

**THE EMERGENT SYNCHRONICITY PRINCIPLE IN APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY:  
SEEING THE CONNECTIONS**

**DISSERTATION**

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“Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes.”

Carl G. Jung

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The Emergent Synchronicity Principle  
in Appreciative Inquiry: Seeing the Connections

ABSTRACT

This study investigates both individual and group interactions around Synchronicity awareness and the possibility of including a new *Synchronicity Principle* in Appreciative Inquiry (AI) methodology and practice. In his initial research, Swiss psychologist C. G. Jung defined Synchronicity as “a meaningful coincidence of two or more events, where something other than probability of chance is involved” (Jung, 1952, p. 5). Jung goes on to describe Synchronicity as coincident experiences of ‘acausal’ events between our inner world (the psyche: everything that is conscious and unconscious) and our outer world experiences (Ibid).

In order to gain a deeper understanding around Synchronicity and AI, the following questions are presented and discussed in this study: (1) How does one recognize Synchronicity as a social phenomenon? (2) What are the types of settings where one might acquire a heightened awareness of Synchronicity that provides a new perspective? Finally, (3) What is the value to create and present a “Synchronicity Principle” within an Appreciative Inquiry framework?

A mixed methodology of research is employed to address these questions. Qualitative data is collected through one-on-one personal ethnographic interviews (n=31) and focus-group sessions (6). In both settings, questions constructed in an AI framework were used (Cooperrider & Whitney, 1999). Qualitative data analysis includes identifying common and reoccurring themes, recognizing specific terminologies, and recording of stories of Synchronicity experiences. Additionally, quantitative data analysis is conducted through a comparison of pre- and post-surveys of interview and focus-group participants. Quantitative analysis of a number of variables informed the interpretation of how an individual’s or a group’s Synchronicity awareness increased, remained constant, or declined during the process. Through the combination of foundational meta-analysis research and current qualitative and quantitative analysis, new possibilities of Synchronicity awareness are identified.

In AI, currently, five core founding Appreciative Inquiry Principles exists – *the Anticipatory Principle, the Constructionist Principle, the Poetic Principle, the Positive Principle, and the Simultaneity Principle*. Since AI’s conception, the following emerging principles were introduced: *the Wholeness Principle, the Enactment Principle, the Free Choice Principle, the Narrative Principle, and the Awareness Principle*. This study outlines and discusses the construction of a new principle: *The Synchronicity Principle* and makes recommendations on how to apply this new principle. It is the hope that from this research, readers will gain a better understanding to recognize and enhance Synchronicity in their own lives, thereby and henceforth, being enabled to identify and leverage these meaningful coincidences and make deeper connections with others. It is these deeper connections that may lead people with more of such insights to utilize their strengths to do good in the world.

## ABSTRACT in Dutch

Deze studie rapporteert onderzoek naar individuele en groep interacties rondom Synchronicity bewustzijn en de mogelijkheid om een nieuw Synchronicity Principe op te nemen in de methodologie en uitvoering van Appreciative Inquiry (AI). In zijn initiële onderzoek definieerde de Zwitserse psycholoog C. G. Jung *Synchronicity* als “een betekenisvolle toevallige samenloop van twee of meer omstandigheden, waarbij iets anders dan de waarschijnlijkheid van toeval betrokken is” (Jung, 1952, p. 5). Jung omschrijft Synchronicity als toevallige ervaringen van ‘onafhankelijke’ gebeurtenissen tussen onze innerlijke wereld (de psyche: al het bewuste en het onbewuste) en onze ervaringen in de wereld daarbuiten.

Teneinde meer inzicht te krijgen in Synchronicity en AI, worden de volgende vragen in deze studie beantwoord: (1) Hoe herkent men Synchronicity als een sociaal fenomeen? (2) Welke omstandigheden zouden het verkrijgen van een groter bewustzijn van Synchronicity teweeg kunnen brengen (wat tot een nieuw perspectief leidt)? En: (3) Wat is het voordeel van het creëren en presenteren van een “Synchronicity Principle” binnen het kader van de AI?

Een “mixed-methods” onderzoek strategie is toegepast om op deze vragen in te gaan. Kwalitatieve data is verzameld door middel van één-op-één interviews en focus-groep sessies. In beide sessies is gebruik gemaakt van vragen die opgesteld waren in een AI kader (Cooperrider & Whitney, 1999). De kwalitatieve data analyse behelsde het vaststellen van gemeenschappelijke en zich opnieuw manifesterende themas, het herkennen van specifieke terminologie, en het vastleggen van Synchronicity ervaringen. Daarnaast is kwantitatieve data analyse uitgevoerd via het vergelijken van surveys verzameld voorafgaand aan en na de gehouden interviews en focus-groep participanten. Kwantitatieve analyse van een aantal variabelen leidde tot de interpretatie van hoe het Synchronicity bewustzijn van een individu of van een groep toeneemt, constant blijft of afneemt. Door het combineren van literatuur en de kwalitatieve en kwantitatieve analyse zijn er nieuwe mogelijkheden geïdentificeerd t.b.v. een rijker Synchronicity bewustzijn.

Thans bestaan er vijf fundamentele Appreciative Inquiry Principles – *the Anticipatory Principle, the Constructionist Principle, the Poetic Principle, the Positive Principle, en the Simultaneity Principle*. Sinds het ontstaan van AI zijn de volgende opkomende principes geïntroduceerd: *the Wholeness Principle, the Enactment Principle, the Free Choice Principle, the Narrative Principle, en the Awareness Principle*. Deze PhD studie identificeert en bespreekt een nieuw principe, *the Synchronicity Principle*, en geeft aanbevelingen voor de toepassing van dit nieuwe principe. Met dit onderzoek leeft de hoop dat lezers een beter inzicht krijgen in de herkenning van Synchronicity in hun leven daarmee hun leven verrijken. Het draait om het beter in staat zijn om betekenisvolle toevalligheden te identificeren en die goed te benutten teneinde diepere verbintenissen met anderen te creëren. Het zijn deze diepere verbintenissen tussen mensen die ertoe zullen leiden dat meer mensen hun sterke eigenschappen gebruiken om goede dingen te doen in de wereld.

DEDICATION

To the memory of C. G. Jung, and to David L. Cooperrider and Martin E. P. Seligman, inspirational and pioneering researchers who, through their insightful work, have helped us “see the connections.”

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## CHAPTER ONE—INTRODUCTION

*“When a person really desires something all the universe  
conspires to help that person to realize his dream.”*

Paulo Coelho (1993)

~The Alchemist~

*I personally believe in the power of Synchronicity and feel  
more and more connection to its messages. It's part of our newest  
understandings in consciousness studies and social construction of reality.  
I'm excited to watch the progress of this new AI emerging principle  
within our growing field!*

David L. Cooperrider, April 2017

*Overview*

Albert Einstein once said, “The intellect has little to do on the road to discovery. There comes a leap in consciousness, call it intuition or what you will, the solution comes to you and you don’t know how or why” (Chang, 2006, P. 179). This “leap in consciousness” or “intuition,” as Einstein calls it, could refer to the concept of Synchronicity. To establish an initial foundational understanding for the body of Synchronicity research, it is important to provide two definitions of the subject matter: Synchronicity and Appreciative Inquiry. Synchronicity, as defined by Swiss psychologist, Carl G. Jung is, a meaningful coincidence of two or more events, where something other than probability or chance is involved (Jung, 1952). In short, Synchronicity may be defined as “seeing the connections” between people, between events, and between experiences or among them. Appreciative Inquiry or AI “embodies both a philosophy and methodology for change” (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 49) and is defined as, “the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system 'life' when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms” (Ibid, p. 8).

This introductory chapter includes a discussion of the background and rationale for the study, the definition of the problem, and the research questions and hypotheses. A definition of terms and their applications are presented as well as the study’s research limitations. Literature reviews are presented in Chapter Two to provide overall insights into the research on Synchronicity and Appreciative Inquiry, and to create a framework for data analysis of results in Chapter Four.

Through this investigation, readers will gain a deeper understanding of the potential hidden connections in their lives through an increased Synchronicity awareness within the framework of Appreciative Inquiry. Readers will also acquire important methods to leverage and take advantage of these connections (Wiseman, 2003). With the basis of elementary understandings of Synchronicity and Appreciative Inquiry, this work proposes the development of an emergent principle in Appreciative Inquiry (Ibid. p. 49), known as, the Synchronicity Principle.



### *Background and Rationale of the Study*

I am a full-time Associate Professor and Department Chair of International Business and Management at the *Stiller School of Business* (SSB) at *Champlain College* in Burlington, Vermont, with over fifteen years of service. Our small, private, and experiential-learning college prepares students for professional business careers in for- and non-profit organizations (Champlain College 2020 Strategic Plan, 2010). Our mission statement (*The Robert P. Stiller School of Business* Strategic Plan, 2014), cited below, succinctly describes our educational goal:

*“The SSB develops the strengths, integrity, expertise and entrepreneurial mindset of aspiring and innovative professionals to create positive change in their lives, workplaces, communities, and the world.”*

My students and some business leaders have asked me, “What constitutes a happy and purpose-driven life?” “Where and how can I find a workplace culture and environment where I am able to fulfill my personal mission(s)?” “How will I personally and professionally continue to develop throughout my life?” “What will provide me with greater happiness and satisfaction in life and at work?” Questions such as these inspired me to explore the complex ways we receive and acknowledge responses that lead us to a myriad of potential life opportunities and possibilities.

My experience in working with students and organizations has taught me these questions can be creatively and insightfully crafted using Appreciative Inquiry methodology (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, Cooperrider, & Kaplin, 2013).

The *David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry*, housed within the *Stiller School of Business* at *Champlain College*, is, “the only academic center in the world that focuses directly on Appreciative Inquiry and its implications for Positive Organization Development and Management” (Champlain.edu/appreciativeinquiry, 2016, n.d). Launched in November 2014, the Center offers “a full range of educational programs, research, AI certification and custom collaborative learning partnerships for companies, organizations, and corporations (Ibid). As a professor of management, I work closely with the *David L. Cooperrider Center for AI* to provide workshops, actively incorporate AI methodology into undergraduate business curricula, and provide support for new and ongoing AI research efforts.

Through this experiential education process, I became intrigued by the concept of “meaningful coincidences” or Synchronicity, and began to consider how I might better understand its potential connection to Appreciative Inquiry. I wondered how I might use the existing set of AI tools to help others “see the connections” of Synchronicity in their personal and professional lives. By understanding these potentially new as well as deeper connections, both individuals and groups can realize greater opportunities for themselves and for their respective organizations.

### *Scope of this Study*

Where and how does general recognition of Synchronicity exist? When, or in what situation, is there acceptance and acknowledgment that Synchronicity has occurred or it occurring? Is awareness of Synchronicity more prevalent in an individual setting, or in groups, or is there no significant difference? How might one acquire a heightened awareness of Synchronicity? A review of past literature on the subject, shows what appears to be a gap in knowledge about how individual people and communities acknowledge, recognize, and leverage

their awareness of Synchronicity. In the words of Cambray (2009), “recognition of the role of Synchronistic phenomena provides unique opportunities for emergent processes to appear in focused group activities. This is an area that deserves much further study as it has great implications for many aspects of our collective life” (p. 92).

There is also a gap in knowledge within the current AI supporting principles. My research found neither recognition nor application of the concept of Synchronicity as a tool and way of understanding connections within AI. In the words of Cooperrider and Whitney, “five AI principles and scholarly streams of thought are central to AI” (2005, p. 49). The original foundational principles are: the Anticipatory Principle, the Constructionist Principle, the Poetic Principle, the Positive Principle, and the Simultaneity Principle (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). “These principles will enable you to adapt Appreciative Inquiry to meet unique and challenging new situations and to create innovative practices of positive change” (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 49). Subsequently, five emergent AI Principles have been developed: the Awareness Principle (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003), the Enactment Principle (Ibid.), the Free Choice Principle (Ibid), the Narrative Principle (Barrett & Fry, 2005), and the Wholeness Principle (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). One product from the primary research of this study is the origination and development of an emergent AI principle known as the “Synchronicity Principle.” This new principle entails the development of new AI questions accompanied by new curriculum. This new curriculum is designed to guide participants through a pedagogical progression that provides participants with opportunities to explore their own Synchronicity experiences and memories. By exploring these personal experiences within an AI framework (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008), new insights are realized and a heightened awareness of Synchronicity is developed.

### *Primary Research Questions*

The research questions that guide this study are as follows:

1. How does one recognize Synchronicity as a social phenomenon?
2. What are the situations and surroundings where one might acquire a heightened awareness of Synchronicity that provides a new perspective?
3. What is the value of trying to identify and develop a “Synchronicity Principle” within an Appreciative Inquiry framework?

### *Central Thesis*

Individuals and groups who recognize, understand, and act upon the presence of Synchronicity in their lives, will create a more fulfilling, positive, and purposeful life and career. An in-depth survey and analysis of foundational research literature suggests there appears to be an unseen and untested opportunity to develop and present a “Synchronicity Principle” within the emerging Appreciative Inquiry framework. The collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data during this research suggests indeed opportunities to develop and present curricula to individuals within an educational seminar, workshop, or AI summit format (Powley, Fry, Barrett, & Bright, 2004), and the perceived effects of this intervention are in the stipulated direction.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The research study was undertaken for two reasons: 1) To investigate awareness of Synchronicity on both an individual basis and in group settings and 2) To explore the possibility of developing a Synchronicity Principle within AI, so the practice and theory of AI is enriched potentially. This may add to contexts in which AI can be applied and employed.

### *Research Methodology*

This section includes an overview of the mixed methodology research used to ascertain whether an understanding of Synchronicity awareness can be recognized and leveraged for a more fulfilling and purposeful personal and professional life. A detailed discussion of this research methodology is found in Chapter Three.

Qualitative research methodology was used in one-on-one participant interviews as well as small focus-group formats. The questions were composed and presented in an Appreciative Inquiry framework (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, Cooperrider, & Kaplin, 2013). The quantitative research approach applies a pre- and post-survey questionnaire methodology (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). This method measured the participants' awareness and understanding of Synchronicity both before and after interviews and focus-group sessions (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, survey data were collected from the individual participant interviews and the focus-group participants. The protocol questions driving the interview observations were: Was one method more effective than the other? Was there a qualitative difference between the individual and group participants?

By incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods within the research, this study offers new insights into the definition of Synchronicity through individual and group participant responses (Ledermann, 1990; Ho, 2006). An outline of the research methodology used in interactive interviews (Kvale, 2008), focus-groups (Morgan, 1996), and *Pre- and Post-focus-group Surveys* (Creswell, 2012) is illustrated below, beginning with the quantitative approach, which initiated the data collection process.

### *Quantitative Methodology*

Each survey instrument employed in this study followed a consistent research protocol. Pre-and post-event surveys were used to collect data from participants prior to, and after their involvement in either a one-on-one personal interview or in a focus-group session. Surveys were also used to gather data to compare a one-on-one setting (interviews) to that of a group setting (focus-group).

The pre-interview survey: A 10-question Likert-style measurement scale (Maeda, 2015) that aimed to capture an individual's understanding of Synchronicity. It was administered before each interview asking: How do people recognize Synchronicity? How have people witnessed Synchronicity incidences before in their lives? Have people experienced it alone and/or in groups? Are people aware of Synchronicity and its potential presence and power?

The post-interview survey: A Likert-style scale survey was developed and administered to measure and provide feedback about the participants' awareness and knowledge of Synchronicity in their lives at a specific time interval (one week) post interview. The same questions were used as in the pre-interview survey in order to provide consistency in the delivery and analysis (Creswell, 2014).

The pre-focus-group survey: A Likert-type scale survey about the participants' awareness of Synchronicity was developed. The same questions as in the *Pre-interview Surveys* were presented (see above for specifics).

The post-focus-group survey: The same questions as in the *Pre-focus-group* Likert-type scale surveys were administered one week after each session. Participants were queried whether they became more aware and cognizant of Synchronicity experiences in their lives. Focus-group participants were also asked whether they became more inclined to apply this Synchronicity awareness to help and support their personal and professional lives.

### *Qualitative Methodology*

Interactive interviews: One-on-one interviews were conducted with participants primarily from the Northeastern region of the United States. The intended length of each interview was budgeted and planned for a minimum of 30 minutes. However, the average length of each interview ballooned to 1:30 hours.

Individual participants varied in gender identity, age, education levels, ethnicity, occupation, work status (full-time, part-time, etc.), and socio-economic backgrounds. A total of thirty-one (31) participants were invited to participate between the dates of September 15, 2015, through August 15, 2016. Personal interviews were recorded by a digital voice recorder, detailed hand-written notes, or both. Interviews conducted on the telephone were recorded primarily in a written note format. Online survey questionnaire data was recorded in the participants' own words. Notes and digital transcripts from all interviews, online questionnaires, and focus-groups were uploaded directly into *NVivo* Qualitative Research Software (QSR, Inc, 2016). During the data analysis of the actual interactive interviews and online questionnaires, common themes, similar narrative patterns, similar terminologies, and recurring descriptive phrases began to manifest (Hampshire, Iqbal, Blell, & Simpson, 2014). Common terminologies and descriptions relative to personal Synchronicity experiences quickly arose from each participant, and were captured and recorded by the researcher. Unseen connections and revelations by the participants were discovered during the interviews and in the focus-group sessions. Questions generated from these individual interviews and focus-group interactions were, "What ways will participants then view future connections through a greater awareness of Synchronicity?" "Will participants now approach future events, interactions, and meetings throughout the world in a new way?"

The Focus-groups: Three focus-group sessions, within a workshop format, were held with 9 to 14 participants present in each group. As in the pre-focus-group survey, the questions used were the same as those used in the individual interviews. The first workshop and focus-group took place on June 2, 2016, during a conference of the *Northeast Strength-based Network Gathering* (Commongoodvt.org, 2016). Two more focus-groups were conducted at Champlain College on July 13 and 20 respectively, and were coordinated with the *David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry* ([www.champlain.edu/appreciativeinquiry](http://www.champlain.edu/appreciativeinquiry)). Digital voice recordings and transcripts were uploaded into *NVivo* software ([www.qsrinternational.com](http://www.qsrinternational.com)) for data analysis. The research gave rise to the following questions: Do the same descriptions, themes, and terminologies emerge in a focus-group setting as in the individual interview settings? If not, what was different? Were the focus-groups more or less cooperative and generative in their approach during the question response process? Were Synchronicity connections made more or less fluidly and rapidly than in the individual interview process? Was there a difference between focus-group participants' perception of the relevance of Synchronicity awareness and individual interview participants' awareness?

### *Autobiographical Narrative Accounts of Synchronicity*

A collection of historical autobiographical narratives are included to provide the reader with broader levels of insight as to how individuals recognize, understand, and react to Synchronicity events. The stories include past empirical evidence that support the qualitative data findings in this study (Freeman, 2007; Pasupathi, Mansour, & Brubaker, 2007).

### *Final Qualitative and Quantitative Data Analyses*

*Pre-* and *Post-interview Surveys* were compared and analyzed using IBM's SPSS Statistical Analysis Software ([www.ibm.com/analytics/us/en/technology/spss](http://www.ibm.com/analytics/us/en/technology/spss)). The identical procedure was performed for *Pre-* and *Post-focus-group Surveys*. The quantitative differences were observed and noted. After doing so, it was observed there were three instances where the results did not support the initial hypothesis regarding improved Synchronicity awareness among participants. The reasons behind these occurrences and the recommendations for future research are presented and discussed in-depth in Chapter Four.

From a qualitative research standpoint, the data results support the future collaborative group work around Synchronicity in an AI format. Raw collected data was uploaded into NVivo software and analyzed. It was found that there was overlap and common use of terminology within both individual interviews and focus-groups using a discourse analysis research approach (Marsh, 1988; Van Dijk, 1993; Van Dijk, 2001) and a thematic coding analysis (Aronson, 1994; Ayres, 2016; Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2012).

### *Qualitative Feedback Research for the Synchronicity Principle Viability*

The potential to develop a *Synchronicity Principle* within an AI framework was addressed in personal interviews and focus-group sessions. Within these sessions, a uniquely-developed AI educational process supported the creation of the Synchronicity Principle. It was in these sessions that the initial development and testing of such pedagogy was presented.

Additionally, after the conclusion of a Board of Advisors conference, August 24-26, 2016 for the *Cooperrider Center for AI* at Champlain College, specific questions about this concept were posed to these researchers and practitioners in the AI field. Thus, a qualitative data collection process was conducted in order to validate the concept. The responses from the 16 experienced AI professionals are analyzed and discussed in Chapter Four.

### *Definition of Terms*

This section offers basic definitions and clarifications of terms and their use in this research. Some terms are provided to further clarify the subject matter, while others are necessary to understand the study's foundation or strengthen its design. The terminology will be further elucidated in the course of the following chapters.

**Acausal** – In Jungian psychology, acausal may be a synonym of a synchronistic event, and related by meaning rather than causation. Not governed by the laws of cause and effect (Jung, 1952).

**Appreciative Inquiry** – “A composite of change practices based on the assumption that organizations have a positive core, that if revealed and tapped, unleashes positive energy and positive improvement” (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003, p. 8). It is a “philosophy and methodology for change leadership” (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 8). “AI is the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system 'life' when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms” (ibid).

**Appreciative Inquiry Principles** – The five original principles (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) are the basic tenets of the AI philosophy. The five principles are: the Constructionist Principle, the Poetic Principle, the Simultaneity Principle, the Anticipatory Principle, and the Positive Principle. Subsequently, new AI principles have been added by Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003) to reflect new learning and thinking: the Wholeness Principle, the Enactment

Principle, and the Free-choice Principle. Two additional principles, the Narrative Principle (Barrett & Fry, 2005), and the Awareness Principle (Stravros & Torres, 2005) are included as well.

**Content Analysis** – A common form of qualitative research by making inferences and both objectively and systematically identify characteristics and/or messages (Holisti, 1968). The analysis is used to record obtained data from interviews, focus-groups, and other forms of media material (Bryman, 2008). Observational notes, recorded text, and terminology are then analyzed (Ibid).

**Focus-group** – “a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes regarding a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members” (<http://libguides.wpi.edu>, 2016). Focus-groups in this study were also conducted with a workshop component used to deliver appropriate Synchronicity information.

**The 4-D Cycle** – (Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny or Deliver), a methodology that allows an organization to identify its positive core strengths relative to an “affirmative topic” being addressed and initiate concrete operational steps to achieve its goals. (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Another widely published cycle, The Five-D Phase Cycle, begins the process with “Define” (Watkins & Mohr, 2001).

**Mendeley** – an online software program for importing and managing large volumes of research data and sources (Mendeley, 2016). A screen shot of this data base is included in Appendix A.

**NVivo** – A qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software package produced by QSR International, Inc. Designed for qualitative research with rich text-based and/or multimedia information, and where deep levels of analysis of data are required (QSR International, 2016).

**Qualitative Research** – Methods of inquiry used in this study to provide specific steps used in analyzing the data (Creswell, 2013). This study uses exploratory inquiry-based research gain a deeper comprehension of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations of participants. Data is collected through interactive interviews, online participant responses, focus-groups, and observations. The research provides insights into the questions and helps to develop predetermined ideas or hypotheses. The research collected is coupled with quantitative research in a mixed-methodology approach (Byman, 2006; Creswell, 2013).

