conundrums. *Emotion*, 10(1), 8.
- Deikman, A.J. (1982). *The observing self: Mysticism and psycho-therapy*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Dierendonck, vD., Garssen, B. and Visser, A. (2005). Rediscovering meaning and purpose at work: the transpersonal psychology background of a burnout prevention programme, in A.G. Antoniou & C.L. Cooper (eds.), *Research Companion to Organizational Health Psychology*, 40, 623. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited
- Drummond, D (n.d.). Retrieved July, 3 2013, from the World Wide Web:
<http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn .010.than.html> :
<http://www.thehappynd.com/pbp-vts-welcome/>
- Ekman, P., Davidson, R.J., Ricard, M., & Wallace, A. (2005). Buddhist and psychological perspectives on emotions and well-being. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 14, 59–63.
- Farb, N.A.S., Segal, Z.V., Mayberg, H., Bean, J., McKeon, D., Fatima, Z., and Anderson, A.K. (2007). Attending to the present: Mindfulness meditation reveals distinct neural modes of self-reflection. *SCAN*, 2, 313-322.
- Ferrer, J. (2008). *The Participatory Turn, Spirituality, Mysticism, Religious Studies*. State University of New York Press.
- Ferrer, J. N., & Sherman, J. H. (2008). *The participatory turn in spirituality, mysticism, and religious studies*. In J. N. Ferrer & J. H. Sherman (Eds.), *The participatory turn: Spirituality, mysticism, religious studies* (pp. 1–80). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Finlay, L. (2013). Engaging Phenomenological Analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. p.23. Taylor & Francis. Open University, United Kingdom.
- Fogel, A. (2009). *The psychophysiology of self-awareness: Rediscovering the lost art of body sense*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Giorgi, A. (2009). *The descriptive phenomenological method in psychology: A modified Husserlian approach*, Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.
- González-Morales, G., Peiro, J., Rodríguez, I., Bliesed, P. (2012). Perceived collective burnout: a multilevel explanation of burnout. *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping Vol. 25, No. 1*. 43-61.
- Gunaratana, B. H. (1996). *Mindfulness in Plain English: Revised and Expanded Edition*, Wisdom Publications. Retrieved October 2014, from The World Wide Web:
http://www.vipassana.com/meditation/mindfulness_in_plain_english_15.php
- Hanna, T. (1979). *The body of life*. New York: Knopf.
- Hanson, R. (2011). *Buddha's Brain, Lighting up the Neural Circuits of Happiness, Love, and Wisdom*. Retrieved June, 27 2013, from The World Wide Web:
<http://www.rickhanson.net/wp-content/files/SlidesEsalenBBSept2011.pdf>

- Hartelius, G. (2015). *Body Maps of Attention: Phenomenal Markers for Two Varieties of Mindfulness*, California Institute of Integral Studies, Springer Science+Business Media, New York.
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time*. New York: Harper & Row. Original work published 1927 [German].
- Hofmann S.G. and Grossman P. (2012). Loving-kindness and compassion meditation: Potential for psychological interventions: *Clinical Psychological Review* 31.
- Hölzell, B.K., 2, Lazar, S.W., 2, Gard, T. 1, 2, Schuman-Olivier, Z., 2, Vago, D.R., 3, Ottl, U. (2011). 1. Bender Institute of Neuroimaging, Justus Liebig-University, Giessen, Germany; 2. Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA; 3. Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA
- Husserl, E. (1917). Pure phenomenology, its method and its field of investigation (Inaugural lecture at Freiburg im Breisgau). Retrieved at <http://www.husserlpage.com/#Texts>.
- Husserl, E. (1970). *The crisis of the European sciences and transcendental phenomenology* (D. Carr, Trans.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Husserl, E. (1983). *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy*: First book: General Introduction to a pure phenomenology (Trans: Kersten, F.). The Hague, the Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff. (Original work published 1913 [German]).
- Irving, J. A., Dobkin, P. L., and Park, J. (2009). Cultivating mindfulness in health care professionals: A review of empirical studies of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR). *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice*, 15.
- Jacobs, T. L., Epel, E., Lin, J., Blackburn, E., Wolkowitz, O., Bridwell, D., et al. (2011). Intensive meditation training, immune cell telomerase activity, and psychological mediators. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, 36(5), 664–681.
- James, W. (1902). *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, Longmans, Green & Co.
- Johnson, D. H. (1994). *Body, spirit and democracy*. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990). *Full catastrophe living*. New York, NY: Delta Publishing.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). *Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future*. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10, 144–156.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2007). Mindfulness Stress Reduction And Healing. Found on www on 9 June 2015 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSU8ftmmhmw>
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2011). *Sonnabend Lecture*. Lesley University. Retrieved October, 30, 2014, from The World Wide Web: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQVyA7L22qc>
- Kahn, P. (2013). *Ecopsychology: Reinventing the Human-Nature Relationship in the Digital Age*. Retrieved June, 9, 2014, from The World Wide Web: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18ZPpHUAowM>
- Katz, J. C., Wiley, S., Capuano, T., Baker, D., Deitrick, L., Shapiro, S. (2005). The Effects of Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction on Nurse Stress and Burnout. *Holistic Nursing Practice*, p. 86