**Quantitative Data Research** – The method applies objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys (Creswell, 2013).

**Quantum Theory** – Considered a theoretical basis of modern physics today. Explains the nature and behavior of matter and energy on both the atomic and subatomic levels (Griffiths, 2001). Theoretical physicists argue the connection of quantum mechanical foundational research to Jung’s theory of Synchronicity (Limar, 2011).

**Social Construction** – The creation of meaning through collaborative activities (Gergen & Gergen, p. 7). A theory in sociology and communication research that examines development of co-constructed interpretations of the world, which form the basis for shared assumptions around reality (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009).

**Survey Monkey** – An online survey-development cloud-based software. Founded in 1999 by Ryan Finley (SurveyMonkey.com, 2016), this instrument was used to collect qualitative and quantitative data for this study.

### *Significance of the Study*

Research into the connection of Synchronicity awareness and AI methodology is significant for two reasons. First, a greater awareness of Synchronicity can help individuals and groups to realize more possibilities of relational connectedness among people, events, and experiences. Equipped with this greater comprehension, people may then leverage and take advantage of existing and new opportunities that arise. Secondly, this research leads to the development of an emergent principle within the research and application of the AI methodology, known as the *Synchronicity Principle*. This new AI principle will promote and support both individual and group recognition of Synchronicity through an AI question format approach. In addition to this new principle, a newly developed associated curriculum is developed and presented. Within an AI framework, the *Synchronicity Principle*, and its associated curriculum, will assist individuals in identifying a more broad understanding of the role of Synchronicity in their personal and professional lives.

An extensive secondary research analysis found no existing AI principle fully addresses the concept of Synchronicity in AI environments. The development of an emergent AI principle and its associated curriculum will help individuals apply a broader awareness of Synchronicity in their own lives.

As mentioned above, the AI research and practitioner community are based on the five original founding principles. Those principles are: the Anticipatory Principle, the Constructionist Principle, the Poetic Principle, the Positive Principle, and the Simultaneity Principle (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). As research and application in the AI field progresses, new principles also have emerged. At the time of this research study, the emergent principles are: the Awareness Principle (Stravros & Torres, 2005), the Enactment Principle (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom, 2003), the Free-choice Principle (Ibid), the Narrative Principle (Barrett & Fry, 2005), and the Wholeness Principle (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom, 2003).

This new *Synchronicity Principle* stands on the shoulders and expands the “Five Original Principles of AI” (Kelm, 2005, p. 2). This proposed emergent principle incorporates aspects of existing AI Principles and creates new criteria. This principle is introduced and discussed in detail later in Chapter Five.

### *Assumptions and Limitations*

This section discusses the assumptions, limitations, and scope of the study.

The following assumptions apply to this study:

1. To this researcher’s knowledge, all survey questionnaire, interview, and focus-group participants provided honest and truthful responses.
2. Relative to the literature reviewed, the authors ensured and took the necessary precautions with ethical prudence as they collected and interpreted their research findings.
3. After providing participants with a working knowledge about the concept of Synchronicity and Appreciative Inquiry, the respondents would provide suitable and usable data.
4. The participant demographics varied in age, gender, occupation, and the level of preliminary knowledge of the subject of Synchronicity. Every attempt was made to attract a diverse population of participants.

The study had the following limitations:

1. The quantitative and qualitative interview and focus-groups participant samplings were primarily constrained to the geographic region of the northeast United States.
2. The researcher initiated contact with participants through email, phone calls, and word-of-mouth networking. Initially, a 30-minute period was allotted and scheduled for each interview. The actual average time was approximately 1 hour 30 minutes. Time budgeted for each focus-group was 1 hour 30 minutes (excluding preparation and analysis time), which remained on target throughout the study.
3. The interview participant sample number (n) was a total of 31, and three focus-group sessions each had 9, 13, and 14 participants totaling n=36.
4. The interactive interviews (Ellis, Kiesinger, & Tillmann-Healy, 1997) were held in an in-person format or by phone conversation. Every effort was made to collect the individual and focus-group participants' responses through digital recordings, recorded notes, digital photographs, and the capture of data from classroom whiteboards.

### *The Scope of the Study*

Continuous efforts were made to keep the scope of the research confined and specific. Various boundaries such as time, location, and process prevented the research from including too many objectives, or outcomes, or becoming too broadly focused (Creswell, 2012). This study remained focused on the specific topic of Synchronicity awareness and its possible connection to the Appreciative Inquiry framework for individuals and groups within a fixed geographic setting. While many new potential research avenues on the subject appear worthy of investigation, they were set aside as beyond the scope of this work. Even so, the generalizability (Blair, 2006) of this study's mixed methodological approach could be applied in either of the following potential research projects:

- (1) The environment of a mixed methodology research approach to Synchronicity awareness and AI in a broader intercultural and global population. That may prove very intriguing and enlightening.
- (2) The sensitivity of specific personality types to Synchronicity awareness. Future research could prove interesting to delve deeper into a broader understanding of personality theory relative to Synchronicity awareness.

### *Theoretical Foundations*

This study has a two-fold theoretical foundation. The first building block is C. G. Jung's provocative hypothesis that there is an acausal connecting principle, which he called Synchronicity. The second is the principles of Appreciative Inquiry, already defined above. Taken together, these two allow for research design and interpretation. The development of both Synchronicity and Appreciative Inquiry is covered in Chapter Two: The Literature Review.

American astronomer and author, Carl Sagan, once said, "Science is not only compatible with spirituality; it is a profound source of spirituality" (1997, p. 45). Throughout time the human understanding of spirituality has taken many forms, incarnations, and has been given numerous interpretations. These views vary from centuries-old traditional interpretations to contemporary 'New Age' definitions. Although there is no single and unanimously accepted



single definition of spirituality, Doug Oman's historical research, *Defining Religion and Spirituality* includes one early English description as an example. He writes, "spirituality was used positively to connote a personal and affective relationship with God" (as cited in *The Handbook of Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 2013, p. 26).

Could there be a system or an organized framework that might provide a venue to pose such questions about Synchronicity and individual interpretations of spirituality? Is there an established methodology or philosophical environment where these types of questions could be delivered and discussed? An investigation into the design of AI suggests that it offers one such methodology, and this study explores how AI does indeed provide the generative environment in which those questions may be explored (Cooperrider, Avital, & Godwin, 2013).

An overview and analysis of the origins and applications of Social Construction (Gergen, 1994) and Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) in organizations concludes the literature review. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is "a form of action research that attempts to create new theories/ideas/images that aid in the developmental change of a system" (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 49). From the investigation into these social applications, a link is developed between the founding principles of AI and current thinking around Synchronicity. There appears to be a gap in the prior knowledge and the application methodology in Appreciative Inquiry. This knowledge gap highlights the opportunity to develop a more distinct relationship between AI applications and methodologies, and the link to greater Synchronicity awareness in individuals and groups. This study illustrates a potential to leverage the concepts of Synchronicity in current AI education and training.

#### *Organization of this Thesis*

After the introduction and literature review in chapter two, the third chapter discusses the mixed methodology approach to the data collection process. The fourth chapter presents an analysis and the findings, beginning with the quantitative and then the qualitative mixed-methodology approach. Finally, the fifth chapter provides how the *Synchronicity Principle* might be incorporated within AI's philosophy and its methods. The chapter also presents the reader with practical advice for greater Synchronicity awareness, recognition, and enhancement, as well as recommendations for future directions of associated research.

## CHAPTER TWO—LITERATURE REVIEW

*Introduction*

What are the connections between Synchronicity awareness and Appreciative Inquiry (AI) methodology and practice? This inquiry is central to the quantitative and qualitative research developed in this study. A review of the research suggests there is an opportunity to develop such a methodology and practice. This chapter outlines and reviews literature that generally hypothesizes and supports the innovation of such an idea. Although no published research was uncovered that explicitly discusses this connection, the review of literature presented in this chapter provides arguments for the melding of Synchronicity and AI.

This chapter provides an overview of the foundational review process and an evaluation of relevant empirical studies and literature. Additional insights into the research search and evaluation process can be found in Appendix B. The evaluation is divided into three main sections. The first section further defines Synchronicity and offers historical perspectives on the origins of this theory. The review includes supporting literature of personal recognitions of “collective unconscious” (Jung, 1975) and an understanding of “interconnectivity” and “oneness” (Reiner, 2006) as initially documented in early Eastern and Greek history and philosophies (Main, 2007; Yuasa, 2008). A brief historical perspective to Jung’s development of the concept he called “Synchronicity” and its relation to the emerging research of Quantum Physics is offered. It was Jung’s work that provided an initial public recognition of the term, “Synchronicity,” and solidified its inclusion and use in the modern lexicon today to explain the nature of meaningful coincidences.

With an understanding of the concept of Synchronicity established, critical literature on the topic is explored, both to provide broader historical and contemporary context for how Synchronicity might apply to every-day thought and to look at areas offering opportunities for further investigation. To guide this deeper investigation, particular questions are posed:

- What scientific theories stand out most?
- How and in what ways can Synchronicity theory be explained, documented, and justified?
- What are the connections between Synchronicity theory and spiritual constructs in human understanding?

In addition to reviewing the literature on Synchronicity, this chapter pays special attention to individual interpretations and acknowledgement of personal Synchronicity experiences. However, the credibility and validity of personally recounted narratives, experiences, and observations cannot be discounted nor denied in qualitative research applications (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). This study supports the acknowledgement and recognition of memorable personal Synchronicity experiences accounts are valid to the individual (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

While acknowledging the presence of literature refuting Synchronicity (Ben-Zeev & Star, 2001; Diaconis & Mosteller, 1989; Forrer, 2015; Haig, 2003; Maltby, Day, Gill, Colley, & Wood, 2008; Smart, 1981; Vul, Harris, Winkielman, & Pashler, 2008), it is beyond the scope of this study to debate, disavow, or disprove that Synchronicity theory exists.

The second section of this chapter summarizes literature and research around the methodologies and philosophies of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) practice (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001). AI, a strength-based methodology and philosophy for positive change development is

utilized by organizations (Cooperrider, Srivastva, Woodman, & Pasmore, 1987; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001) and also used by individuals (Kelm, 2005). This section also summarizes AI's historical, practical, and theoretical roots, which emerged from Social Constructionist theory (Berger, 1967; Gergen, 2001; Neimeyer, Neimeyer, Lyddon, & Hoshmand, 1994) during the 1980s (Cooperrider et al., 1987).

The second section also includes a review of AI literature that outlines particular criticisms of its methodology and philosophy (Bushe, 2011b; Grant & Humphries, 2006). The following questions are explored:

- What are the oversights and shortcomings surrounding AI methodology and philosophy?
- Could oversights be interpreted as too blindly optimistic and lacking in realistic feedback mechanisms (Bushe, 2011a; Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Grant & Humphries, 2006)?
- Do oversights exist in AI methodology that do not accurately address organizational and personnel structures (Bushe, 2011b)?

The third section includes potential connections between Synchronicity awareness and AI methodology and practice. A review of contemporary literature on awareness of Synchronicity and its applications within AI methodology provides readers with greater understanding of current gaps in the knowledge (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003) of and the research on the relationship between Synchronicity and AI. The guiding questions for these inquiries include:

- Are there occasions when Synchronicity awareness and Social Construction methodology and Appreciative Inquiry theory and practices overlap?
- Is there enough prior research to substantiate and support connections between the two concepts?
- Is there a new opportunity within the boundaries of this study to combine foundational research literature on Synchronicity with that on AI methodologies and practices?

This review of the literature also highlights a collection of authors who call for new and innovative original research around themes of Synchronicity (Cambray & Rosen, 2012; Hocoy, 2012; Lorenz, 2006) and AI (Cooperrider & Laszlo, 2012; Orr & Cleveland-Innes, 2015; Saadat, 2015) and on research into expanding knowledge of Synchronicity (Bolen, 2004; Cambray & Rosen, 2012; Lorenz, 2006; Main, 2014) and in the applications and uses of Social Construction and Appreciative Inquiry (Calabrese, Cohen, & Miller, 2013; Saadat, 2015; Serrat, 2008).

However, as noted, scans of social and physical science research reveals that very few researchers to date have directly correlated the two areas with plausible linkages (Saadat, 2015). The survey of the literature led to the discovery of the gaps in the literature and the development of a research project that explored ways to diminish the knowledge gaps.

### *The Foundational Literature Review Process*

According to Creswell (2013), foundational literature reviews are designed to (1) gain a broad understanding of the literature, (2) to discover the gaps in the literature relative to the research topic, (3) and weave the researcher's theories to the foundational research. Researchers Boote and Beile (2005) further explain, "a researcher cannot perform significant research without first understanding the literature in the field" (p. 3).

One approach to the logical analysis of a literature review, is to use Cooper's Taxonomy of Literature Reviews (Cooper, 1988), which contains the following five categories: *focus*, *goal*,

*perspective, coverage, organization, and audience*” (Randolph, 2009, p. 2), as illustrated in Table 2-1. Cooper’s Taxonomy was employed for this study’s review of the literature. The review process incorporated all elements of Cooper’s Taxonomy. The table includes unique combinations used from the list of *Characteristics* and *Categories*.

Table 2-1. Cooper’s Taxonomy of Literature Reviews

Characteristic	Categories	Applications to this Study
Focus	Research outcomes Research methods Theories, Practices, or Applications	Both <i>Theories</i> and <i>Practices or Applications</i> approaches were used to investigate the background of both Synchronicity and AI. “A review might concentrate on how a certain intervention has been applied or how a group of people tend to carry out a certain practice. In terms of a research rationale, this fourth type of review can help establish a practical need not currently being met” (Randolph, 2009, p. 3).
Goal	Integration (a) Generalization (b) Conflict resolution (c) Linguistic bridge-building Criticism Identification of central issues	This study has a multiple goal focus (Cooper, 1988). The approach is to <i>Integrate</i> and <i>Generalize</i> the findings across many platforms.
Perspective	Neutral representation Espousal of position	An <i>Espousal of position</i> in the initial outline of the research methodology was used. The overall goal of the thesis was stated early in the study, namely, to investigate a plausible linkage between Synchronicity awareness and AI methodology.
Coverage	Exhaustive Exhaustive with selective citation Representative Central or pivotal	The study utilizes a <i>Representative</i> methodology, which includes <i>central</i> and <i>pivotal</i> articles in the field.
Organization	Historical Conceptual Methodological	<i>Historical and conceptual formats</i> are used when establishing the foundational understanding of Synchronicity and AI.

Audience	Specialized scholars General scholars Practitioners or policymakers General public	The primary audience of this study are <i>specialized scholars</i> (Faculty Advisors & Promoters) and reviewers. Secondary audiences include <i>general scholars</i> and <i>practitioners</i> in the fields of Appreciative Inquiry and Social Constructionism.
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From “Organizing Knowledge Synthesis: A Taxonomy of Literature Reviews,” by Cooper (1988), p. 109.

An additional vital purpose for writing the literature review “is that it provides a framework for relating new findings to previous findings in the discussion section of a dissertation. Without establishing the state of the previous research, it is impossible to establish how the new research advances the previous research” (Randolph, 2009, p. 2).

The literature review in the below will cover the following areas:

1. A definition of Synchronicity
2. A history of the development of Synchronicity as a theory
3. Eastern philosophies that influenced Jung and Western scientific research around Synchronicity understanding
4. Quantum Theory and Synchronicity
5. Arguments against and criticisms of Synchronicity
6. The foundational origins of Appreciative Inquiry and its presence today
7. A content analysis of AI and its potential connections to Synchronicity

Accordingly, this literature review is presented as a historical perspective (Cooper, 1988) on the topics of Synchronicity and Appreciative Inquiry. The primary objectives of this review are to (1) provide the reader with foundational understanding of these topics, (2) demonstrate gaps in the knowledge between the two topics, and (3) include a new and original thinking to the existing foundational research (Creswell, 2013).

### *Questions that Guide the Review*

The following questions guided the review of the literature:

1. What are the foundational and historic origins of Synchronicity?
2. Are there scientific explanations for Synchronicity? To what extent can Synchronicity be observed, measured, and monitored?
3. What are the foundational origins of Appreciative Inquiry?
4. What is the place for Synchronicity awareness and understanding within an Appreciative Inquiry methodology?
5. Does the Appreciative Inquiry methodology, with its various approaches, offer an appropriate setting for understanding Synchronicity within the individual and in group environments?
6. How could Social Construction theory and practice relate to the future of ‘mixing’ Appreciative Inquiry and Synchronicity?

*Review of Literature**Synchronicity: A Definition*

*To develop a complete mind: study the science of art; study the art of science.*

*Learn how to see. Realize that everything connects to everything else.*

Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519)

*Synchronicity is an ever present  
reality for those who have eyes to see.*

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961)

*Despite our habit of seeing ourselves as separate,  
solid 'things,' our minds, our beings are not fixed.*

*We exist in a web of relationships.*

Joseph Jaworski *Synchronicity* (2009, p. 178)

The term Synchronicity has been widely recognized and used throughout history (Andel, 1994) and is commonly used in the contemporary vernacular, where it can be found in modern music and media (Cambray & Rosen, 2012; Hocoy, 2012; Hogenson, 2005; Lorenz, 2006). As an example, the rock music band, The Police launched their *Synchronicity* album and global concert tour in 1983-1984, (<http://www.thepolice.com/discography/album/synchronicity-23441>), and a full-length science fiction motion picture, *Synchronicity*, was released in 2015 ('Synchronicity' Review: A Sci-Fi Thriller for the 'Ex Machina' Crowd | *Variety*, n.d.).

However familiar it may be, Synchronicity's meaning may be confusing because of its interpretations and definitions vary depending on the environment in which it is used. For example, Synchronicity is broadly used in financial markets to describe a consistency in stock market prices (Khanna & Thomas, 2009). In various forms of media communication the term refers to a confluence of messaging (Dennis, Fuller, & Valacich, 2008). Synchronicity is also used widely to describe simultaneous occurrences in the laboratories of modern medical research (Li et al., 2010). A list of ways the term is used could continue almost indefinitely. However, for this particular research study the definition of "Synchronicity" is rooted in human behavioral sciences and psychology (Mansfield, Rhine-Feather, & Hall, 1998), where it is used to describe an experience of an "acausal meaningful coincidence" (Jung, 1975).

Jungian analyst and researcher, Cambray explains, "the first reference to the idea of Synchronicity occurs on 18 November 1928 in Jung's seminar on dreams published in *Dream Analysis*" (p. 7). The term can be interpreted, literally, as a "falling together in time" (Forrer, 2015). Jung constructed the word "Synchronicity" from two Greek roots: *Synch* (a coming together) and *chronos* (time) (Cambray & Rosen, 2012).

Ancient Greeks used two different words to describe the concept of time, *chronos* or *kairos*. Both words relate to time. However, *chronos* represents quantitative and sequential movements of time (Smith, 1969), whereas *kairos* represents qualitative and significant points in time (Roberts, 2003; Smith, 1969). *Kairos* also describes right or opportune moments, even referring to an interpretation of the 'supreme moment' (Roberts, 2003). Researchers continue to ascribe a 'spiritual' connection to the *chronos/kairos* differentiation. To elaborate on the Greek "spiritual" distinction, psychoanalytical researcher Main explains further,

Another Jungian-influenced approach to the understanding of synchronicity is the attempt to view the phenomenon mythically, that is, in terms of the "god" or "spirit" that

might be considered responsible for it. Thus, various writers have thought to elucidate aspects of the nature of synchronicity by viewing it imaginatively or — “imaginally” — as the expression of one or other of the gods of the Greek pantheon: Hermes the trickster and transgressor of boundaries; Pan the god of spontaneity; or Dionysus bestower of the experience of mystical fusion and timelessness (Main, 2007a, p. 3).

The classic definition of Synchronicity is: a psychologically meaningful connection between an inner event (thought, vision, or feeling) and one or more external events that occur simultaneously (Jung, 1975). “Jung also proposed a broader definition in which synchronicity experiences could involve a coincidence between an inner event and an outer event occurring at either a distant place or a future point in time” (Schwartz, n.d., p. 2). Jung explains Synchronicity in this manner,

...it is impossible, with our present resources, to explain ESP or the fact of meaningful coincidence, as a phenomenon of energy. This makes an end of the causal explanation as well, for “effect” cannot be understood as anything except a phenomenon of energy. Therefore, it cannot be a question of cause and effect, but of a falling together in time, a kind of simultaneity. Because of this quality of simultaneity, I have picked on the term “synchronicity” to designate a hypothetical factor equal in rank to causality as a principle of explanation (1969, p. 435).

Author and researcher, Gary Schwartz, goes on to define Synchronicity in a less psychological and more operational or empirical way, as “the occurrence of two or more highly improbable sequences of seemingly disconnected temporary related events which may (or may not) hold a specific meaning or interpretation for the synchronicity observer” (Ibid, p.2).

### *Synchronicity versus Serendipity*

Today, the terms Synchronicity and Serendipity are often confused and treated as synonyms (Cambray & Rosen, 2012). This subsection will attempt to clarify the confusion. While Synchronicity is an “acausal meaningful coincidence” (Jung, 1975), Serendipity, on the other hand, may not include “meaning” (Guindon & Hanna, 2001), but may be acausal (Cambray & Rosen, 2012).

According to Cambray and Rosen, the term, which is recognized in scientific and medical research as well as other areas, was coined by a British man of letters, Horace Walpole in 1754, during the Age of Enlightenment. The root word comes from a fable, well-known during Walpole’s childhood (Ibid), *The Three Princes of Serendip* (Foster & Ellis, 2014). In this fable, the Island of Serendip, now known as Sri Lanka (Cambray & Rosen, 2012), was the home of three princes who “were always making discoveries, by accidents and sagacity, of things which they were not in quest of” (Remer, 1965, p. 6).

Numerous accounts of serendipitous exist, ranging from scientific discoveries, such as those of penicillin and the application of antibiotics in modern medicine (Roberts, 1989), to food and flavor development (Andel, 1994) like artificial sweeteners (“How to Cultivate the Art of Serendipity” - *The New York Times*, n.d.), and to entrepreneurial business successes (Dew, 2009), such as the development of the now ubiquitous Post-it™ Notes ([www.3m.com/3M/en\\_US/company-us/](http://www.3m.com/3M/en_US/company-us/), n.d.) and the invention of the convenient Velcro™ hook and loop fasteners (Roberts, 1989). Today, entire websites and blogs are devoted to serendipitous discoveries (Cambray & Rosen, 2012; Dew, 2009; Roberts, 1989).

That being said, can there be Serendipity without Synchronicity (Meyers, 2007)? The distinction between Serendipity and Synchronicity is found in what is defined as “meaningful.” What may initially be a happy accident can only prove “meaningful” with the passage of time. Cambray explains further, “It is the gift or capacity of the well-informed mind that is open to chance that can make the curious or odd, often seemingly minor occurrence in an encounter into a meaningful, at time momentous, event, that is, for the synchronistic dimension to become more evident” (2012, p. 102). Sociology researchers Merton and Barbor (2004) refine our understanding further: “not all lucky accidents are synchronicities with meaningful coincidences, especially of an acausal nature” (p. 37). Cambray (2012) concludes the discussion by stating, “It often takes some time and research to discern whether or not a serendipitous occurrence includes a synchronicity. Serendipity does not necessarily include a meaningful insight. This may come out through a process of time to become a synchronistic event, but it can only be proven through time” (p. 103). He adds, “Whether serendipities are truly synchronistic or have a synchronistic core can be debated, even in Jungian circles, because of the question of attribution of meaning” (p.125).

### *Synchronicity: A Historical Perspective*

This section provides the reader with a deeper understanding of the foundations and development of Jung’s theory of Synchronicity and summarizes the theory’s evolution. Jung described his own experience of Synchronicity as follows:

The problem of Synchronicity has puzzled me for a long time, ever since the middle twenties, when I was investigating the phenomena of the collective unconscious and kept on coming across connections which I simply could not explain as chance groupings or “runs.” What I found were “coincidences” which were connected so meaningfully that their chance concurrence would represent a degree of improbability that would have to be expressed by an astronomical figure (Jung, 1975, p. 21).

In his 2011 article in the *Journal of NeuroQuantology*, researcher Igor Limar states, “the concept of Synchronicity represents an integral part of analytical psychology” (p. 1). Analytical Psychology, the school of psychotherapy founded by Jung, “emphasizes the importance of the individual psyche and the personal quest for wholeness” (Stevens, 1995, p. 190). While Jung and noted Austrian psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud were close friends and collaborated as research partners in the early years of psychoanalysis, from 1907-1913 (Wollman, 1984), the two differed widely on their conception of the unconscious (Taylor, 1998). One central conflict and cause for the divergence in philosophies between Freud and Jung was, “the concept of synchronicity which emerges from a model of the mind characterized by a radical connectedness between minds and also between minds and matter, placing the human mind in a field characterized by interactive possibilities that simply occupy no conceptual place in Freud’s psychology of the individual” (Mayer, 2002, p. 93). A further reason for the divergence was Jung’s belief that the natural sciences were not only a method of research into the human psyche, but also “part of the phenomenology of spirit” (Lorenz, 2006, p. 2). In order to better comprehend the mind, Jung thought that empirical data could be drawn from dreams, folklore, and myths as a way to gain a richer understandings and meanings (Sharp & Jung, 1992).

There were numerous times in Jung’s life, when he experienced “ghosts, haunting, inexplicable sounds, and precognitive dreams that he documents in many articles and letters” (Lorenz, 2006, p. 5). His early assumptions and hypotheses of meaningful coincidences were what Jung called “psychic facts” (Ibid, p. 2). Lorenz describes Jung’s assertion like this, “it



doesn't matter if other people believe that these events happened or that they can be documented or somehow proved to be true. The key issue is that they appear within the experiences of individuals who are deeply impressed with them" (Ibid).

According to Jung, his most famously recounted personal experience of Synchronicity is that of the "golden scarab" (Ibid, pp. 21-22). Jung was having a particularly difficult time breaking through to an existing patient. In therapy sessions, the young woman was resistant to Jung's counseling, and Jung was at a standstill with no idea of how he could break through to his patient. Suddenly, that opportune moment presented itself. Jung describes how, during one particular treatment session, there came

a critical moment, a dream in which she was given a golden scarab. While she was telling me this dream I sat with my back to the closed window. Suddenly, I heard a noise behind me, like a gentle tapping. I turned round and saw a flying insect knocking against the window-pane from outside. I opened the window and caught the creature in the air as it flew in. It was the nearest analogy to a golden scarab that one finds in our latitudes, a scarabaeid beetle, the common rose-chafer (*Cetonia aurata*), which contrary to its usual habits had evidently felt an urge to get into a dark room at this particular moment. I must admit that nothing like it ever happened to me before or since, and that the dream of the patient has remained unique in my experience (Ibid, p. 22).

Jung also includes in his definition, coincident occurrences of acausal events between the inner world (the psyche: everything that is conscious and unconscious) and external world experiences (Robertson, 2005). Psychoanalytic researchers, Friedman and Goldstein recount Jung's thoughts, stating:

The still unknown relationship between what we call the unconscious psyche and what we know as matter is a phenomena beholden to many fields of study. With the reason still not fully understood, the point is that Synchronicity happens, and I think the most interesting of events are the ones that occur regardless if we have a reason or not (1964, p. 197).

Jung observed that three distinct criteria are necessary in order for a special confluence of events to occur (Hopcke, 1989). First, Jung suggests, the Synchronistic events must be acausally connected: a particular synchronistic event's outcome cannot be derived through a 'cause and effect' approach. Be it acausally or causally connected, the individual cannot "discern [the event] as intentional and deliberate on her or his own part" (Hopcke, 1997, p. 23). Jung also concluded, "The coincidence in time of two or more causally unrelated events which have the same meaning" (Jung, 1975, p. 8).

Jung's second criterion is that the event occurs at a time when they may be connected to a "deep emotional experience" (Hopcke, 1997, p. 23). These experiences could be birth, death, marriage, or other major life changes (Beitman, 2016). Physicist, David Peat finds, "Synchronicities also act as markers of time, moments of transformation within a life that occur in *chaïros*, when 'the time is right'" (Laurikainen, 1989).

Jung's third criterion suggests that the event is represented by various signs and may be symbolic in nature (Jung, 1975). In other words, one such example of a sign or symbol of impending life events may come in the form of a dream. Jung believed in a "collective consciousness"—a fundamental connectedness we all share within the mind, such as in dreams (Reiner, 2006). Jung's research entailed the realm of dream states, which may also inform and predict forthcoming realities (Forrer, 2015). Aniela Jaffe, a friend and collaborator of Jung's

used the following examples to illustrate interpretations of dreams: “a woman dreamt that she was standing on a bridge and saw a man struggling desperately for his life in the water. The same evening she received news that her father had been drowned” (p. 22). Jaffe describes yet another dream encounter, “a girl in Solothurn (Switzerland) dreamt that she met her cousin on the Bahnhofbrücke in Zurich, and, the cousin told her that their grandmother had died. In the morning she received the announcement of the death” (ibid).

In his book, *There Are No Accidents: Synchronicity and the Stories of Our Lives* (1997), Hopcke adds a fourth criterion to Jung’s original list. Such meaningful coincidences occur “at points of important transitions” and “turning points” in our lives (p. 23). When faced with difficult choices at crossroad in life, an awareness of Synchronistic signals may help individuals make more appropriate and beneficial choices for future decisions (Hocoy, 2012; Hogenson, 2009; Main, 2007b).

### *Synchronicity: Cultural and Spiritual Influences*

*When the pupil is ready, the teacher will come.*  
Ancient Chinese quote

*I am open to the guidance of synchronicity,  
and do not let expectations hinder my path.*  
Dalai Lama (1989)

Coincidence is God’s way of remaining anonymous  
Albert Einstein (1931)

*Synchronistic events provide an immediate religious experience as a  
direct encounter with the compensatory patterning of events in  
nature as a whole, both inwardly and outwardly.*  
C. G. Jung (1937)

As Jung considered and developed his theory of Synchronicity, he drew insights from many external sources (Liang, 2012). Prominent among these varied sources were the centuries-old Eastern wisdom and spiritual writings of Taoist philosophy, introduced to him in 1928 by his colleague, and friend, Sinologist, Richard Wilhelm (Cambray & Rosen, 2012; Zabriskie, 2005). Wilhelm was the first “Westerner” to translate the entire ancient “Chinese Oracle of Change, the I Ching” (Main, 2007a, p.3), which essentially explains the formation of the universe and the relationship of man to the universe (Lu, 2013). The *I Ching*, which dates to 2853 B.C.E., also asserts the interconnectivity and oneness of all living things and the universe, in its entirety (Coward, 1996; Douglas, 1998; Jung, 1975; Lu, 2013; Zabriskie, 2005).

As cited in Cambray and Rosen, Jung described his affinity for his connection and interest in Eastern philosophies as follows:

The East bases much of its science on this irregularity [acausal meaningful coincidences] and considers coincidences as the reliable basis of the world rather than causality. Synchronism is the prejudice of the East; causality is the modern prejudice of the West. The more we busy ourselves with dreams, the more we shall see such

coincidences—chances. Remember that the oldest Chinese scientific book [the I Ching] is about the possible chances of life (2012, p. 8).

Contemporary psychiatrist and Jungian researcher, Jean Shinoda Bolen adds,

Much of the value of Synchronicity lies in its ability to connect us to a meaning-giving, intuitively-known principle in our lives by which we can find a “path with heart,” a Tao, a way to live in harmony with the universe, Synchronicity can provide us with confirmation that we are on the right path, as well as let us know when we are not” (2004, pp. xiv–xv).

As evidence of eastern philosophy and religious influences upon Jung’s theory of Synchronicity (Liang, 2012), Jung expounds in his own words,

I had known for a long time that there were intuitive or “mantic” methods which start with the psychic factor and take the existence of synchronicity as self-evident. I therefore turned my attention first of all to the intuitive technique for *grasping the total situation* which is so characteristic of China, namely the *I Ching* or *Book of Changes*. Unlike the Greek-trained Western mind, the Chinese mind does not aim at grasping details for their own sake, but at a view which sees the detail as part of a whole... The *I Ching*, which we can well call the experimental foundation of classical Chinese philosophy, is one of the oldest known methods for grasping the situation as a whole and this placing the details against a cosmic background—the interplay of Yin and Yang (1975, pp. 34–35).

Bolen describes the concept as follows: “Synchronicity is the Tao of psychology, relating the individual to the totality” (2004, p. 7). Jung connects his Theory of the Self with this totality concept. As Cambrey and Rosen explain,

A holistic, radically interconnected, reflective universe has been a recurrent imagining of humanity, and Jung’s theory of the Self together with the collective unconscious offer a psychological reading of this archetypal pattern. Synchronicity becomes a particularly potent manifestation of the field with the resonant reflections of internal and external events (2012, p. 44).

A review of research indicates that a preponderance of documented work in the area of human explanation of Synchronicity understanding ascribes the phenomenon to the work of some higher power. One such hypothesis is the Spiritual Assistance Hypothesis (Schwartz, n.d.), which is not new and explains the “possible spiritual assistance in the mediation of events in the physical world” (Ibid, p. 3). It proposes that unexpected events happen sometimes because spirits are causing them. Throughout time, this is one human explanation of “the apparent capriciousness of nature” (Ibid, p. 3). During his life, Jung maintained strong connection to the divine (Main, 2007a), even beyond what his work on Synchronicity makes evident. Jung stated, “what happens successively in time is simultaneous in the mind of God” (1975, p. 102).

Throughout time, individuals have been drawn to universal guides offering direction to their lives. Jungian author and scholar Harlene Shulman Lorenz elaborates on this concept: “Synchronicity is also connected to imaginative systems in which people feel themselves to have spiritual guides, with foreknowledge of events that may be animals, gurus, dream figures, or daimons. In addition to Jung, Rumi, Socrates, Black Elk, and Joan of Arc are famous examples of individuals who consider such altered states to be significant” (2006, p. 4).

In 1989, Arthur Koestler conducted the first large-scale survey of coincidence experiences. Koestler's research on coincidences had great impact because it was done outside specifically Jungian circles (Main, 2007a) and was from "a predominately parapsychological perspective" (Ibid. p. 5). Main explains:

Concerning the types of coincidence experienced, 33 percent of the respondents accepted the characterization "prayer answering," and similar numbers the characterizations "guardian angel" (34 percent) and "library angel" [information guidance (typically in libraries) by coincidence rather than a cataloguing system] (30 percent). Concerning what factors might have accounted for or influenced the coincidences, 51 percent accepted "Destiny/ Fate/Karma" as a possibility, 38 percent accepted "Synchronicity (Jung's theory)," and 36 percent accepted "Divine or diabolic intervention." The survey was not specifically designed to elicit information regarding the spiritual experiencing and interpretation of coincidences, but the preceding figures nonetheless serve to suggest that many experiencers do view them in this light (p. 5).

Because of varying spiritual contexts, agreeing upon a common interpretation of Synchronicity is difficult. A 2010 conference on the "Science of Synchronicity" hosted by the Program in Religion, Science, and Technology at the Yale University of Divinity provides a perfect example. During the conference, numerous Synchronicity definitions were studied, but no single definition was agreed-upon (Schwartz, n.d.).

As stated earlier, it is not the intention of this study to disprove or disavow the individual and collective spiritual beliefs and how they may be attributed to Synchronistic events and understanding. However, Chapter Four does include qualitative research data of participant responses pertaining to the connection of Synchronicity to spirituality.

As Jung gained insight from his acquired understanding of fundamental Eastern spiritual philosophies, he looked to potentially pair this knowledge with Western scientific approaches in order to more comprehensively and fully present his Synchronicity theory (Cambray & Rosen, 2012; Main, 2007b). This is the topic of the next subsection.

*Synchronicity and the Quantum Theory Connection*

*“Sci-fi has never really been my bag. But I do believe in a lot of weird things these days, such as Synchronicity. Quantum physics suggests it’s possible, so why not?”*

John Cleese

*“Everything is connected and the web is holy.”*

Marcus Aurelius

*“It would be most satisfactory if physics and psyche could be seen as complementary aspects of the same reality.”*

Wolfgang Pauli

(Jung, & Pauli, 1952/1973)

As Jung continued to develop his theory of Synchronicity through the 1930s and '40s, he became convinced that there was a scientific basis for his concept, but he lacked the expertise to prove this (Cambray & Rosen, 2012). As Jung progressed in his quest for a more complete understanding of Synchronicity theory, he looked for a more scientific basis; he found it in theoretical physics (Zabriskie, 1995), when he began his long-term collaboration with Austrian physicist, Wolfgang Ernst Pauli in 1948 (Lindorff, 1995; Zabriskie, 1995). The Jung/Pauli relationship initially began when Jung treated Pauli in therapy sessions and afterwards, developed into a collaborative research partnership (Cambray & Rosen, 2012). From this relationship, Jung “has always made sure that the data gathered from his clinical observations conforms to the principles of natural science” (Limar, 2011b, p. 2).

Pauli was one of the leading twentieth-century scientists in the emerging field of quantum physics (Landau, 2007). Nominated by Albert Einstein (Landau, 2007), he was awarded the Nobel Prize for physics in 1945 for his discovery on the Exclusion Principle, also known as the Pauli Principle (Atmanspacher & Primas, 1996). The Pauli Principle states:

that quantum entities are in one of two possible forms: *symmetric form* and *anti-symmetric form*. It is because of *anti-symmetry* that electrons are prevented from occupying the same energy states and forced to take up characteristic energy patterns around an atom without any apparent cause/effect relationship between them. Thus, Pauli had discovered an acausal connection principle that governs the fundamentals of quantum matter, suggesting that there is a deep connection between Jung’s Synchronicity principles (Moreira & Wichert, 2015, p. 116).

Jung gained confidence in his research into Synchronicity from the urging of Pauli (Cambray & Rosen, 2012), although it was not until the early 1950s that Jung began to publish research in this area (Lorenz, 2006). Jung opens his 1952 book, *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle* as follows:

In writing this paper I have, so to speak, made good a promise which for many years I lacked the courage to fulfill [sic.]. The difficulties of the problem and its presentation seemed to me too great; too great the intellectual responsibility without which such a subject cannot be tackled; too inadequate in the long run, my scientific training. If I have now conquered my hesitation and at last come to grips with my theme,

it is chiefly because my experiences of the phenomenon of synchronicity have multiplied themselves over decades (Jung, 1952, p. 3).

Jung and Pauli progressed in their research together on Synchronicity, and “it was Pauli who helped Jung formulate the “psychoid archetype” that grounds the psyche in biology (and nature) and allows for interconnections with things in the universe (Lorenz, 2006, p. xii).

Although Jung first began thinking about Synchronicity theory in the mid-1920s (Cambray & Rosen, 2012), a survey of his analytical writing about Synchronicity shows that it was close to four decades later before “Jung’s own struggle for individuation in relation to the official knowledge of his epoch, which he called the collective consciousness” came to fruition (Lorenz, 2006, p. 5). Jung and Pauli ultimately co-authored the 1952 book *The Interpretation of Nature and the Psyche*, in which the topic of Synchronicity and its connection to quantum physics was a prominent subject (Jung & Pauli, 1955).

Synchronicity cannot be explained by classical physics (Martin, Carminati, & Carminati, 2009); however, quantum theory—one of the most interesting developments in modern science—does offer a scientific explanation for Synchronicity (Cambray & Rosen, 2012; Condon, 1932; Frenzt, 2011; Limar, 2011; Von Lucadou, Röme Walar, & Walach, 2007). Briefly, in lay terms, quantum theory can be described as using complex mathematical formulae used to study subatomic particles and electromagnetic waves, such as light (Gamow, 1985). Through complicated experimentation in the field, physicists noticed these particles and energy can perform in unpredictable ways when observed (Wilczek, 1999).

The explanation of such experiments is very difficult for two reasons: the involvement of human operators, and our persistent illusions about reality. Quantum mechanics is presented first as a remedy for such illusions. Mind as an emergent property of the brain is presented next. Physical and mental points of view are combined to give a plausible explanation of the observed data as a special case of synchronicity (Duch, 2002, p. 154).

This scientific research has been employed to examine the relationship between the conscious mind and the unconscious mind, and to examine free will (Martin et al., 2009). Physicists such as Pauli studied the analogy between Synchronistic events and quantum entanglement (interconnection), where mental states (conscious and unconscious) are treated as quantum states (Martin et al., 2009).

In summary, as applied to the individual, researchers in quantum theory hypothesize that a quantum process occurs between different parts of the mind. However, in Synchronistic events, this process extends beyond the individual mind. Researchers theorize that the mind of an individual is connected to a ‘collective unconscious’ (Jung, 1975) through quantum entanglement (Cambray & Rosen, 2012; Jung, & Pauli, 1973; Main, 2014; Martin et al., 2009). Martin et al. adds,

The analogy of the entanglement between two individuals is, for example, the continuing bonds between children who are adults with their aging parents...As an end let us mention a quantum effect that can have important consequences in mental phenomena, for example for awareness (for the emergence of consciousness) (2009, p. 589).

During his collaborative research with Pauli, Jung wanted to ensure his psychological observations connected to the principles of natural science (Limar, 2011). Interestingly, it was

not until the 1980s that advances in scientific experimentation in certain areas of quantum physics allowed for a renewed exploration into Synchronicity theory (Frentz, 2011). Many instances exist where Jung's and Pauli's original theoretical research of the 1950s were still supported by more advanced scientific technologies thirty years later (Cambray & Rosen, 2012). Lucadou, et al. (2007) outline the relationship between Synchronicity and quantum theory this way: "Non-causal and non-local correlations as postulated in synchronicity theory are well known in quantum theory under the name of entanglement correlations" (pp. 50–51). Synchronicity is regarded as a significant coincidence that occurs between a mental state and a physical state. "In this case the physical state is symbolically correlated to the mental state by a common meaning. They appear not necessarily simultaneously but in a short interval of time such that the coincidence appears exceptional. Jung referred to these events as "meaningful coincidences" (Martin et al., 2009, p. 580). According to Martin, one can view Synchronistic events between the mental and the material domains as a consequence of a quantum entanglement between mind and matter (Ibid). Synchronicity phenomena, especially those involving a correlation at a distance between several individuals, lead one to regard non-localized unconscious mental states in space and time (Von Lucadou et al., 2007).

### *Synchronicity and its Applications*

As Jung's theories developed during the mid-twentieth century, he began to rely upon his researcher collaborators to broaden and develop further his theories of Synchronicity (Cambray & Rosen, 2012). In anticipation of burgeoning and future research in the behavioral and social sciences, Jung and his colleagues outlined six major areas "part of a much larger paradigm change in process in Western thought," where Synchronicity could be applied (Lorenz, 2006, p. 6). Those six areas are: cultural studies, comparative religions and spirituality, neurobiology work on altered states of consciousness and parapsychology, social structures of observations in the humanities, and complexity theory or self-organizing systems (Ibid). This study focuses its attention on one of these six areas outlined by Jung—complexity systems (theory) or self-organizing systems.

According to Cambray and Rosen, complexity systems cut across traditional academic disciplines and "have emergent properties, meaning that interactions among the parts produce behaviors that are greater than the sum of the interactions but also manifest new, unexpected higher levels of functioning and order in the process of adapting to their surroundings" (2012, p. 45). For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that Jung and his colleagues' research in Synchronicity and complexity theory may help bridge and support the connection between Synchronicity awareness and the methodology and philosophy of Appreciative Inquiry. The exploration of this link has potential applications for AI practitioners and scholars.

### *Complexity Theory*

Today an exhaustive level of work is being done in complexity theory, particularly at the *Santa Fe Institute* located in Santa Fe, New Mexico, United States (Santafe.edu). Jungian researcher and author, Joseph Cambray (2002) explains, "The Santa Fe Institute, an impressively creative 'think tank' of scientists from many disciplines, was set up to explore and employ the concepts involved in complexity and chaos theories" (p. 415). The institute's mission is as follows: *Searching for order in the complexity of evolving worlds* (Santafe.edu/about/mission-and-vision). Their interdisciplinary research domain is complex adaptive systems (CAS), and the ways to better understand them and their relation to information systems and order. CAS are

“systems that have what is termed “emergent” properties, that is, self-organizing features arising in response to environmental, competitive pressures” (Cambray, 2002, p. 415).

Jung investigated other sciences studying the concept of order and found an example of CAS in entomology or the study of insects (Jung, 1952). In his 1952 work, *Synchronicity, An Acausal Principle*, he recounted his late-1940s research on the organization structure and communication among honeybees (1952), “that showed that even though bees have no cerebral cortex, they have a complex language through which they communicate direction and distance of feeding locations to each other” (Lorenz, 2006, p. 10).

An ant colony has become a classic illustration of Complexity Theory (Lorenz, 2006; Manson, 2001; Schneider & Somers, 2006). Lorenz (2006) explains that as the research in Complexity Theory has progressed, “it has become possible to model four basic types of information systems, based on the levels of connectivity, that seem to emerge from the logic of mathematics” (p. 10).

In ant colonies, the four basic types appear as follows:

*Class 1 System:* Colonies of certain types of ants have too few members and hence too few connections to develop creatively and fall into entropy or lack of available energy. “They simply freeze and fail to move or work” (Lorenz, 2006, p. 10).

*Class 2 System:* More ants mean more connective links are made and when ants brush-up against one another, they are awakened from entropy (p. 10). Enough ants have to exist in the colony for viability, and with enough frequency of encounters, the ants divide into two distinct work groups—one to dig and burrow, and the other to clear the scree or debris (Ibid). Ultimately, the ants in a Class 2 system settle into this pattern for life (Ibid).

*Class 3 System:* In this system, the ant colony is “turbulent and chaotic and no stable patterns ever emerge” (Lorenz, 2006, p. 11). As an example, when an ant nest is disturbed, the ants tend to scatter in all directions without order (Stewart, 2001).

*Class 4 System:* In this system, the ant colony has reached just the right level of connectivity (Lorenz, 2006, p.11). They “have all the characteristics of synchronistic events: they arise as acausal, non-predictable ordering within the natural world” (Ibid, p. 11).