- Kelly, T.M. (2005). Natural Resilience and Innate Mental Health, *American Psychologist*, p. 265
- Levinas, E. (1998). *Otherwise than being, or, beyond essence*. Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press. Original work published 1974 [French].
- Mackenzie, C. S., Poulin, P. A., Seidman-Carlson, R. (2006). A brief mindfulness- based stress reduction intervention for nurses and nurse aides. *Applied Nursing Research*, 19, 105–109.
- MacLean, K.A., Ferrer, E., Aichele, S.R., Bridwell, D.A., Zanesco, A.P., Jacobs, T.L., Saron, C.D. (2010). Intensive meditation training improves perceptual discrimination and sustained attention. *Psychological Science*, 21, 829–839.
- McKnight P.E., Kashdan T.B. (2009). Purpose in Life as a System That Creates and Sustains Health and Well-Being: An Integrative, Testable Theory. *Review of General Psychology*. Vol. 13, No. 3, 242–251
- Malinowski, P. (2008). Mindfulness as psychological dimension: Concepts and applications. *The Irish Journal of Psychology*, 29, p.157.
- Meiklejohn, J., Phillips, C., Freedman, L., Griffin, M. L., Biegel G., Roach A., Frank, J., Burke, C., Pinger, L., Soloway, G., Isberg, R., Sibinga, E., Grossman, L., Saltzman, A. (2012). *Integrating Mindfulness Training into K-12 Education: Fostering the Resilience of Teachers and Students*. Springer Science and Business Media, LLC
- Merleau-Ponty, M (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge & Degan Paul
- Merleau-Ponty, M (1964). *The Philosopher and His Shadow*, in *Signs*, trans. R. McCleary (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2005). *Phenomenology of perception*. New York: Routledge. Original work published 1945.
- Millman, D. (1992). *No Ordinary Moments* H J Kramer (p.5)
- Mindful Power audio programme (n.d.). Retrieved June, 27 2015, from The World Wide Web: <http://jevondangeli.com/mindful-power/>
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomoneological research*. New York: Sage.
- Niemiec, R., Rashid, T., Spinella, M. (2012). Strong Mindfulness: Integrating Mindfulness and Character Strengths. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*. Vol. 34. No. 3. 240-253.
- Okamoto, K., Momose, Y., Fujino, A., Osawa, Y. (2007). Life worth living for caregiving and caregiver burden among Japanese care- givers of the disabled elderly in Japan. *Arch. Gerontol. Geriat.* 48 (1), 10-13.
- Olendzki, A. (2010). *Unlimiting mind: The radically experiential psychology of Buddhism*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications.

- Oplen, M. and Hesson, M. (2015). *Stress Management for Life: A Research-Based Experiential Approach*, 4th edition. Cengage Learning.
- Ouspensky, P.D. (1971). *The Fourth Way*. Vintage; New edition
- Overdurf, J. (personal communication, June 20, 2013) <http://www.johnoverdurf.com>
- Ratcliffe, M. (2008). *Feelings of being: Phenomenology, psychiatry and the sense of reality*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Roisman, G. (2005). *American Psychologist*. p.264
- Rossi, E. L. (1993). *The Psychobiology of Mind-Body Healing: New Concepts of Therapeutic Hypnosis (Revised Edition)*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Ryan, M. and Deci, L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, Vol 55(1), 68-78.
- Schmitz, H., Müllan, R., & Slaby, J. (2011). *Emotions outside the box—the new phenomenology of feeling and corporeality*, *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 10(2), pp.241-259.
- Segal, Z., Williams, M. and Teasdale, J. (2002). *Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for depression: A new approach to preventing relapse*. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Selye, H. (1950). Stress and the general adaption syndrome. *British Medical Journal*
- Shusterman, R. (2008). *Body consciousness: A philosophy of mindfulness somaesthetics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Siegel, D. (2007). *The Mindful Brain: Reflection and Attunement in the Cultivation of Well-Being*. W. W. Norton.
- Smith, J.A. and Osborn, M. (2003). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Qualitative Psychology. A Practical Guide to Research Methods*, pp. 55, 56, 57, 59/67. London: Sage Publications.
- Smith J.A. (2008). Reflecting on the development of interpretative phenomenological analysis and its contribution to qualitative research in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. p. 5/44.
- Smith, J.A., Flowers, P. and Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*. SAGE publications Ltd. London.
- Spiegelberg, H. (1982). *The phenomenological movement* (3rd Rev. ed.). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. Doi:10.1007/978-94-009-7491-3.
- Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1993). *Breaking Out Again: Feminist Ontology and Epistemology*. London: Routledge.

- Taylor, C. (1999). *The Body in Husserl and Merleau-Ponty* PHILOSOPHICAL TOPICS VOL. 27, NO. 2, Columbia University
- Teasdale, J. D. (1999). Metacognition, mindfulness and the modification of mood disorders. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 6, 146-155.
- Varela, F.J., Thompson, E., Rosch, E. (1991). *The embodied mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Wallace, A. (2008). Retrieved May, 28, 2015, from The World Wide Web:
http://www.alanwallace.org/spr08wallace_comp.pdf
- Wertz, F. J. (2011). The qualitative revolution and psychology: Science, politics, and ethics. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 39, 77-104.
- Write, S. (2005). *The Nursing Standard*. vol. 19, no. 6