Lorenz concludes about Class 4 Systems: “life, psyche, culture, art, ritual, and by extension synchronicities, are not random accidents, but a necessary outcome of inherent mathematical ordering of the world” (Ibid). This insight provides a useful perspective on the potential connections between awareness of Synchronicity and its application to interdisciplinary research.

Lorenz concludes her discussion of Jung’s research and involvement with Synchronicity with the following insight:

I would like to suggest that now we are in an epoch when new theory in the sciences and the humanities makes it possible to link some of Jung’s most radical ideas, particularly those connected to synchronicity, with contemporary work going on in diverse fields in the 21st century” (p. 1). ... It “opens new ways for us to continue to learn about openness, humility, dialogue and grace, as we face the challenges of building peaceful environments in a new era. Synchronicity gives us a way to imagine communities as interconnected, filled with untapped spiritual potentials, and called to the work of liberation (Ibid, p. 12).



Considering the above quotation relative to this study's research thesis—to explore the connection of Synchronicity awareness and Appreciative Inquiry practice—it only seems logical to provide a historical overview and development of AI methodology, which follows.

## *Appreciative Inquiry*

### *A. The Origins*

*“From the constructionist position the process of understanding is not automatically driven by the forces of nature, but is the result of an active, cooperative enterprise of persons in relationship.”*

(Kenneth J. Gergen, 1985, p. 267)

*“Appreciative Inquiry is a whole set of philosophy and tools that help with the elevation, the magnification and then ultimately the refraction of our highest human strengths out to society.”*

David L. Cooperrider (Champlain.edu, 2016)

During the mid-twentieth century, researchers and theorists in sociology developed the theory and practice known as Social Constructionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), which pioneering Social Constructionist scholar Kenneth Gergen defines as follows:

Social Constructionism is principally concerned with elucidating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world in which they live. It attempts to vivify common forms of understanding as they now exist, as they have existed in prior historical periods, and as they might exist should creative attention be so directed (1985, pp. 3-4).

From this Social Constructionist approach sprouted and flourished “Appreciative Inquiry (AI)” methodology (Cooperrider, Barrett, & Srivastva, 1995), which is a form of Action Research. Action Research was initially inspired and advanced by social psychologist Kurt Lewin in 1944 as a method to develop and generate data on social systems (Adelman, 1993). A strength-based positive organizational change system (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005), AI was first documented in 1986 in the research of David L. Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva from the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio (1987). Cooperrider initially developed his concept of AI while conducting primary research on the human side of organizational development at the Cleveland Clinic in 1980 (Watkins & Mohr, 2001). He observed “the highly effective functioning of the clinic” (Ibid, p. 24) and noted that the Clinic was the first large-scale site where “a conscious decision to use an inquiry focusing on life-giving factors forms the basis for an organizational analysis” (Ibid).

A review of AI literature demonstrates the fact that an AI approach can be applied to various formats and settings. Globally, diverse industries, businesses, and organizations have successfully implemented AI methodology.

Table 2-2 illustrates examples of companies and organizations that have benefited from including AI practice into their strategies (Bushe, 2013; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005a; Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008; Cooperrider & Laszlo, 2012):

Table 2-2. Examples of Companies and Organizations Benefiting From AI

Company	Industry	Country of Origin
<i>Ben &amp; Jerry's Homemade, Inc.</i>	Food/ice cream	United States
<i>British Petroleum, Ltd.</i>	Energy	United Kingdom
<i>Champlain College</i>	Education	United States
<i>The City of Cleveland, OH</i>	Municipality	United States
<i>The Cleveland Clinic</i>	Medical	United States
<i>Fairmont Minerals, Inc.</i>	Mining	United States
<i>Hewlett Packard, Inc.</i>	Computer peripherals	United States
<i>Keurig Green Mountain, Inc.</i>	Food/coffee	United States
<i>Nutrimental Foods, Inc.</i>	Nutritionals	Brazil
<i>Roadway Express, Inc.</i>	Transportation/trucking	United States
<i>Sherwin Williams, Inc.</i>	Paints	United States
<i>United States Army and Navy</i>	Defense	United States
<i>Toyota Corp.</i>	Automobiles	Japan

According to Watkins and Mohr (2001), “Appreciative Inquiry is a collaborative and highly participative, system-wide approach to seeking, identifying, and enhancing the life-giving forces that are present when a system is performing optimally in human, economic, and organizational terms” (p. 14). Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) refer to AI as a knowledge searching and a collective-action theory designed to aid the evolution of the normative vision and motivation of a collection (organization, society, or group) as a whole. Basing their work upon Gergen’s (1978) original and pioneering research, Cooperrider and Srivastva perceived that AI embodies generative capacity and, reiterate Gergen’s description on generative capacity: “Capacity to challenge the guiding assumptions of the culture, to raise fundamental questions regarding contemporary social life, to foster reconsideration of that which is taken for granted and thereby furnish new alternatives for social actions” (1987, p. 1346).

Years later, Cooperrider and Whitney (2001) elaborated and expanded on the AI description in a dictionary-style definition:

*Ap-pre'ci-ate, v., 1. valuing; the act of recognizing the best in people or the world around us; affirming past and present strengths, successes, and potentials; to perceive those things that give life (health, vitality, excellence) to living systems 2. to increase in value, e.g. the economy has appreciated in value. Synonyms: Valuing, Prizing, Esteeming, and Honoring. Further definitional work honors the learning from difficult and painful experiences (Bushe, 2011b).*

*In-quire' (kwir), v., 1. the act of exploration and discovery. 2. To ask questions; to be open*

*to seeing new potentials and possibilities. Synonyms: Discovery, Search, Systematic Exploration, and Study* (p. 2).

AI is thus the act of valuing the best in people and exploring and being open to new possibilities.

Taken together, then, AI is a way of looking at a person, an organization, and the world and saying, “Let’s look at the best that there is. Let’s define and study that, and then use the data to build on what is working.” AI is a change process. It is not another organizational development intervention; rather it is a new approach to existing organizational development interventions such as strategic planning, business process redesign, teambuilding, organization restructuring, individual and project evaluation (valuation), coaching, diversity work, and so on (Martinetz, 2002, p. 35).

AI asserts that a group’s or society’s symbolic capacities of mind and imagination include the social capacity for cultural evolution and that of a conscious choice (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). Today, an AI approach continues to be a practical application methodology for businesses, education, governments, and non-profit communities world-wide (Cooperrider & Laszlo, 2012), as described below.

### *B. The Practice of AI*

For the first fifteen years after the initial AI research published in 1987, the original AI researchers were frequently asked to write a book on how to “do AI.” Instead, they encouraged people to focus on the principles of the model and encouraged innovation in the method (Bushe, 2001). Cooperrider and Whitney (2001) explain that there should be freedom during the AI process to allow for productive pathways to develop.

With this open and inclusive mindset, ways of applying AI proliferated, underscoring the belief there is no single, or one way, to do it (Ibid). The initial foundational principles, (or dimensions as they were called in 1987), stated that AI should begin with appreciation, should be collaborative, should be provocative, and should be applicable (Cooperrider et al., 1987; Ludema, Cooperrider, & Barrett, 2006). Later, Cooperrider and Whitney theorized and published “five principles and scholarly streams we consider as central to AI’s theory-base of change” (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001, p. 14). Known as the five foundational principles, they are widely used and cited today (Bushe, 2001). Cooperrider, et al. (2005) outlines these five principles:

### *C. The Five Core Principles*

#### *1. The Constructionist Principle:*

- What we believe to be true determines what we do, and thought and action emerge out of relationships.
- Through the language and discourse of day-to-day interactions, people “co-construct” the organizations they inhabit.
- The purpose of inquiry is to stimulate new ideas, stories and images that generate new possibilities for action.

#### *2. The Principle of Simultaneity:*

- As we inquire into human systems we change them and the seeds of change, the things people think and talk about, what they discover and learn, are implicit in the very first questions they ask.

- Questions are never neutral, they are fateful, and social systems move in the direction of the questions they most persistently and passionately discuss.
3. *The Poetic Principle:*
    - Organizational life is expressed in the stories people tell each other every day, and the story of the organization is constantly being coauthored.
    - The words and topics chosen for inquiry have an impact far beyond just the words themselves.
    - They invoke sentiments, understandings, and worlds of meaning. In all phases of the inquiry effort is put into using words that point to, enliven and inspire the best in people.
  4. *The Anticipatory Principle:*
    - What we do today is guided by our image of the future.
    - Human systems are forever projecting a horizon of expectation that brings the future powerfully into the present as a mobilizing agent.
    - Appreciative Inquiry uses artful creation of positive imagery on a collective basis to refashion anticipatory reality.
  5. *The Positive Principle:*
    - Momentum and sustainable change requires positive affect and social bonding.
    - Sentiments like hope, excitement, inspiration, camaraderie and joy increase creativity, openness to new ideas and people, and cognitive flexibility.
    - Promote the strong connections and relationships between people, required for collective inquiry and change.

Cooperrider, et al. constructed these five original principles to be organic and generative concepts for future development by practitioners and researchers in the field (Bushe, 2013). With the emergence of new AI principles, those expectations have been met (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005a).

#### *D. The Five Emergent Principles*

The new principles that have emerged are designed to address the expanding application of AI in different settings (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2007). While these new principles partner with the core, or foundational, principles, some practitioners prefer to see them as ‘intentions’ for their work, rather than principles (Bushe, 2012). However, this study’s nomenclature of these more recently-developed principles refers to them as ‘emergent.’

As of 2016, the current emerging five AI Principles include:

1. *The Awareness Principle:*
  - Awareness is understanding and integrating the AI principles.
  - Bringing underlying assumptions to the surface is important in good relationships.
  - Practice cycles of action and reflection, where we act, reflect, and act with awareness (Stavros & Torres, 2005).
2. *The Enactment Principle:*
  - Embody what you want.
  - Simply try something (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003).
3. *The Free Choice Principle:*
  - Freedom from internal and external forces is one type of freedom.
  - The freedom of inner clarity allows us to pursue life freely (Ibid).
4. *The Narrative Principle:*

- We construct stories about our lives.
  - Stories are transformative (Barrett & Fry, 2005).
5. *The Wholeness Principle:*

- Wholeness provides more expansive thinking than reductionism.
- Learn to be present to the emerging whole (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003).

Chapter Four of this study will introduce and examine the development and application of a new Emergent Principle, *The Synchronicity Principle*. This proposed principle will build upon the theories of existing Foundational and Emergent AI Principles.

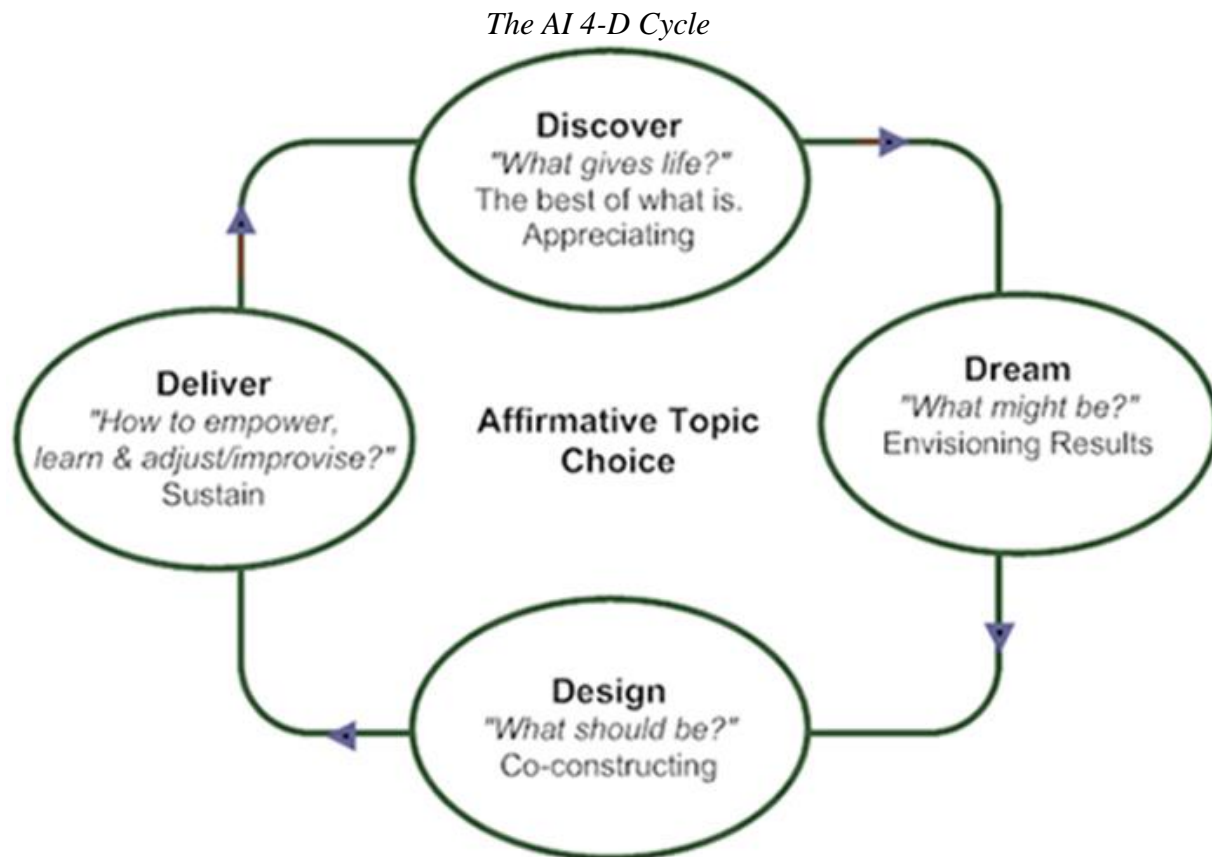
#### *E. AI and the 4-D Cycle*

AI methodology facilitates organizational change by shifting the focus of a firm's stakeholders (employees and managers) from seeking the negative aspects of their workplace to exploring the positives and hidden capacities and strengths of their organization (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2005). The AI 4-D Cycle process was developed to explore these hidden capacities (Whitney & Schau, 1998) and it can occur within an Organizational 'Summit,' which involves a meeting of 50 to 1000 participants (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2001). In a Summit, participants are encouraged "to consider what their organization (department, business unit, or entire company) is being "called" to do. The agreed upon choice of an "Affirmative Topic" connects the work of all members of the organization to a greater purpose and vision" (Ibid, p. 5). This purpose and vision is included as a vital characteristic in the "Affirmative Topic," framed in positive and life-giving language central to the organization's mission (Cooperrider et al., 2005), as illustrated in Figure 2.5 (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005a).

After a group or organization has settled on an "Affirmative Topic," AI implementation methods follow a generally-accepted procedure or model, referred to as the 4-D cycle (Bushe, 1998; Carr-Stewart & Walker, 2003; Cooperrider et al., 1995; Cooperrider & Laszlo, 2012). The steps involved in the 4-D cycle are as follows (Cooperrider et al., 2005):

1. *Discovery:* The identification of organizational processes that work well and that gives life to the organization. This process mobilizes a whole-system inquiry into the positive change core.
2. *Dream:* This process envisions what might work well in the future and generates a results oriented vision relative to discovered potentials and to then craft questions of a higher purpose.
3. *Design:* A planning and prioritizing processes that would work well and creates possibilities for the ideal organization.
4. *Delivery/Destiny:* The actual implementation of the planned and proposed design. This process strengthens the affirmative capability of the whole system by building hope and momentum around a deep purpose. Additionally, the process creates on-going processes for continuous organizational learning, adjustment, and improvisation.

Figure 2-3. The Process of the 4-D Cycle (Cooperrider &amp; Whitney, 2005a, p. 16)



#### *F. Criticisms on AI*

According to researchers Bushe (2012; 2011b) and Grant and Humphries (2006), literature critical of AI primarily focuses on how this method's excessive emphasis on 'positivity' can invalidate and potentially conceal the negative organizational experiences of participants and suppress necessary and meaningful dialogues needed to resolve conflicts (Bushe, 2010; Coghlan, Preskill, & Catsambas, 2003). In his research, Bushe revealed that an organization's failure to provide proper conditions for raising, expressing, and discussing unspoken resentments will cause members to find AI invalidating (Bushe, 2012; Bushe & Kassam, 2005). In response to this criticism, in the past fifteen years, a number of solutions to improve AI's functionality have emerged. These solutions include: (1) enhancing AI's generative capacities rather than focusing exclusively on positivity, (2) improving AI's effectiveness using recent advances and discoveries in positive psychology, and (3) re-emphasizing AI's primary role, which is energizing social systems through the power of inquiry and the establishment of a strong shared vision (Bright, Cooperrider, & Galloway, 2006; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005a; Gergen, Gergen, & Barrett, 2004; Powley, Fry, Barrett, & Bright, 2004).

*At the Intersection of Synchronicity and Appreciative Inquiry*

*“Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread  
within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.  
All things are bound together. All things connect.”  
Chief Seattle (1854)*

A review of the literature linking Synchronicity awareness to the Appreciative Inquiry methodology revealed a paucity of research in this area, suggesting an area of opportunity for investigation. The few references found were tangential in nature.

One published work, *The Appreciative Organization* (Anderson et al., 2008), contains an approximate mention of the relationship. Chapter Six is titled, *Organization in Context: From Separation to Synchrony*. The chapter itself outlines inherent distinctions present in many organizations between those on the “inside” and those from the “outside.” The authors maintain that “the distinction between “us” and “them” can create adversarial relations” (p. 73). The argument continues: “In order to accomplish this greater mission, it is vital to blur boundary distinctions and recognize the fundamental interdependence of the organization with its surrounds” (pp. 73-74). Relative to Jung’s Synchronicity theory—the coming together (synching) of the mind’s internal psyche to that of external material world experiences (Jung, 1969)—might this also apply to the dynamics in organizations as the authors suggest? This topic will be further investigated in Chapter Four.

Another plausible connection of Synchronicity to AI may lie in the Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) concept (Cambray, 2002; Saadat, 2015; Schneider & Somers, 2006; Stewart, 2001). As discussed earlier in this chapter, CAS considers the relationship between social systems within an organization (Cambray, 2002). According to Saadat’s (2015) study of the AI and CAS connection:

an analysis of AI’s functionality through the lens of CAS reveals two critical insights: a) AI enhances adaptability to change by strengthening communication among agents, which in turn facilitates the emergence of effective team arrangements and a more rapid collective response to change, and b) AI possesses the potential to generate a collective memory for social systems within an organization, which dynamically informs agents of their existing capacities” (p. 5).

Saadat’s twin points of strengthening communication and generating collective memory in groups provides a framework that would support a broader awareness of Synchronicity in AI methodology and practice. It is another potential pathway that may lead to an intersection between Synchronicity awareness and AI. Chapters Four and Five will offer the reader deeper insights into group and individual responses to Synchronicity awareness and AI, and how they might more closely connect. These possible connections will be explored and presented.

*Opportunities: Synchronicity and AI Future Research*

The literature review not only provided insights into the vast amount of historical research on the topic of Synchronicity and AI, but it also included numerous invitations for future research on these topics. Jungian author Lorenz (2006) concludes,

Our work over eons, as in the mystical texts of gnosticism, Judaism, and Islam, is to awaken to spirit in the world, and to become bearers of more just and humane relatedness to suffering. In our witness and caring for suffering by ourselves and others,

Jung claims, “God becomes conscious in the act of human reflection.” Jung talks in several articles about learning to have an “ethical” relationship to the emergent unconscious, to take up the symptoms, emotional life, and images that arise through synchronicities in us and in the world around us as a call, a vocation, and a responsibility. This is, to my mind, a very much needed program for surviving the chaos of the globalized world of the 21st century (p. 12).

Synchronicity author and researcher Main further remarks, “there have been very few major studies focusing on the more spiritual or religious dimension of synchronicity (2007a). Three notable exceptions are works by Jean Shinoda Bolen, Robert Aziz, and Victor Mansfield. The first of these “emphasizes the importance of synchronicity as an experience that can lead to a sense of cosmic meaning and connectedness” (p. 4).

Finally, Cambray (2012) concludes with the following invitation for future investigation,

While Jung articulated the theory of the collective unconscious, composed of archetypal patterns, the sociocultural ramifications of the theory are only beginning to be examined, such as in discussions about cultural complexes. In this book, I have built upon several articles to begin to construct a network theory of the collective unconscious; I believe this deserves fuller study with explorations of various aspects of large group psychology, as well as applications of network theory, to our ideas about individuation. As a step in that direction I have sought to raise the possibility of looking at the historical record in various fields for synchronistic phenomena that may have occurred at the interface of cultures and/or across time frames beyond the individual (p. 110).

Cambray (2012) adds, “Hopefully we will learn to reflect more deeply through our experiences and understandings of the interconnectedness of our world as mirrored through synchronicity” (p. 111).

Invitations for future studies from esteemed researchers in the fields of Appreciative Inquiry, Jungian psychology, quantum physics theory, neuroscience, social science, and spirituality have fueled and inspired interest for further research that will lead to a deeper comprehension of our existence in the universe. Synchronicity awareness and its connection with AI methodology and practice is one such avenue for further investigation. Deeper exploration into reflective practices within the Synchronicity and AI spheres may help to illuminate new ways of thinking. Continued applied research into these concepts and theories may offer a new and unique perspective.

Chapter Three outlines the design of the research study to investigate and explore Synchronicity awareness and a possible connection of Synchronicity awareness to AI practice. Chapter Four then presents the results and a reflection of that study. By using a blend of grounded theory and action forms of research, the current study provides new insights and perspectives into the connection between the two topics. It is my intention that, once a more in-depth understanding about this relationship is offered, the reader will gain new insights and be able to employ these new connections between Synchronicity and AI practice.



## CHAPTER THREE—RESEARCH DESIGN

*Introduction*

Chapter Three describes the research design, methodology, and purpose employed in this study, and also outlines the specific research steps taken in order to achieve this objective in order to provide the reader with insights into the procedures and processes pursued in this study. It details the purpose of the research, the research questions applied, the role of the researcher, and provides an overview of the data collection process.

Central to this research is recording the process by which participants comprehend the concept of Synchronicity awareness both in individual, and in group environments using a mixed-methodological approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2010). This study also seeks to better acquire and collect the various ways in which participants describe their experiences. This is achieved through both inquiry (Harwell, 2011) and narrative (Creswell, 2012) approaches to information data collection.

The specific instruments used to capture the data are presented and discussed in order to offer the reader a comprehensive understanding of the quantitative and qualitative data collection methods employed (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Harwell, 2011). The complete detailed analysis of the findings and results of this mixed-methodology approach is presented and discussed in Chapter Four.

*Purpose of the Research*

This research is intended to identify ways individuals and groups are, or can become, aware of Synchronicity events and occurrences in their lives. What are their experiences? How may any awareness be enhanced to achieve greater fulfillment in personal and professional life? Can individuals become more aware of Synchronicity incidents in their lives? Once aware, are they better-able to recognize and enhance these insights in order to take advantage of new opportunities?

As laid out in Chapter One, the research expectation states:

Individuals and groups who recognize, understand, and act upon the presence of Synchronicity (seeing the connections) in their lives, can create a more fulfilling, positive, and purposeful life. Research literature indicates there appears to be potential to develop a “Synchronicity Principle” within the emerging Appreciative Inquiry framework (Kelm, 2005) to help guide individuals in this progression. Collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data during this research process supports the development and presentation of curricula within a seminar, workshop, or “AI Summit-style” format (Bushe, 2013; Cooperrider & Laszlo, 2012; Powley, Fry, Barrett, & Bright, 2004).

*Research Questions*

The primary research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. How does one recognize Synchronicity as a social phenomenon?
2. What are the situations and surroundings where one might acquire a heightened awareness of Synchronicity that provides a new perspective?
3. What is the value of trying to identify and present a “Synchronicity Principle” within an Appreciative Inquiry framework?

*Research Design*

The research design for this study included quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, otherwise known as mixed-methodology (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). In a mixed methodological approach, two or more research methods may complement one another (Bryman, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). “When used along with quantitative methods, qualitative research can help us to interpret and better understand the complex reality of a given situation and the implications of quantitative data” (Mangal & Mangal, 2013, p. 162). This research approach was applied to participants in both individual and group settings (Ho, 2006; Kvale, 2008; Lederman, 1990). This mixed-methodology process was accomplished by incorporating online and paper-based surveys, conducting personal interviews in-person and by telephone, and facilitating focus-groups. The data collection process occurred between September 15, 2015 and August 20, 2016.

The research was structured to incorporate a wide approach, ensuring a broad collection of data. Both convergent and holistic triangulation frameworks (Golafshani, 2003b) were applied within the mixed methodology. Within the research spheres of the social sciences, “triangulation refers to using multiple, different approaches to generate better understanding of a given theory or phenomenon” from the data collected and the actions observed (Turner, Cardinal, & Burton, 2015, p. 1). Turner, Cardinal, and Burton go on to say that in convergent triangulation, “validation for a theory is produced when it has been subject to multiple tests using different methods and yields consistent results” (Ibid, p. 11).

Convergent triangulation can take two forms. The first form focuses on testing a theory using two complementary research strategies. For example, researchers may pair the initial archival-based research strategy with analyses of survey data that were less specific to the particular task and involved a broader range of participants. If consistent results were found across the two research strategies, the study would support the accuracy of predictions from the theory based on greater external validity and would offer evidence that could support claims of a more general domain for the theoretical explanation (Ibid, p. 11).

The second form of triangulation is defined as:

one in which the first research strategy is used for the purpose of theory development, followed by a second that tests predictions derived from the developed theory.

Researchers often employ this triangulation approach as a way of demonstrating that the developed theory is strong enough to survive an initial round of empirical scrutiny (Ibid, pp. 11-12).

This second form of triangulation offers a “more complete, holistic, and contextual portrayal of the unit(s) under study and enriches our understanding by allowing for new or deeper dimensions to emerge” (Jick, 1979, pp. 603-604). When applying both convergent and holistic triangulation, “the objective is to assess the validity of a theory or set of results by examining across the research strategies. This includes the extent of agreement across the research strategies (the convergent aspect) and their capacity to offer unique perspective that can provide a more complete understanding of a phenomenon or theory (the holistic aspect)” (Turner et al., 2015, p. 13).

To complete the mixed-methodological research approach, quantitative research measured participants’ awareness and experience of Synchronicity before, and after, each

interview and focus-group research interaction. The study's participants came primarily from the Northeastern United States with an even distribution of gender identities and ages ranged from 18 to 74. Data was gathered through the use of online Likert scale surveys using *SurveyMonkey* software (SurveyMonkey.com) for personal interviews, and the same surveys were completed on-paper before each focus-group. Likert-style scale instruments were chosen because they make relative and absolute judgements about measures of attitude, behaviors, opinions, and perceptions (Maeda, 2015). Qualitative research was collected from participant responses during each personal interview and each focus-group. The progression of questions listed below were used in both interviews and focus-group sessions using the AI 4-D Cycle Model (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005):

The Discovery Phase

1. *Remember a time when you experienced Synchronicity and/or events in your personal life. Are there any that especially stand out for you? Please tell me the story. Who was involved and how did they contribute to this/these event(s)?*
2. *Tell me about a time when you experienced Synchronicity in your professional life. Who was involved and what was the outcome?*

The Dream Phase

3. *Was there anything in particular or special about this/these event(s) or circumstance that helped you connect the events to your current and future actions?*
4. *What were the outcomes you experienced? Were there benefits?  
Can you tell me a couple of times or a time when you have been able to identify meaningful (Synchronicity) signs or signals, and how did you recognize them?*

The Design Phase

5. *From your past success in the recognition of Synchronicity, what are a few ways you might enhance your ability to use these meaningful (Synchronicity) signs or symbols going forward? How might you leverage these opportunities for a more fulfilling personal and professional life?*

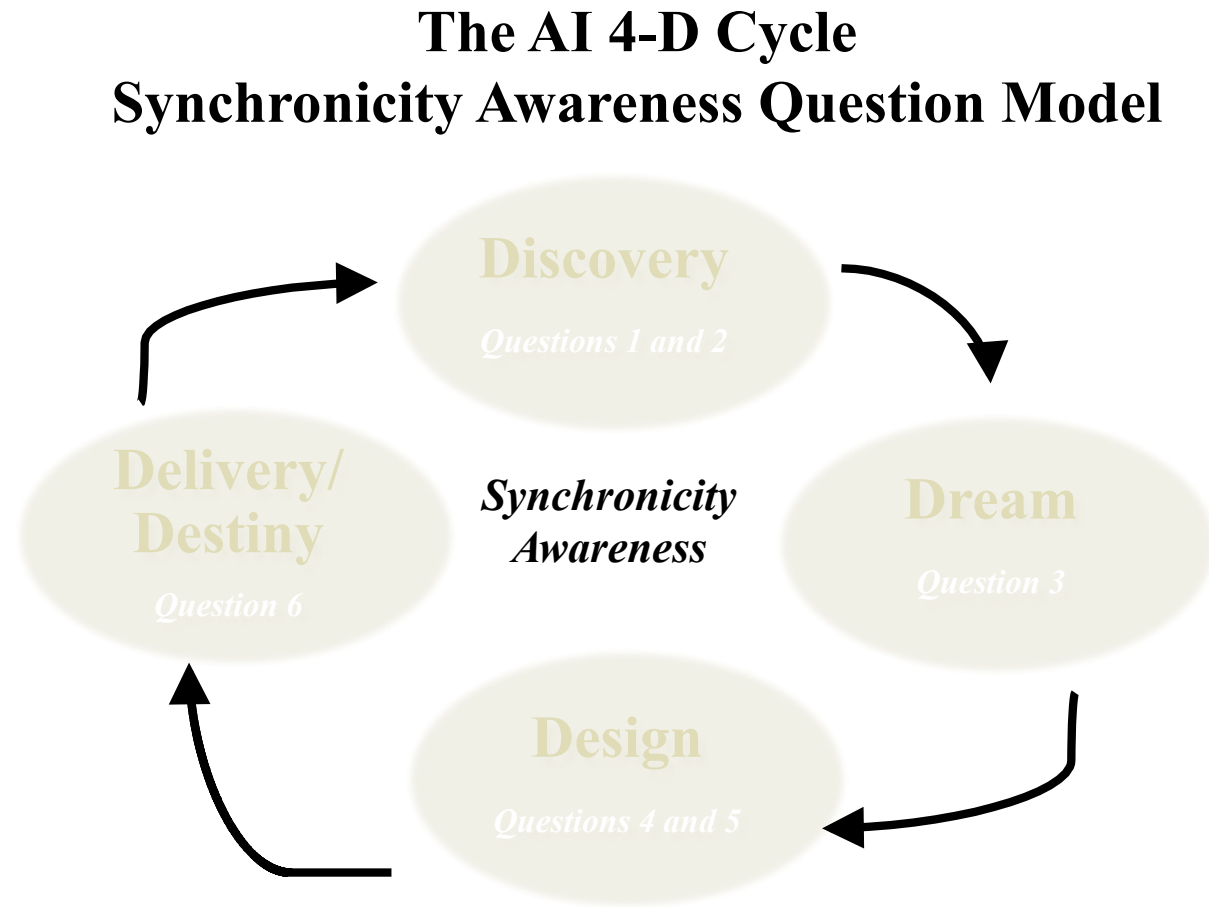
The Delivery/Destiny Phase

6. *Imagine that it's 2021 (five years from now). How could a greater awareness of Synchronicity have played-out to help you in your personal and professional lives?*

A total of thirty-one (31) personal interviews were conducted between September 15, 2015, and August 20, 2016. Three pilot focus-groups were conducted in February, 2016, to test both the quantitative and qualitative methodologies, and three focus-group sessions were conducted between June 2, 2016 and July 21, 2016. In addition, a group of AI practitioners and researchers provided feedback and insights toward the development of a *Synchronicity Principle*.

The actual qualitative research questions used in both individual interview and focus-group sessions were developed by using an Appreciative Inquiry 4-D Cycle of design and methodology (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, Cooperrider, & Kaplin, 2013), as discussed and illustrated in Chapter Two (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Questions 1 and 2 were designed to invite participants to remember personal Synchronicity experiences from the past using the *Discovery Phase* of the 4-D Cycle. Question 3 incorporated the *Dream Phase* to bring these Synchronicity experience memories into the present. Questions 4 and 5 then asked participants how the recognition of signs and/or symbols of Synchronicity could be applied using the *Design Phase*. Finally, Question 6 focused on a personal vision of the future by employing the *Delivery/Destiny Phase* that placed this enhancement of Synchronicity awareness into action. Figure 3-1 illustrates the question process within an AI 4-D Cycle model format.

Figure 3.1. The AI 4-D Cycle of Synchronicity Research Questions



### *Ethical Considerations*

Strict adherence to the guidelines/principles of the Champlain College *Internal Review Board* (IRB) was employed throughout the entire data collection process. The “Rationale” description from College’s formal IRB operating document states:

The Champlain College Institutional Review Board (IRB) will protect the safety, health, dignity and privacy of human subjects participating in research conducted by Champlain faculty, staff, and students. The IRB will provide a structured review, aligning the college with the norms of acceptable practices and the requirements for research involving human subjects (as defined herein, see Definitions) established by the federal government (see 45 CFR 46 and 21 CFR 56) which conform to ethical standards for a particular research activity or method (Champlain College IRB, 2014, pp. 2-3).

The complete document is included in Appendix C.

All verbal and written communication with potential research participants emphasized the application of confidentiality disclosures (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Similar disclosures were incorporated in all online correspondence as well. The verbiage included in all email and verbal communications was as follows: “*Your anonymity will be preserved throughout this data*

*collection process. All information you provide will be held in strict confidence and I will only disclose general demographics in my conclusions such as, age, gender, occupation, and work status.” See Appendix D for examples of written communication between the researcher and the participants.*

### *The Pilot Project*

In order to measure the survey questionnaire instruments (quantitative) and the focus-groups (qualitative), preliminary test sessions were held in February 2016. In three separate first-year class sections of *Marketing and the Organizational Mindset* business class (BUS 120), seventy-five (75) undergraduate students volunteered to participate in this research. These focus-groups took place in three separate classrooms on the Champlain College campus in Burlington, Vermont. These sessions served as a trial of research instruments and the process flow. A spreadsheet summation of this pilot project research is found in Appendix E.

The information acquired from this practice process revealed a number of issues with the research design. The following adjustments were made to the content and processes moving forward:

1. More accurate and declarative language was used in the surveys.
2. The methods to create and organize the focus-group processes were improved. Questions posed to the groups included: What went smoothly? What needed work? Through this exercise, adjustments were made to the *Pre-* and *Post-surveys*, as well as the questions applied during the interviews and group sessions.
3. A process of comparing groups’ responses to the questions within the group setting was perfected. This also helped in consistency when comparing the commonly-made responses between the three class groups.
4. These practice group sessions also helped to gauge the length of time of future focus-group sessions. Each session lasted one hour and fifteen minutes (1:15). The time limit helped to inform the design and preparation for the future focus-group sessions held in June and July 2016. The three summer sessions were scheduled for one hour and thirty minutes (1:30) each.
5. The practice sessions also helped to determine, frame, and outline the Synchronicity theory introduction for each session in order to provide participants with adequate knowledge to actively engage in the exercises.

### *The Data Collection Process*

By incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods in the research (Ho, 2006; Kvale, 2008; Lederman, 1990), the study allowed for new insights into the understanding of Synchronicity through individual and group participant responses. Building on the qualitative methods of Kvale (2008), and Morgan (1996) and the quantitative methods of Creswell (2012), four separate but related instruments were employed:

(1) *Pre-interview Surveys*, (2) *Post-interview Surveys*, (3) *Pre-focus-group Surveys*, and (4) *Post-focus-group Surveys*.

Additionally, four qualitative data collection approaches were used: (1) *Personal Interviews*, (2) *Focus-groups*, (3) *Open-ended question text boxes* provided in online pre-and post-event surveys, and (4) *Feedback questions* directed to an advisory group of Appreciative Inquiry practitioners and researchers, who inquired about the future inclusion of a potential *Synchronicity Principle* in AI methodology and philosophy.

A chronological account of the data collection process is provided below. Interviews and focus-groups were held concurrently (Sein, Henfridsson, Rossi, & Lindgren, 2011). As a tool to manage the on-going research progress, an Excel spreadsheet was developed and used to track the researcher's interaction with participants and the complicated work flow. These Excel spreadsheets can be found in Appendix F. All participant names have been redacted to preserve anonymity and confidentiality (Babbie, 1990; Morgan, 1996).

### *Personal Interviews*

To begin the process, customized email invitations were sent to an original group of thirty-six (36) participants. The initial invitation list of participants was based on the proximity of location to this researcher. This list also included individuals with a broad range of knowledge about AI—some with none on the subject and others with extensive knowledge. As word spread, sixteen (16) additional participants for the study were included, for a total of fifty-two invited participants. Special attention was given to demographic equity (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2008) and the participant group included a diversity of age, gender, race, occupation, and work status (Mason, 2010). Embedded within the email, was a link to an online *Pre-interview Survey*. Careful attention was paid to not providing too much detailed background information about Synchronicity, which might bias or sway the respondents' initial answers (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). An example of this email can be found in Appendix D.

The research instruments used in the data collection process for personal issues were:

*Pre-interview Survey* (Quantitative Methodology): A 10-question Likert-style scale (Maeda, 2015) survey questionnaire assessing participants' awareness and understanding of Synchronicity was created and developed and was initially tested and fine-tuned during the pilot phase of research. These *pre-interview surveys* were administered online one week before each interview. In addition to demographic questions, the survey asked participants about their experiences of Synchronicity. Questions included: "Have you heard of Synchronicity?" "How have you experienced Synchronicity either alone, in groups, or both?" "Are you aware of Synchronicity and its potential presence and power?" The actual survey is provided in Appendix G.

Once participants completed the *Pre-interview Survey*, a message alerted the researcher of its completion. At that time, an interview date, time, and location were established. After the interview confirmation, a preface containing a description of Synchronicity and the actual interview questions were emailed to prepare the participant (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). An example of email communication and interview preparation questions can be found in Appendix H.

*Interactive interviews* (Qualitative Methodology): The researcher's time management was crucially important during this intensive phase of research. The intended length of each interview session was budgeted at a maximum duration of 30 minutes. However, due to the nature of the open-ended questions and the in-depth responses from participants, the actual average length of each interview ballooned to approximately one hour and forty-five minutes.

As discussed earlier, the same questions were used in both interviews and focus-groups.

*Post-interview Survey* (Quantitative Methodology): A Likert-type scale survey questionnaire was developed and administered to measure and provide feedback about the participants' awareness and understanding of Synchronicity approximately one week after the interview. As with the *pre-interview surveys*, the *post-interview surveys* were initially developed and tested during the pilot phase research. The same questions were used as in the *Pre-interview*

*Survey* in order to preserve consistency and reliability in the delivery of questions and in the data analysis of the results (Creswell, 2014). These *Post-interview Surveys* measured participants' level of awareness and recognition of Synchronicity experiences in their lives after the interview. This *Survey* was also used to compare the quantitative results of the *Post-focus-group Surveys*, with the research goal of measuring variations between the individual versus group awareness of Synchronicity. The actual survey is provided in Appendix I.

### *Focus-groups*

*Pre-focus-group Surveys* (Quantitative Methodology): In order to ensure consistency and reliability, a Likert-type scale survey about participants' understanding of Synchronicity, using the same questions as in the *Pre-interview Survey* (see above for specifics), was administered immediately before the beginning of each group session. As with the previous data collecting instruments in this study, the focus-group surveys were tested and amended during the pilot research phase. This survey was completed in person and on paper just before the introductory overview of Synchronicity that kicked-off each session (See Appendix G).

*Focus-groups* (Qualitative Methodology): Three focus-group sessions (in a workshop format) were held with nine (9) to fourteen (14) participants present in each scheduled session. Participants were presented with the same preparatory material individual interviewees had received via email. This background information came in the form of a brief introduction to Synchronicity theory presented before each session. These live introductions ensured every participant had similar historical background and understanding of the Synchronicity concept before beginning a session. The same AI-constructed questions were used in focus-groups as used in individual interviews.

The first workshop/focus-group took place on June 2, 2016, during a conference of the Northeast Strength-based Network Gathering (Commongoodvt.org, 2016). Two following workshops/focus-groups were conducted at Champlain College in Burlington, Vermont on July 13 and July 20 (one week apart). The three sessions were coordinated with the *David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry* at Champlain College. The actual lesson plan and PowerPoint slides used in each session can be found in Appendices M and N.

The three focus-group sessions used the following consistent format for data collection:

1. The group sessions adopted an AI summit-type of organizational structure (Cooperrider & Laszlo, 2012).
2. Participants chose a discussion partner. They were given three minutes and instructed to discover at least one very meaningful connection they shared. This exercise demonstrated that through using appropriate questions and directed inquiry (Leech, 2002), participants can quickly and rapidly realize commonly shared experiences and interests.
3. Participants were then asked to recount a Synchronicity experience they had witnessed. They were given time to reflect and write about it. Guiding questions included were framed in such a manner as to tell a story about Synchronicity. Who was there? Where were you? What happened? Were there benefits? Participants then met with a partner to share their stories.
4. The next step included convening at the room's two tables to collectively share stories. The two sub-groups worked independently and in isolation from one another. Each sub-group of five to seven members was asked to write on the classroom's whiteboards their answers to three questions around a heightened Synchronicity awareness:

- a. What are the distinct *signs and/or symbols* of Synchronicity awareness for you?
- b. In what ways and/or when do you *recognize* a Synchronicity experience?
- c. How might you *enhance* the awareness of Synchronicity experiences in the future?

The answers from the two sub-groups were recorded both on paper and on white boards in the classroom. The white boards included three columns—“Signs and/or Symbols,” “Recognition,” and “Enhancement” of Synchronicity awareness. Photographs of all six white boards are included in Appendix J.

5. After each group concluded their discussion, the researcher asked both groups to compare the white boards. What was similar between the two? What stood-out as the most common word and phrases? Had prevalent themes emerged around Synchronicity awareness? Then each team was asked to apply a discourse analysis process (Marsh, 1988; van Dijk, 1993; Van Dijk, 2001) to analyze the common words and phrases on the other team’s whiteboard. The white boards’ data from the three focus-group sessions were collected and uploaded into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (Appendix K). The original Excel spreadsheet data are collected in Appendix L.
6. The groups reconvened and were asked, how they would individually and collectively use their Synchronicity awareness going forward. Five years from now, how would they have applied Synchronicity awareness to create a more fulfilling personal and professional life?

After each focus-group session, the notes, photos, and transcripts of the groups’ activities were uploaded into NVivo Software data vase (NVivo.com) for thematic coding analysis (Aronson, 1994; Ayres, 2016; Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2012).

The research gave rise to further questions, which are described and discussed as part of the findings that will be presented in Chapter Four.

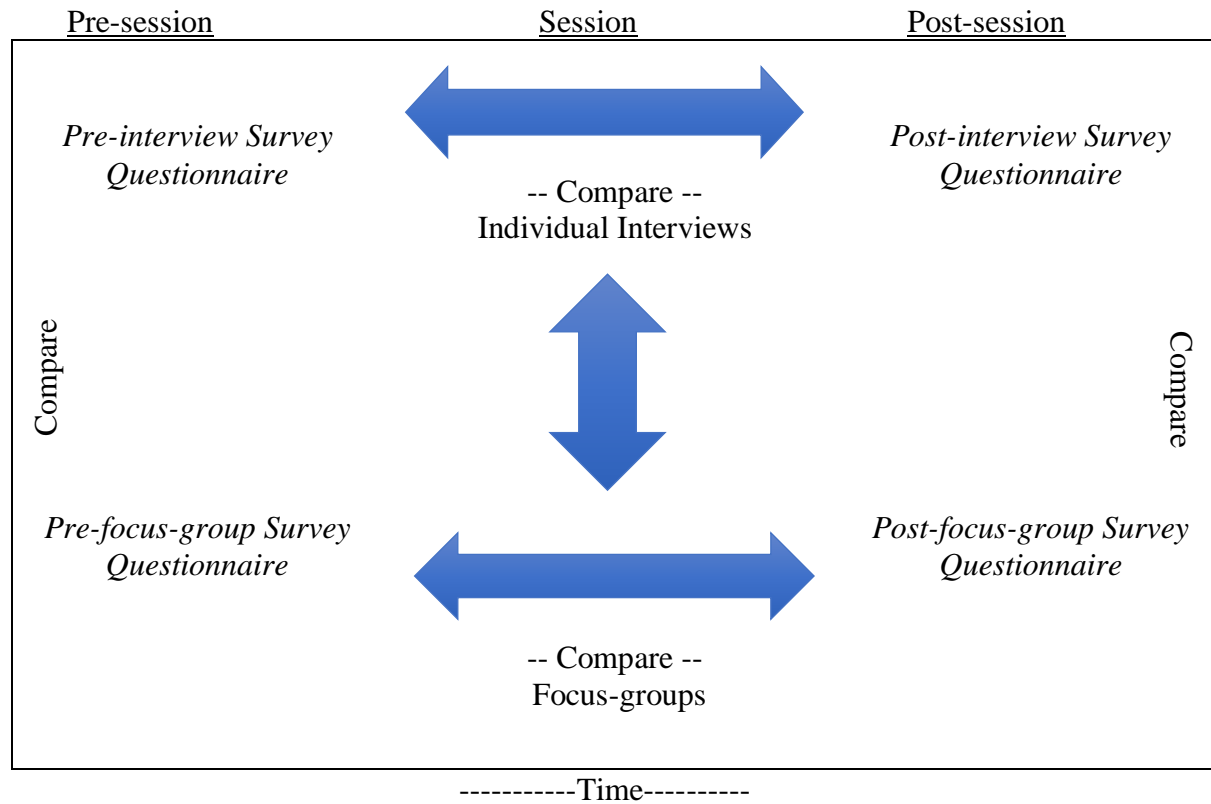
*Post-focus-group Survey* (Quantitative Methodology): Again, to ensure consistency in the process, the same questions as in the Likert-type scale *Pre-focus-group Survey* were administered one week after each group session. These surveys measured participants’ awareness of Synchronicity since participating in the session.

### *The Quantitative Research Approach*

This process measured Synchronicity awareness and understanding in individual interviews and in focus-groups by applying the *Pre-and Post-interview Surveys* and the *Pre- and Post-focus-group Surveys* (see Appendices G and I) to the following questions: Did Synchronicity awareness improve for participants after completing either an interview or a focus-group? Is there a measureable and statistical variation between individual and group environments around Synchronicity awareness? Are people more aware of Synchronicity individually or within groups, or is there no measurable distinction between the two? The form the comparisons took is shown in Figure 3-2.



Figure 3-2. Instruments Comparing Quantitative Data in Individuals and Groups

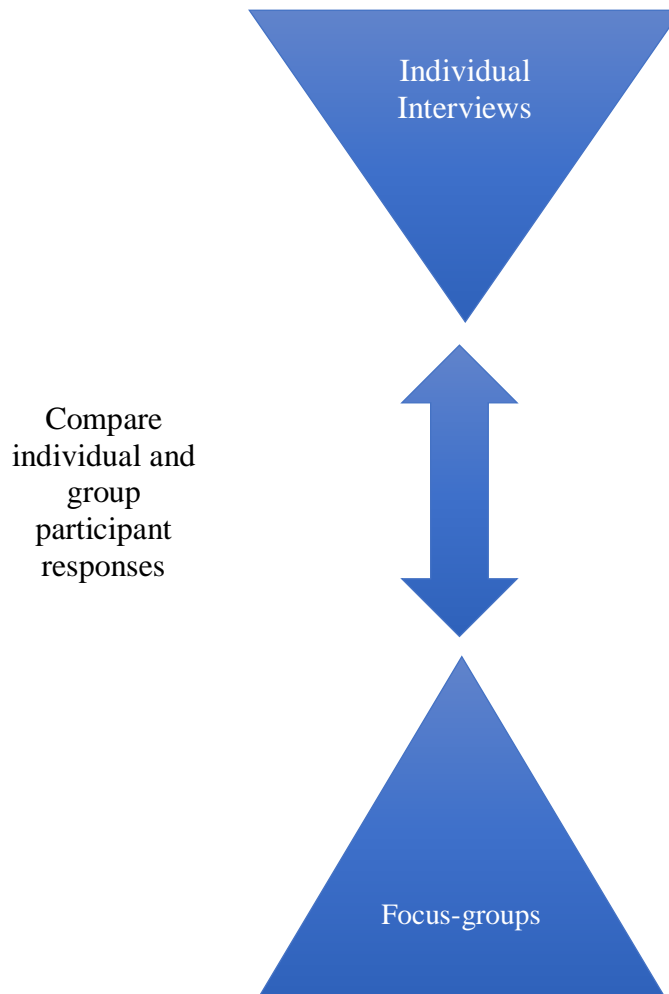


All data from the online SurveyMonkey (surveymonkey.com) surveys was uploaded into IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software for analysis (IBM-SPSS Statistics Base, n.d.). A complete detailed discussion of this data analysis process and the measured results is included in Chapter Four.

*The Qualitative Research Approach*

During the qualitative research phase, the primary objective was to observe and record responses of Synchronicity awareness and understanding in individual interviews and compare them to the responses given in focus-groups in order to answer the following questions: What common emotions, feelings, phrases, terminologies, and themes emerged during this process? Did frequently reoccurring words emerge that helped to inform a pattern for Synchronicity awareness? What were the variables between an individual and a collective environment?

Figure 3-3. The Qualitative Research Comparison Process



### *The “Synchronicity Principle” Question Posed to AI Experts*

On August 22-24, 2016, an opportunity to acquire valuable feedback about the direction of the potential of a “Synchronicity Principle” in AI arose. An advisory group of twenty-three internationally-recognized Appreciative Inquiry practitioners and researchers convened on the Champlain College campus, with the goal of envisioning and planning the mission of the *David L. Cooperrider Center of Appreciative Inquiry*. During this expert group’s time together, and without any prompting from this researcher, the concept of “Synchronicity” was raised numerous times by the participants. A Synchronicity theme began to appear on its own. Was this Synchronicity at play?

After the conclusion of this expert meeting, and with permission from the organizers, this researcher emailed the twenty-three (23) participants to get their unique feedback and perspectives about the future application of Synchronicity in AI. The individual responses received from these questions are also discussed and presented in Chapter Four.

This is the text of the email communication sent to each AI practitioner and researcher:

*The concept of "Synchronicity" was repeatedly echoed during our Cooperrider Center gathering. As many of you know, I am currently working on my dissertation, focusing on Synchronicity and its impact and implications for AI and beyond. I would love to include YOUR reflections in my work. To that end, I would welcome your comments/reflections/quotes in response to the following questions:*

- *How might greater awareness of Synchronicity play a role in Appreciative Inquiry methodology and philosophy?*
- *What potential do you see for the development of a "Synchronicity Principle" within the AI framework?*
- *Do you have any examples of Synchronicity that have happened to you in connection to our gathering last week?*

### *Summary of Chapter Three*

The research design of this study included a qualitative and quantitative mixed-methodology approach within a holistic triangulation outlined (Turner et al., 2015). This process provided a more, comprehensive, reliable, and valid progression of data collection (Brod, Tesler, & Christensen, 2009; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Golafshani, 2003a; Maxwell, 1992). By incorporating personal interviews, focus-groups and online text box responses, this researcher used a multi-pronged approach to acquiring data.

Qualitative data collection used a variety of research techniques to collect data about how participants acknowledge and interpret Synchronicity. The three primary avenues to collect data were: personal interviews, focus-groups, and online text box questionnaires. From these interactive sessions, personal account descriptions, common phrases, and words were collected relative to participants' emotions and feelings about Synchronicity awareness.

Applying the research questions using the quantitative approach measured the data relative the knowledge and awareness of Synchronicity before and after each interview and focus-group. The data could then be used to compare the measured differences between individual and group settings around the awareness of Synchronicity in their lives.

In addition, the qualitative feedback and insights collected from the questions posed to the expert group of AI practitioners and researchers, provided a strong foundation for the development of the *Synchronicity Principle*.

With the study design now firmly established, it is time to turn to the results and analysis, the topic of Chapter Four.

## CHAPTER FOUR—RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

*“Research is creating new knowledge.”*

Neil Armstrong (2005)

*“In all chaos, there is a cosmos.*

*In all disorder, a secret order.”*

Carl G. Jung (1968, p. 32)

### *Introduction*

This chapter details the quantitative and qualitative results of the research that was conducted through individual interviews and focus-group sessions. A presentation of participants’ demographic data is discussed. A mixed methodology analysis of the two primary research propositions in the study is then presented. After quantitative data is presented in the form of actual research participants’ responses, both quantitative and qualitative data are presented and examined, resulting in an in-depth analysis of them (Harwell, 2011).

The chapter is organized in the following format:

SECTION I presents an analysis of participant’s demographic data.

The next two sections then present an analysis of the findings of the mixed methodology research, divided according to the initial two research propositions:

SECTION II focuses on Research Hypothesis 1: Individuals who recognize, understand, and act upon the presence of Synchronicity (seeing the connections) in their lives, can use this awareness to create more fulfilling, positive, and purposeful lives.

SECTION III focuses on Research Hypothesis 2: From preliminary foundational research, there appears to be an unseen and untested opportunity to develop a “Synchronicity Principle” within the emerging Appreciative Inquiry framework.

### *The Guiding Research Propositions*

Within each sections I and II, the guiding research questions are addressed, using first quantitative analysis, then qualitative analysis. Converting the primary research questions into affirmative propositions (Turner et al., 2015) helped to support the findings as well as to frame the data in an organized and reader-friendly format. The three guiding research propositions are as follows:

1. *There is recognition of Synchronicity (seeing the connections) among individuals as a social phenomenon.*
2. *There are situations and surroundings where one might acquire a heightened awareness of Synchronicity that provides a new perspective.*
3. *There is a value in trying to identify a “Synchronicity Principle” application within an Appreciative Inquiry framework*

*SECTION I: Participant Demographics*

A demographic data analysis sets the background against which the findings of the mixed methodology analysis must be understood. The demographic data outlined below illustrates gender identity (Figure 4-1), age distribution of the participants (Figure 4-2), including gender identity and age comparisons (Figure 4-3), as well as occupation and work status (Table 4-1) for both individual interview and focus-group participants. Although this study's geographic reach was predominantly limited to the Northeastern United States, participants, now living in the U.S., came from other countries such as Brazil, Canada, India, South Africa, South Sudan, and the U. K. The participants' home domiciles were not included in the data figures below; however, research into Synchronicity topics including a broader global geographic focus could be an enlightening and interesting future research topic.

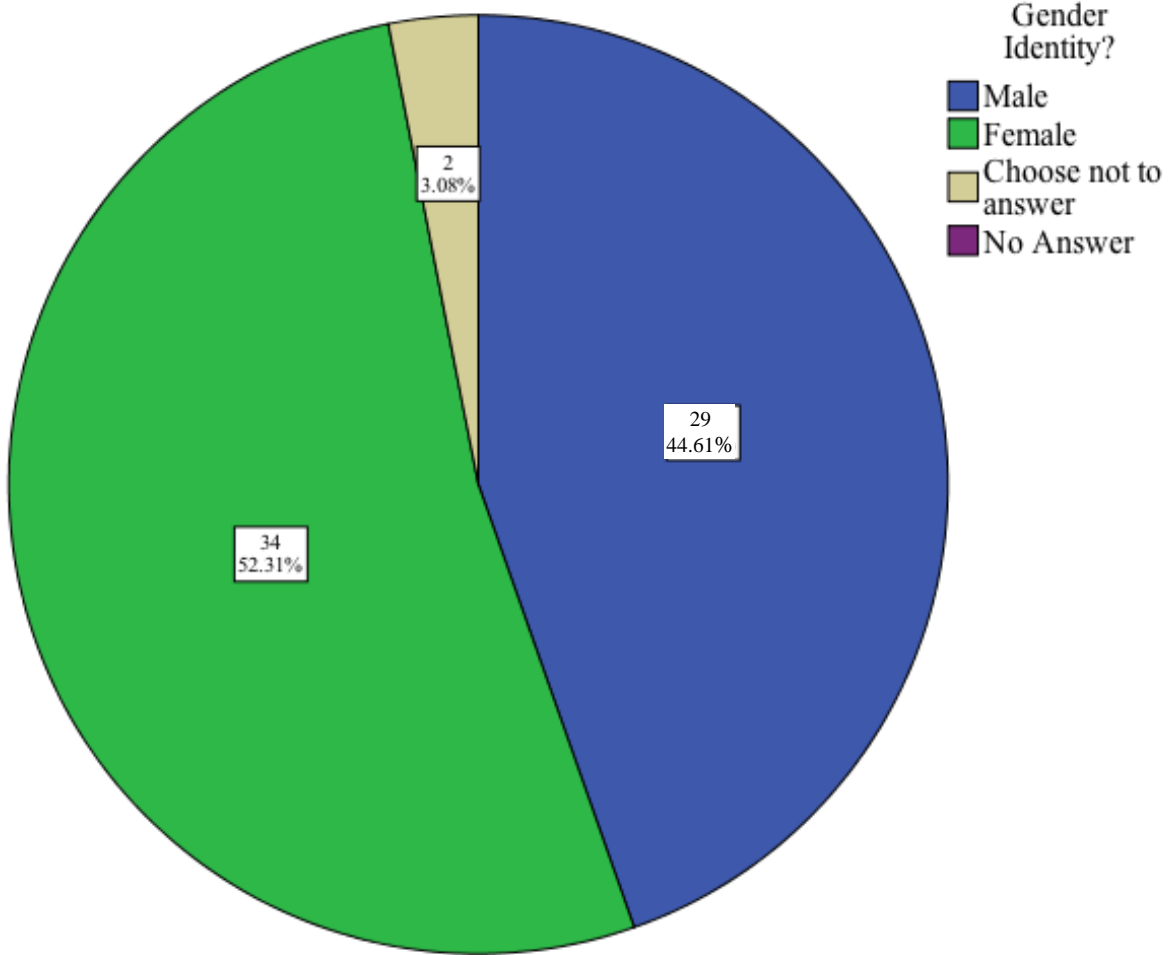
Interview and focus-group participants were selected because of their location proximity to this researcher. In addition, participants were selected based on their level of prior knowledge of, and experience with, AI methodology. This spectrum of AI experience among participants reflected a span of no prior knowledge to a very knowledgeable level. Please see Appendix D for an example of a participant invitation.

The age distribution varied somewhat, depending on the particular study component participants were involved in. The initial pilot focus-group sessions were conducted with 18 to 21-year-old students enrolled at Champlain College. The students' results served only to refine the wording in the instruments for the main study: no results will be reported on the data of this piloting. A total of 31 individuals, ages 18-74, participated in the one-on-one interview sessions. In addition, 36 individuals, ages 25-74 participated in the three separate focus-group sessions. Three interviews were conducted long-distance by telephone, and the remaining 28 interviews were completed in an in-person format. Focus-group sessions were all conducted and accomplished in an in-person format.

*Gender Identity*

Figure 4-1, below, illustrates the distribution gender of all participants in interview and focus-group sessions.

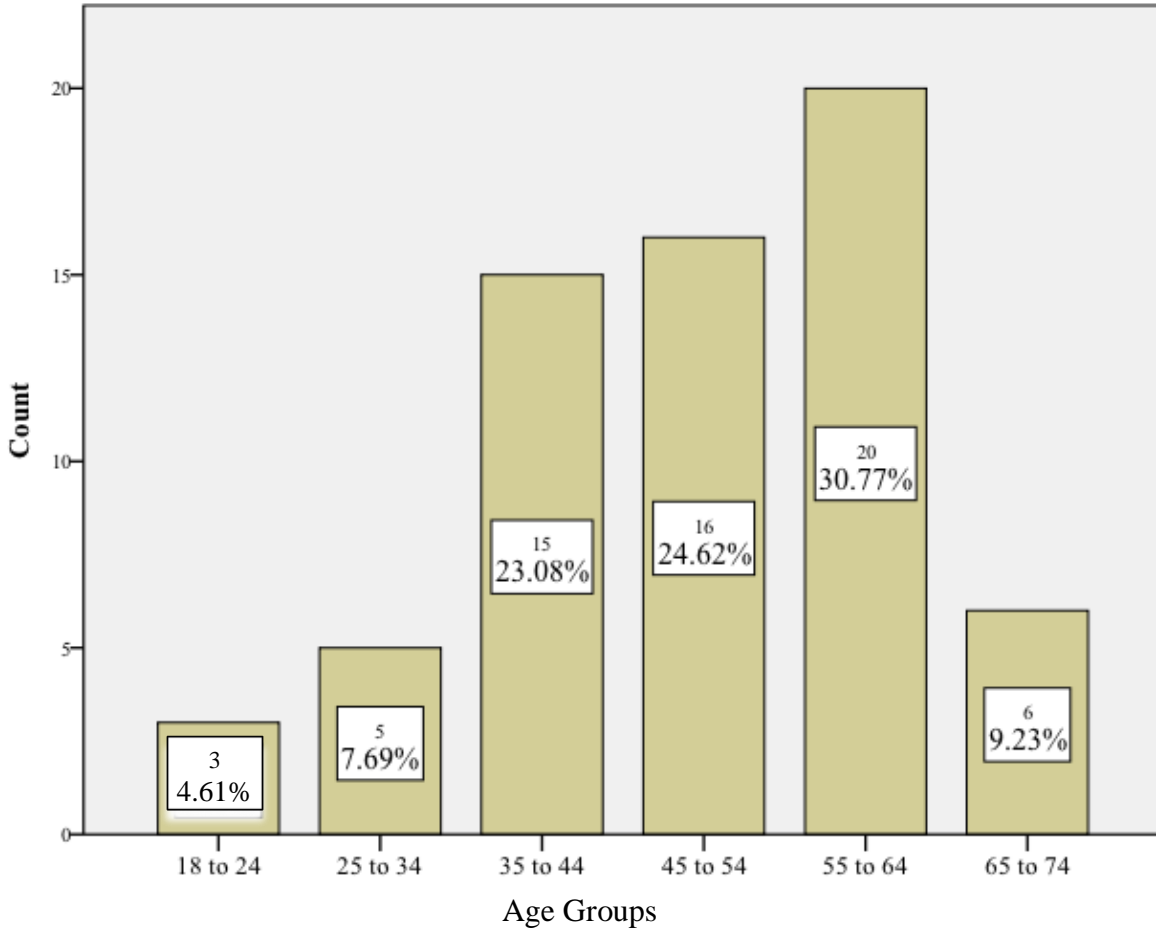
Figure 4-1. Gender Distribution of the Participants in the Main Study



*Age Distribution*

Figure 4-2, below, illustrates age distribution of all participants in interviews and focus-groups of the study.

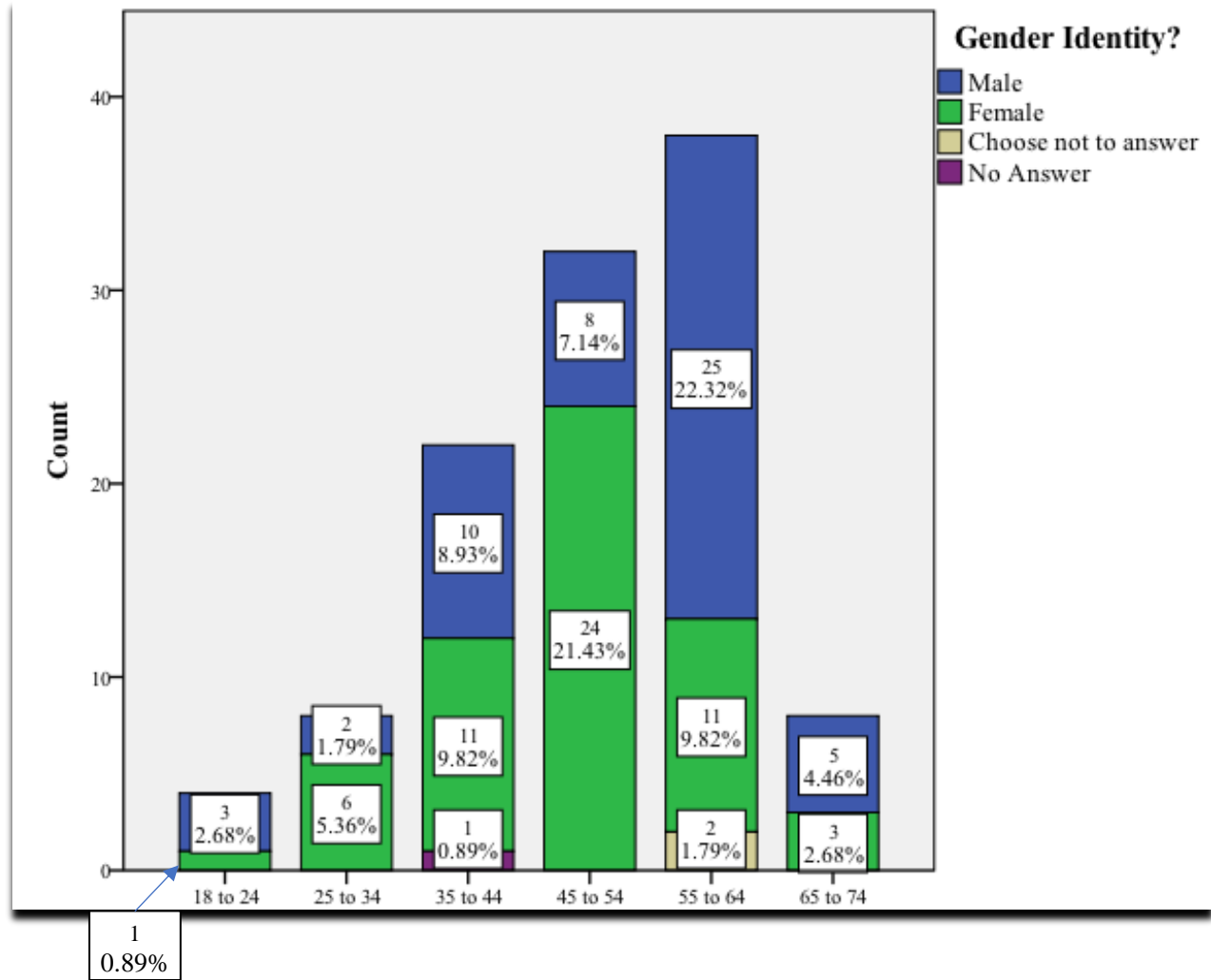
Figure 4-2. Age Distribution of the Participants in the Main Study



*Gender Identity and Age*

Figure 4-3 illustrates the gender identity/age mix of the interview and focus-group participants in the study.

Figure 4-3. Gender Identity and Age Comparison of Participants





*Occupation and Work Status*

The table below illustrates the current occupational category and work status of participants in interviews and focus-groups. There was a relatively large percentage of full-time Professional (n=31 or 54.8%) and Faculty/Teachers (n=8 or 14.4%) in the participant pool.

Table 4-1 illustrates the cross-tabulation of participants’ occupation and current work status.

Occupation and Current Work Status		Current Work Status				Total
		Full time	Part time	Unemployed	Retired	
Current Occupation	Professional	31	5	1	0	37
	Faculty/Teacher	8	0	0	0	8
	Student	0	2	0	0	2
	Other	3	1	1	2	7
Total		42	8	2	2	54

Overall, the demographics show that the research subjects were fairly evenly split along gender lines. However, it was observed most subjects were from the same “professional” occupational class as shown in Table 4-1. Additionally, a majority of participants was in the 45 – 54 and 55 – 64 age groupings. This may suggest that with an advancement of age, individuals may encounter more opportunities to experience Synchronicity, and hence, may have a greater number of realized Synchronicity observations.

With the analysis of the study’s demographic data now concluded, the next section turns to the core of the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The presentation is organized according to the primary research questions, with the research presented first through a quantitative approach followed with a qualitative approach.

*SECTION II: Research Hypothesis 1*

Individuals who recognize, understand, and act upon the presence of Synchronicity (seeing the connections) can use this awareness to create more fulfilling, positive, and purposeful lives.

*Research Proposition #1*

*There is recognition of Synchronicity (seeing the connections) among individuals as a social phenomenon.*

*Quantitative Analysis*

The quantitative research survey instruments were used to measure participants’ general recognition of Synchronicity before, and then after, each interview or focus-group session. Two sets of surveys containing identical questions also compared Synchronicity awareness levels between individuals and groups.

This researcher expected to find a statistical increase in the results of Synchronicity awareness after participants completed interviews and focus-groups. However, this was not the

case as illustrated and discussed in Tables 4.2 and 4.2 below. A detailed analysis of this trend is offered later under “Limitations of the Research.”

Table 4-2 includes the four primary questions used to address Synchronicity awareness in interview sessions.

Table 4-2. Pre- and Post-Interview Survey Comparisons





<i>Pre-interview Survey</i> n=31	Compare	<i>Post-Interview Survey (one week later)</i> n=23
<i>Have you ever witnessed incidences of Synchronicity in your life?</i>		<i>Since our interview, have you encountered any incidences of Synchronicity?</i>
<i>Do you think there is interconnectedness in the world?</i>		<i>Since our interview, have you noticed any examples of interconnectedness in the world?</i>
<i>Do you feel there is potential power in understanding and using Synchronicity in your life?</i>		<i>Do you feel you have been able to use any part of Synchronicity awareness and knowledge in your personal and/or work life?</i>
<i>Have you experienced/witnessed connections between Synchronicity and motivation, positive emotions, and/or your interpretation of spirituality in your life?</i>		<i>Have you observed, understood, and/or witnessed any connection between Synchronicity and motivation, positive emotions, and/or your interpretation of spirituality in your life?</i>

Table 4-3 includes the four primary questions used to address Synchronicity awareness in focus-groups.

Table 4-3. Pre- and Post-focus-group Survey Comparisons





<i>Pre-focus-group Survey</i> n=36	Compare to	<i>Post- focus-group Survey</i> (one week later) n=27
<i>Have you ever witnessed incidences of Synchronicity in your life?</i>		<i>Since our focus-group discussion, have you encountered any incidences of Synchronicity?</i>
<i>Do you think there is interconnectedness in the world?</i>		<i>Since our focus-group discussion, have you noticed any examples of interconnectedness in the world?</i>
<i>Do you feel there is potential power in understanding and using Synchronicity in your life?</i>		<i>Do you feel you have been able to use any part of Synchronicity awareness and knowledge in your personal/work life?</i>
<i>Have you experienced/witnessed connections between Synchronicity and motivation, positive emotions, and/or your interpretation of spirituality in your life?</i>		<i>Have you experienced/witnessed connections between Synchronicity and motivation, positive emotions, and/or your interpretation of spirituality in your life?</i>

Figure 4-4 (below) illustrates an analysis of the first question posed in both the pre-interview and pre-focus-group surveys: *Have you heard of the term Synchronicity (“acausal meaningful coincidences”)?* Although there is not a statistically significant difference between the two cohorts’ pre-event surveys, the graph illustrates a larger percentage of focus-group participants demonstrated a recognition of the Synchronicity definition. The graph illustrates that a slightly greater recognition of Synchronicity in the group cohort—35.8% “have heard the term and sort of understand its meaning” and 8.9% “understand Synchronicity and its meaning.” Six individuals in both cohorts had “never heard of it” with the same statistical result of 8.9%.

Figure 4-4. Analysis of Question, “Have You Heard of the Term Synchronicity?”

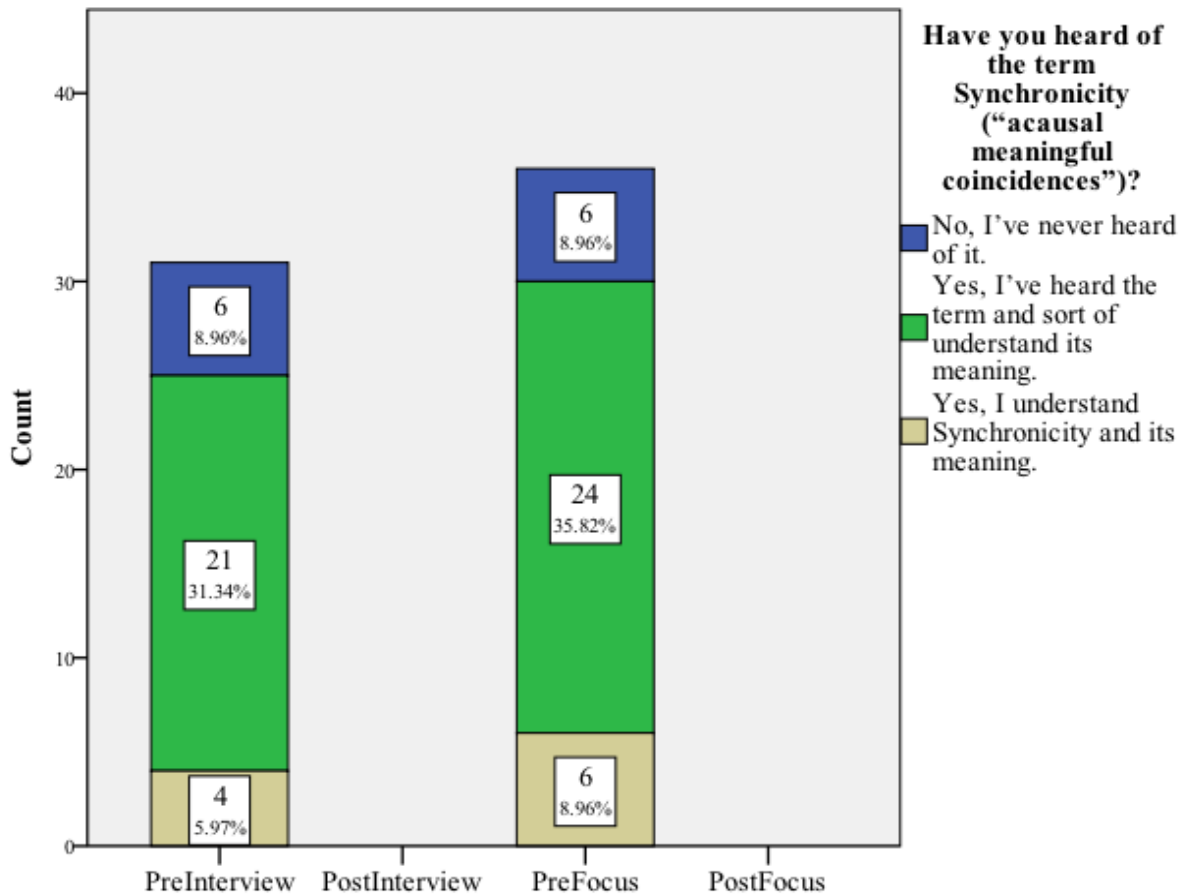
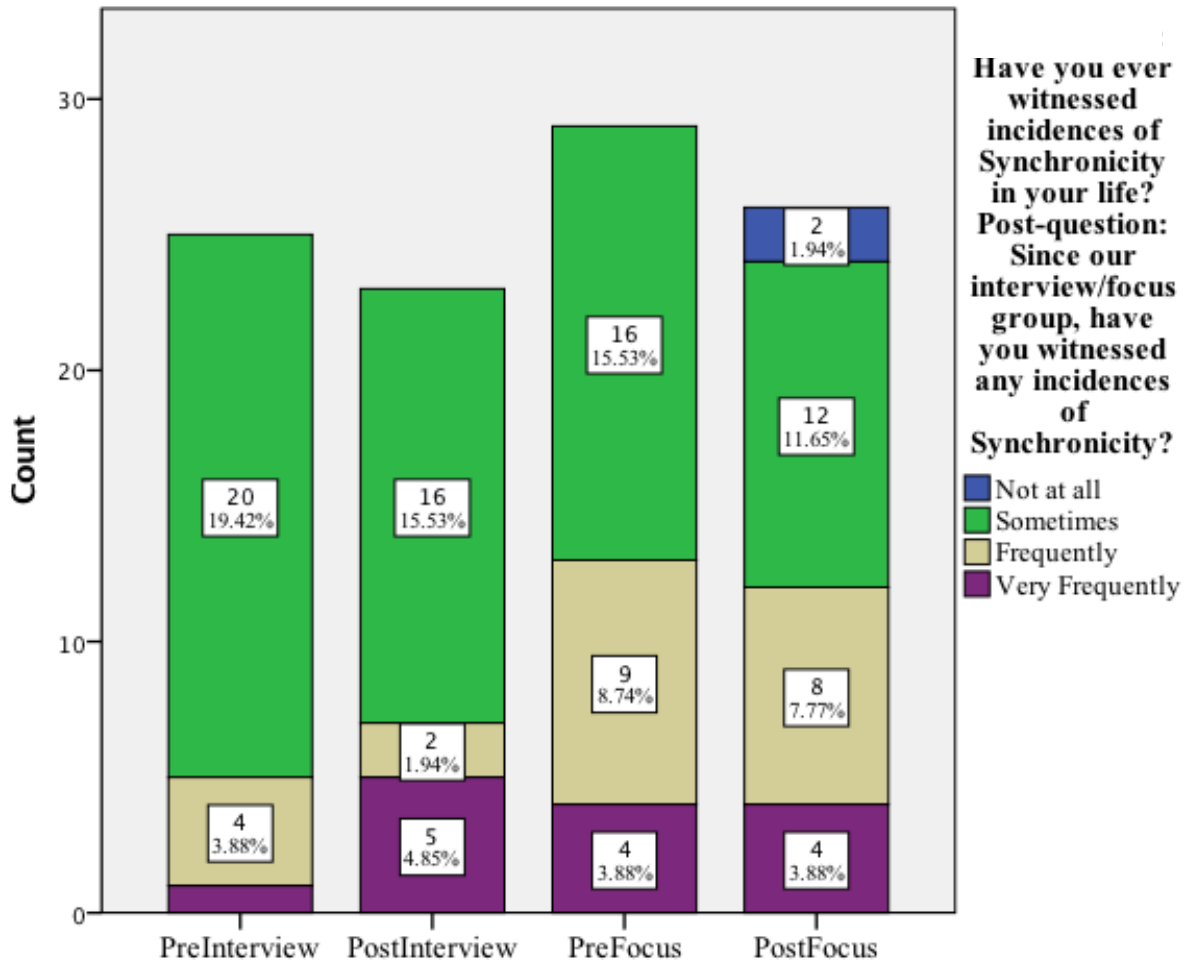


Figure 4-5 (below) compares the results of the pre-interview and pre-focus-group survey question, “Have you ever witnessed incidences of Synchronicity in your life?” against the results of the post-interview and post-focus-group survey question, “Since our interview or focus-group, have you witnessed any incidences of Synchronicity?” one week afterwards.

Figure 4-5. Pre- and Post-Survey Analysis of Observations of Synchronicity



There were relative observable positive trends between the pre- and post-interview surveys, specifically the “Very frequently” witnessed category increased from 1% to 4.8%. This researcher expected more dramatic statistical improvements between the pre- and the post-event measurement data results. However, the inverse was true. Why was this the case? The original hypothesis was that there would be measurable improvements after participants in the study became attuned to their own Synchronicity awareness during the interviews and focus- groups.

Figure 4-6 illustrates a noticeable decline from pre-event to post-event when participants were asked about examples of “interconnectedness in our world.” Querying about “connections” rather than “Synchronicity” was an intentional attempt to address the topic from a different angle. It was thought that participants who did not understand Synchronicity might better-identify with the term “connections.”

Figure 4-6. Pre- and Post-Survey Analysis about “Interconnectedness”

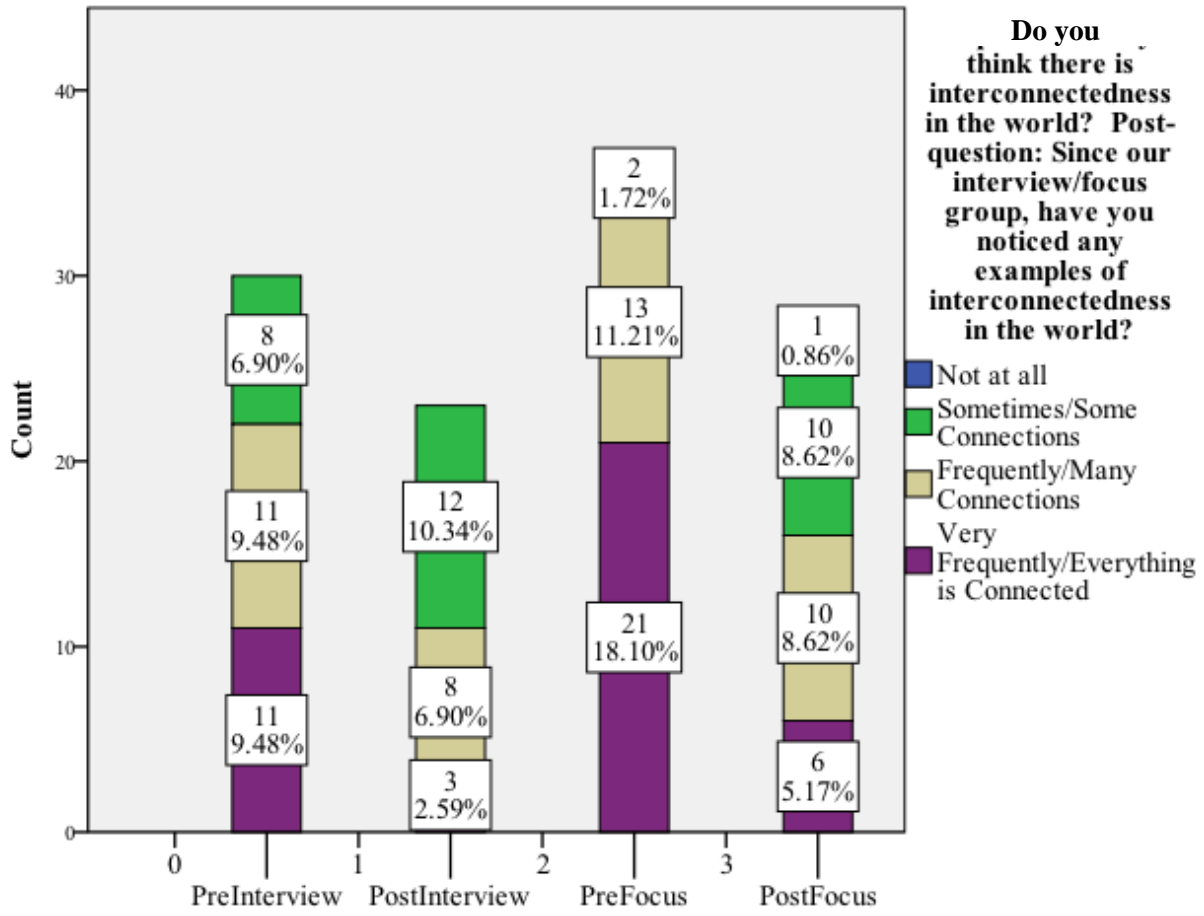


Figure 4-7 shows the pre- and post-event results relative to the question pertaining to the “power of understanding and using Synchronicity awareness in your life.” These results also illustrated a decrease in the pre-and post-event statistics for both interviews and focus-groups.

Figure 4-7. Pre- and Post-Survey Analysis about the Potential Power of Synchronicity

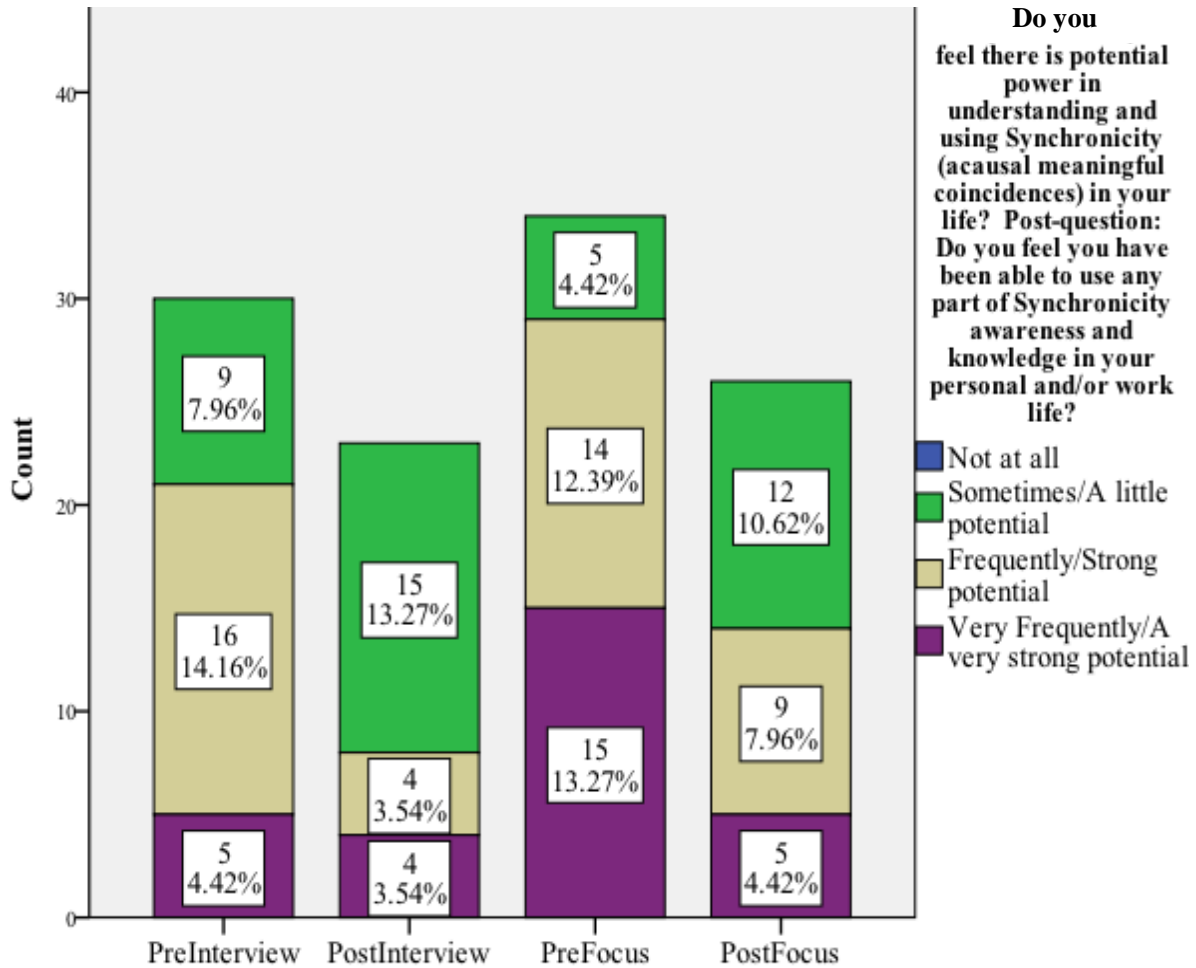
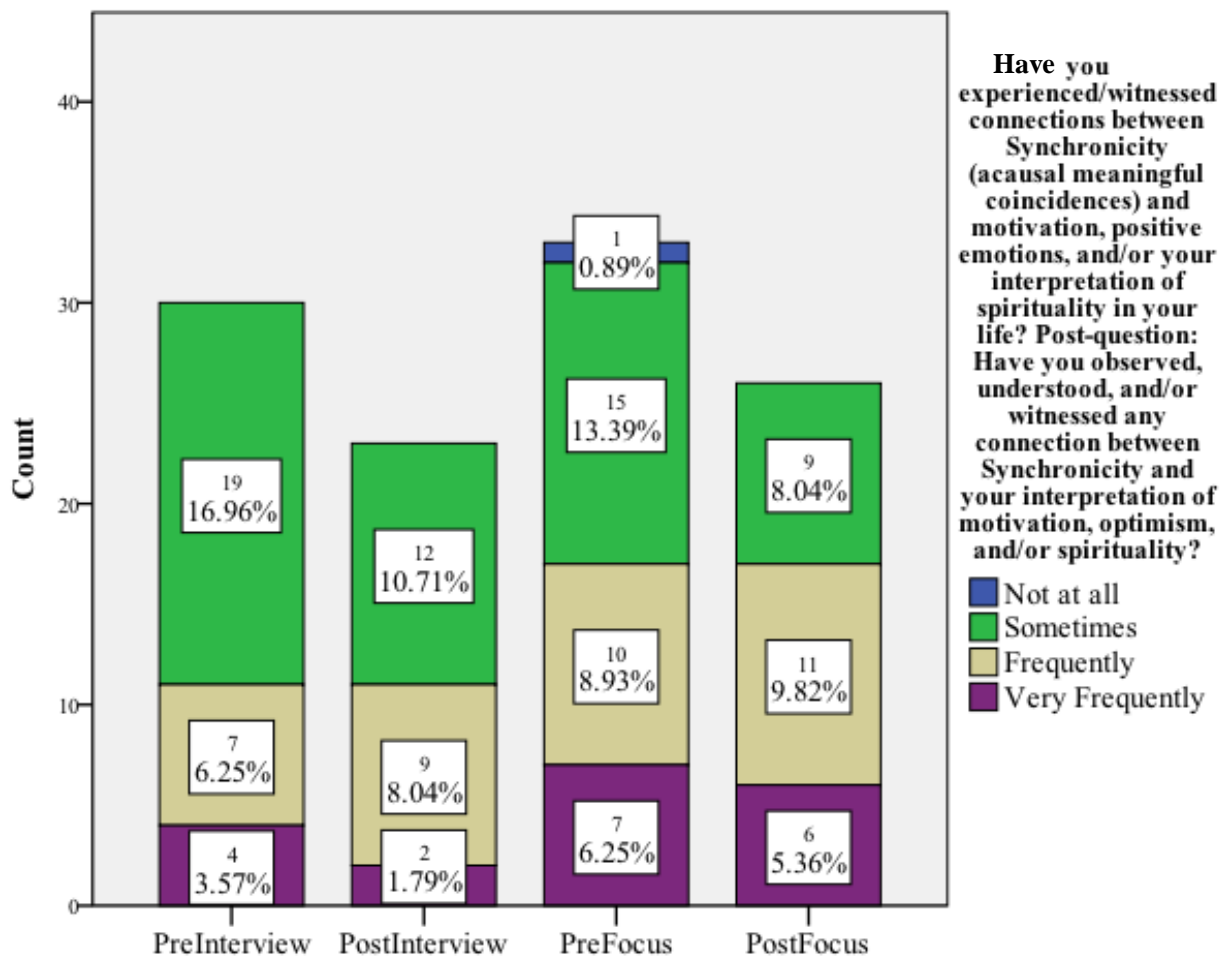


Figure 4-8 demonstrates the participants’ pre- and post-event responses to the survey question, “Have you experienced/witnessed connections between Synchronicity (acausal meaningful coincidences) and motivation, positive emotions and/or your interpretation of spirituality in your life?” The quantitative data, once again, displays a decline between the pre- and post-event data, which is addressed in the section “Limitations of the Research.” However, there were slight improvements in the “Frequently” category of pre- and post-interviews (6.25% to 8.04%), and pre- and post-focus-groups (8.93% to 9.82%). Additionally, there were no “Not at all” responses in the post-focus-groups. The discussion of spirituality’s connection to Synchronicity is more analyzed in greater depth under qualitative results.

Figure 4-8. Pre- and Post-Survey Analysis of Connection of Synchronicity to Motivation, Positive Emotions, and/or Spirituality



Overall, the quantitative data demonstrated greater percentages of initial responses from the focus-group sessions due to the slightly larger number of participants in group setting versus interviews—n=36 vs. n=31 respectively. Ultimately, the post-event results were consistently lower in each survey question category for both the interview and the focus-group cohorts.



### *Qualitative Data Analysis*

In this study on Synchronicity awareness, the qualitative data relative to *Research Proposition #1* proved more useful than the quantitative data and yielded more interesting results. The posing of AI-constructed and developed questions helped participants to recall distinct memories about certain events of their past life. The interviews conducted were more reflective and it seemed as though participants pieced together memories that suddenly assembled effortlessly, into a whole, like pieces of an interconnecting puzzle, before this researcher's eyes. Interview participants described the following experiences of Synchronicity awareness:

- *“Things like this happen and Synchronicity are common occurrences. They seem to happen all the time.”*
- *“Synchronicity happens every day of my life—all the time. When travelling, I run into someone unexpectedly.”*
- *“Synchronicity is looking for something different and asking more questions.”*
- *“Challenge yourself to see everything as an opportunity.”*
- *“With Synchronicity, everything seems to fall into place and when it does, it generates excitement and energy. A number of people and things come to help me.”*
- *“Don't know at the time until after the fact about Synchronicity. Always very open to the idea to connect the dots. You must be in a frame of mind and must be present in the moment. Being present in the moment is the only way to experience that. When I'm not, there's too much emotional intensity and I'm not able to respond to the present.”*
- *“Create the environments and allow Synchronicity to happen.”*
- *“Synchronicity happens once or twice and you feel like you can make it happen. Put it out to the world and can come back to you again. Try not to force things when it's difficult. Planting seeds today will lead to where you're meant to go.”*

However, during focus-group sessions, broader conversations ensued among the participants. Within the groups, numerous opportunities arose when participants discovered connections among themselves. Essentially, the interconnectedness of small groups was observed, an interconnectedness reflecting the sort of Complex Adaptive System (CAS) process that happens in an AI setting. (As a reminder, CAS “consists of a complex set of diverse and autonomous components referred to as agents, which are dynamically interrelated, interdependent, linked through many interconnections, and behave as a unified whole in learning from experience and in adjusting to environmental changes [self-organization]” (Sadat, 2015, p.8). It was observed that during group sessions, when the topic of Synchronicity was introduced within an AI approach, this fueled participants' interest in discovering more in-depth and meaningful connections between one another. In the end, focus-groups provided more generative and mutual discussions around Synchronicity awareness due the number of participants simultaneously talking about it. Synchronicity awareness and its application within groups and organizations will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

### *Empirical Data Background*

A collection of autobiographical narratives was gathered to support the primary research performed for this study. These narratives were chosen and analyzed for their appropriateness in the research as well as to “make a connection” to the participants' data collected. Jane Henry, in

her book, *Parapsychology: Research on Exceptional Experiences*, explains the significance of this type of empirical data as follows:

Over the years a number of people have addressed the question of coincidence experiences [Synchronicity] (e.g. Johnson 1899, Jung 1972, Koestler 1972, Vaughan, 1979, Peat 1987, Diaconis and Mostler 1989, Inglis 1990, Henry 1993). Most of the empirical work in this area had involved the collection of coincidence anecdotes. A large collection of cases can be found in Alice Johnson's 60,000-word treatise in the SPR Proceedings of 1899. Diaconis has amassed 200 files of American coincidences. A modern English collection, somewhat biased towards the arrestingly dramatic, is provided by Inglis (1990). Falk (1989) has shown that people tend to rate their own coincidence experience as more surprising than other people's (2004, p. 169).

Synchronicity events can be observed when we notice "the connection between our inner selves and the world around us" (Hopcke, 1997, p. 94). Throughout time, copious personal Synchronicity accounts exist. Narratives provide the reader with a broader understanding about the way in which individuals recognize and enhance Synchronicity experiences.

#### *Research Proposition #2*





*There are surroundings where one might acquire a heightened awareness of Synchronicity that provides a new perspective.*

Quantitative and qualitative data was gathered about the types of environments that are conducive to Synchronicity experiences: Do participants experience greater Synchronicity awareness alone or in a group? Does it occur in times of quiet or in busy and noisy settings? Is there a possibility to better-recognize and enhance Synchronicity awareness?

#### *Quantitative Analysis Comparing Individual and Group Settings*

Post-interview (n=23) and post focus-group (n=27) surveys were collected and compared to determine whether an individual or a group setting is more conducive to Synchronicity awareness. Table 4-4 illustrates the comparison of the post-event survey questions.

Table 4-4. Post-interview and Post-focus-group Comparisons

<i>Post-interview Survey Results n=23</i>	Compare to	<i>Post-focus-group Survey Results n=27</i>
<i>Since our interview, have you encountered any incidences of Synchronicity?</i>		<i>Since our focus-group discussion, have you encountered any incidences of Synchronicity?</i>
<i>Since our interview, have you noticed any examples of interconnectedness in the world?</i>		<i>Since our focus-group discussion, have you noticed any examples of interconnectedness in the world?</i>
<i>Do you feel you have been able to use any part of Synchronicity awareness and knowledge in your personal/work life?</i>		<i>Do you feel you have been able to use any part of Synchronicity awareness and knowledge in your personal/work life?</i>
<i>Have you experienced/witnessed connections between Synchronicity and motivation, positive emotions, and/or your interpretation of spirituality in your life?</i>		<i>Have you experienced/witnessed connections between Synchronicity and motivation, positive emotions, and/or your interpretation of spirituality in your life?</i>

The quantitative results comparing individual to group settings show negligible differences, as demonstrated previously in Figures 4-6, 4-7, 4-8, and 4-9. Ultimately the qualitative data collected for this study provided more accurate insights into address *Research Proposition #2*. The discussion will now move to an analysis of that data, specifically, of qualitative data from a group setting.

#### *Qualitative Analysis of Group Settings*

The data in Table 4-5 was collected and analyzed using discourse analysis and thematic coding (Ayres, 2016; Van Dijk, 2001) within structured exercises designed to identify a “heightened awareness of Synchronicity.”

As outlined in Chapter Three, three separate focus-group sessions were used to collect qualitative data about participants’ Synchronicity experiences and knowledge. The curriculum, lesson plan, and PowerPoint slides used for each focus-group can be found in Appendix M. A list of the words and phrases that most frequently arose from the three focus-groups is included below in Table 4-5. A detailed description of how these form useful tools to provide greater Synchronicity awareness is discussed in Chapter Five.

Table 4-5. List of Common Terminology from the Three Independent Focus-Groups

Signs and/or Symbols	Ways and/or when to recognize	How to Enhance
<i>Visceral reactions and feelings (goosebumps, ears ringing, etc.)</i>	<i>Pay attention to "Aha" or "light bulb" moments</i>	<i>Listen more</i>
<i>A feeling of knowing</i>	<i>Notice the timing, repetitions, and/or patterns</i>	<i>Find quiet time—limit distractions</i>
<i>Connections with people/places/things—it's shared</i>	<i>It feels right</i>	<i>Meditation, faith practice, prayer, and/or yoga</i>
<i>Get a gut feeling (visceral) or a gut sense</i>	<i>In "Flow" or "in the zone" feeling</i>	<i>Need to be comfortable with vulnerability and letting go of control</i>
<i>A feeling of comfort</i>	<i>Everything comes easily</i>	<i>Take time to reflect—journaling</i>
<i>There's a certain timing, repetition, and/or pattern—"it occurs in 3s"</i>	<i>Everything fits together—connections are made</i>	<i>Networking with others</i>
<i>Comes at a time of vulnerability</i>		<i>Discuss Synchronicity moments with others</i>
<i>Someone or something stands out that says pay attention (dreams or premonitions)</i>		<i>Learn to trust your intuition and in yourself</i>

An analysis of this thematic coding revealed noteworthy insights, detailed below. This analysis is organized by the headings that prompted the questions for each participant group, except for the terminology of “patterns and timing,” which arose during discussions. It is interesting to note also that participants in the individual interview sessions reported similar responses to the Synchronicity awareness questions around *Signs and/or Symbols*, *Recognition*, and *Enhancement*.

### *I. Signs and/or Symbols of Synchronicity*

It is important to understand the difference between signs and symbols within this context. Author David Hopcke explains, “a sign is an object which points to something beyond itself which is definite, finite, and knowable; whereas symbols are objects, situations, or events which point to a reality beyond our awareness or full understanding” (1997, p. 37).

The responses to queries about the signs and/or symbols observed that offer an indication of a Synchronicity experience is occurring, appear to provide conclusive evidence of prominent

visceral sensations—like goosebumps or hair standing-up on the back of your neck. This finding is consistent with Synchronicity literature reviewed for this research (Bolen, 2004; Jaworski, 2009; Jung & Pauli, 1973; Jung, 1952; Zabriskie, 2014). A word frequency analysis illustrates that “feeling(s)” and “connections” are most prevalent when addressing these signs. On a side note, participants reported that Synchronicity occurs when “you feel most vulnerable” and are “open to new messages.” Medical researcher Bernard Beitman refers to instances of vulnerability during, “times of high emotion, transition, need, and seeking” (2016, p. 73).

The following participant responses illustrate typical signs and/or symbols:

- *I get a feeling of calmness and peace and knows everything will work-out. I trust my intuition—where you are, is where you’re supposed to be. There’s a gut feeling. A feeling you’re in a different environment, but you’re supposed to be there.*
- *From this interview, I’m becoming more aware of Synchronicity. When you have a “gut feeling,” act on it right away and learn to step-out of your comfort zone, when I normally wouldn’t.*
- *I can feel when I get out of “flow.” When you get a red light, move and redirect. Take a step back and ask why is this happening and I must readjust.*
- *You know when you’re on the wrong road or path, because it doesn’t feel right. There’s a wrong feeling.”*
- *“AI questions are now a huge part of my life and I create “deep and meaningful dreaming.” Synchronicity is looking for something different and asking more questions.”*

The following narratives illustrate personal insights into Synchronicity signs and/or symbols and that relay call to action:

*A colleague of mine named Val remembered a time when as a single mother felt caught in her job, slaving away for a tyrannical boss at a considerable distance from her home because she was so desperately needed the money and had so few marketable skills. Day after day, she dragged yourself into the office, did what she was told, got her paycheck, and kept her mouth shut. However, annoyance, then anger, then rage slowly built within her, making it harder and harder to get her body to the station, take the commuter train, then take orders from her obnoxious boss. The idea of leaving altogether, of course, crossed her mind about a thousand times a day, but given her circumstances, her lack of education, her financial needs, and her hopelessness, it was not an idea that she felt was practical even possible.*

*Then one day, standing on the rain platform, in her usual funk about the coming day, Val felt an intense mixture of feelings—fury at her situation and an acute longing for just one day off, one day when she wouldn’t have to face it all. “But it’d have to be something catastrophic for my boss to let me do something like that,” she told me. He wasn’t the sort of person that calling-in sick meant much to, he’d just make life that much more difficult for you when you came back, and it wasn’t worth it. No, to get out of there would take something really unusual.’*

*At which point, Val said, she heard a huge explosion, and far down the track she saw gigantic flames shooting up amidst a cloud of black smoke. Word came immediately to the platform. The engine of the train that she was just about*

*to board, the train she took every day to work, had just blown up. Mesmerized by this site, Val stood in awe as the emergency services overran the platform, fire trucks, helicopters, and ambulances arrived to handle an extraordinary and previously unheard-of disaster. For Val, though, the explosion was a symbol which told her: get out of her job or explode. She left the job immediately afterwards and did not look back, and she is now employed in a field where she is much happier. The symbolic aspects of a Synchronistic event do not always hit us over the head so forcefully, but in Val's case, she was glad the message was unmistakable. (Hopcke, 1997, pp. 121-122).*

As author and researcher, Bolen tells us, “Paying attention to dreams is another way of getting our bearings. Whether attended to or not, dreams and synchronistic events go on happening; if one does not decide to pay attention and attempt to remember, they may slip by unnoticed. As the Talmud states, “An unexamined dream is like an unopened letter.” Each dream or synchronistic event is an invitation to look forward” (2004, p. 93). Additionally, Bolen explains the inverse as well, “Paying attention to Synchronicity, like paying attention to dreams, adds an extra dimension that enriches our inner lives and adds another facet to our awareness” (2004, p. 47).

The following Synchronicity event occurred on September 15, 2017 around a specific dream told to this researcher by Dr. Martin E. P. Seligman, the founder of modern Positive Psychology. Seligman described this dream and mentioned that it will be included in an autobiography he is currently writing. This story was later relayed to an entire audience during the AI Summit-style meeting of the Steering Committee for the upcoming *Positive Education Summit* to take place in Dallas, TX in June 2018. A link to the video of Seligman's dream presentation can be found here: [Martin E.P. Seligman's Synchronicity Dream, September 15, 2017](#).

This moment in time exemplifies the Synchronistic power a vivid dream can hold as a guide for the future. The actual transcript of Seligman's dream is included here:

*I hope it doesn't embarrass you. If it does, please excuse me. To explain it, I have to give you two framing circumstances: When Lindsey [Godwin] asked about gratitude the other day, I didn't speak. But I'll give you the image I had. There are these statues in the Parthenon that hold up the roof called caryatids. All my life I felt like one of these statues, holding up the roof. But what I felt yesterday, I don't need to do that anymore. There are other people holding up the roof. You.*

*That's one framing remark. The second is that I recently celebrated my 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. And I think I have one more semester left. That's the framing remark. So, I woke up at 4:47 a.m. this morning out of a numinous dream. I take dreams very seriously. I was talking to Tom [Myers] about that this morning. I wrote this one down and decided to tell you about it. So, indulge me if you will—it's strange. It starts off I am in my bedroom of a house I grew up in in Albany, New York, 200 miles from here. And my parents are still alive, and I am so grateful to be able to see them and talk with them. Then I go down to the front lawn, and there's my old classmate, Bill Bradley--the basketball player and the senator. I didn't know him when I went to school with him at Princeton, but we became good friends over this issue of positive psychology, education, and positive theology. Bill then asked me to drive some golf balls with him and I felt*

*so accepted. I turned him down because my shoulder doesn't work that well anymore, but Bill and I then walked down this hill, strangely enough, toward my hotel in Burlington [Vermont]. We get to my apartment and standing out front is David Yaden, who is a graduate student of mine and working on the transcendent and positive theology. He is being held up with two young punks with guns. I decided to intercede and say "I'd like to help you. There is a notion of positive education and there may be a way we can redo your education and get you productive jobs." They then put their guns down and say, "oh good we will come tomorrow."*

*In the very last scene of the dream, I go to my mailbox and its crammed with first class mail. But there is so much of it I can't carry all of it. I look on the steps up towards my apartment and there are all of you (pointing at audience). You're sitting on the steps and say "we will carry the mail." So you do, and Bill and I go upstairs with you. Bill then says, "we are late for class, Marty," so we should leave now and find out what happens in the last semester of our education. The title of the dream is "My life makes sense now" (applause from audience).*

Seligman's dream account, written by in his own words, was sent to this researcher via an email on January 6, 2018:

*My Life Makes Sense Now*

*Hotel Vermont, 4:47 am*

*September 14, 2017*

*I am lying contentedly on my bed in the home in Albany that I grew up in. Both my mother and father are surprisingly alive, although in the next bedroom. I am very pleased to see them and to find that they have not died and I can still visit with them.*

*I go out to the front lawn and there, Bill Bradley invites me to drive some golf balls with him. I refrain, because of my shoulder injury, but I am very pleased that he is there and has invited me to play with him.*

*We walk down the hill together (it seems to be the walk from the Burlington campus) and Stu Warren and Jeff Albert are with us. I am annoyed at Jeff for this continual betrayal of me as a friend (in past dreams) in particular that when I am stranded in Albany for a week, he never calls me to invite me to do anything. But being with Bill seems to make up for that feeling and I tell Jeff we should iron this out later. Jeff goes off.*

*We arrive at my apartment and there I see David Yaden being held up by two young punks. They seem to be holding a gun to him and I intervene, striking up a conversation with them about their unemployment and lack of education. I offer to intercede on their behalf and ask them if they would like me to find (menial) jobs for them so they can earn a living. They are pleased, put their guns away and agree to meet me tomorrow.*

*Before going upstairs, I check my mailbox. It is stuffed with first class mail that I am eager to read, but there is so much of it that I ask my gaggle of friends and students, who are sitting on the steps, if they will help carry it all. They are honored and agree.*

*We go upstairs and we realize that we are late for class. Bill says we should depart soon to find out what the last semester of our Princeton education holds.*

*Interpretation: Contentment and joy are the mood. Happiness about my parents and childhood. Delight that someone as important and admired as Bill is now my friend. I have a role in life: helping the young and doing positive education. I am admired and befriended and look forward to what the rest (last 1/8<sup>th</sup>) of my life may hold (M.E.P. Seligman, personal communication, January 6, 2018).*

## II. Recognition of Synchronicity

Participants said they recognize Synchronicity because “It’s like a lightbulb going off in your head.” Others described it as when “you have that ‘aha’ moment.” Other participants stated they recognize certain ethereal and strange feelings and connections to which they have learned to be cognizant and sensitive. Jung noted that Synchronicity events have certain emotional tone associated with them. He called them “numinous” experiences, deriving the term from theologian, Rudolf Otto. Otto states, “Numinosity is that experience we have when we feel we are undeniably, irresistibly, and unforgettably in the presence of the Divine, our experience of something which transcends our human limitations” (Hopcke, 1997, p. 30).

Participants also said, “things fall into place,” “everything comes easily,” and “connections are effortlessly made.” Essentially, “it feels right,” they explained. Hopcke explains, “If we are open to feelings, we can feel not only our own feelings, but *others’* feelings as well. The nature of feeling and the power of empathy demonstrates that we are all connected, or at least potentially so, through an experience of another’s pain, happiness, grief, satisfaction, pride, or shame” (Ibid, p. 33).

These are some typical participant responses to questions about how they recognize Synchronicity:

- *“There is in energy in the universe. You know this when there doesn't seem to be much effort and I don't need to put much work for it and it comes very easily.”*
- *“When it's supposed to happen, it gets easy and things fall into place. When not doing the right thing or on the wrong path, it's like rowing upstream through the rapids and against the current.”*
- *“You can't recognize Synchronicity at the time. When you're calmer and out of your head, then you can recognize it. Oftentimes, we're too busy working within our head that we can't or don't see it. With these types of concepts, you must first understand yourself, mindfulness, and being fully present—that is vital. It's difficult to do, but it can be done. People would probably be able to recognize Synchronicity a lot more if you were able to be more present.”*
- *Not to be vague, but I feel Synchronicity all the time ... sometimes with specifics and sometimes vaguely. I spend more time in a space that is seeing connections between things than not.*
- *“You must be in a frame of mind and must be present in the moment. Being present in the moment is the only way to experience Synchronicity.”*



Synchronicity author and researcher, Chris Mackey relays the following narrative describing an instance of a Synchronicity event recognition:

*In Winnipeg Canada, a grandfather clock stopped when it's 72-year old owner died. There was no male heir to pass it on to, following traditional practice. Several years later the man's widow noticed that the clock had unexpectedly started again. Moments afterwards, she received a phone call announcing that her first grandson had been born 15 minutes earlier (2015. P. 9).*

Another story describes Synchronicity recognition through visceral feelings and physical manifestations:

*Jungian psychiatrist Jean Bolen tells the story of Judy Vibberts, who had been having an uneventful day, pleasantly relaxed afternoon in San Francisco's Golden State Park, when precisely at 4:30 (she unaccountably noted the time) she was suddenly struck by an excruciating, doubling-up abdominal pain, accompanied by a splitting headache. That evening, she found out that a good friend had been in a terrible accident. Her car had been smashed, causing severe abdominal and head injuries. She had been taken immediately to a hospital, needed emergency surgery to remove her ruptured spleen, and was on the critical list in the intensive care unit. The accident had occurred at exactly 4:30 PM (Breitman, 2016, p. 11).*

#### *Patterns and Timing Around Synchronicity Recognition*

One interesting observation transpired during the course of qualitative data collection: In both interviews and the focus-group “whiteboard” exercises, five participants independently described their Synchronicity experiences as typically “occurring in threes.” As one of them said,

- “Synchronicity, it comes in threes: 1st time—notice it, 2nd time—recognize it, and the 3rd time—act upon it.”

When viewed holistically, these experiential messages or signals communicate an ultimate “call to action.” After the initial independent verbalizations of the three-fold experience of Synchronicity, the idea was presented and discussed with others. After participants contemplated the idea and retrospectively applied it to their own Synchronicity experiences, there was a broad acceptance and corroboration of the theory was observed. The idea prompted this researcher to develop the *3A Concept*.

Jung describes the application of patterns relative to numbers in this way,

*Since the remotest of times man have used numbers to establish meaningful coincidences that can be interpreted. There is something peculiar, one might even say mysterious about numbers. They have never been entirely robbed of their numinous aura (1952, p. 40).*

He later goes on to explain,

*Although I would not care to undertake to say anything illuminating about the inner relation between two such apparently incommensurable things as number and synchronicity, I cannot refrain from pointing out that not only were they always brought into connection with one another, but that both possess numinosity and mystery as their common characteristics. Number has invariably been used to characterize some numinous object, and all numbers from 1 to 9 are “sacred,” ... The most elementary quality about an object is whether it is one or many. Number help more than anything else to bring order into the chaos of appearances. It is a predestined instrument for creating order, or for apprehending an already existing, but still unknown, regular arrangement or “orderedness.” It may well be the most primitive element of order in the human mind, seeing that the numbers 1 to 4 occur with the greatest frequency and have the widest incidence. In other words, primitive patterns of order are mostly triads or tetrads (Ibid).*

### *Introduction of the “3A Concept”*

The following story is an example of the *3A Concept* that was developed from this research study. This concept is explained in greater detail in Chapters Five. However, as a brief introduction, the *3A Concept* describes the reactions to Synchronistic pattern of events in participants’ lives. It was observed, that five interview and focus-group participants independently concurred that Synchronicity experiences tend to present in “patterns of three.” Participants stated, the three interrelated experiences (Winter, Matlock, Shaki, & Fischer, 2015) communicate a call to action or intervention. It is from these three related incidences that the *3A Concept* originates—Awareness, Acknowledgement, and Action. It is anticipated that individuals will first develop a heightened level of Synchronicity “Awareness,” which then connects to a second related Synchronicity occurrence of “Acknowledgement,” and finally a related third Synchronistic event that may take the form of taking “Action.” The following story illustrates this new concept. Here, is an illustration of the *3A Concept*.

#### *The Woman on the Causeway*

Paula M. (Summer 2016)

*Paula, one of the participants I interviewed for this research, talked about riding her bike on the Burlington (Vermont) bike path this past summer. She was at the end of the bike path located on a causeway in the middle of Lake Champlain in Vermont. There is a break in the causeway to allow for boat traffic. It is here where a “bike ferry” takes riders to the other side of a boat channel. While waiting for the ferry, Paula met a woman riding alone visiting from New Jersey. They had a nice friendly conversation. That very evening, Paula went to dinner with an elderly friend. They visited a very small restaurant in Burlington. There was no one else in this restaurant—except for that same woman she met earlier on the bike path visiting from NJ. Again, they greeted each other and had a nice conversation, during which Paula learned more about the visitor. Paula*

*told me the story of these two meetings and said, “if I see her again, it’s a sign for me to make a plan to get to know her. Paula said, “I have a feeling this woman may become a good friend.” Only after a day or so later, Paula ran into the same woman while shopping downtown. Paula said, “that’s it, we need to make a plan have lunch together,” which is what they did. Paula had just moved to Burlington with her family a year ago. Her new friend from NJ had retired and just move to VT this summer after her children had grown—she was looking for new adventures. They’ve become good friends and are exploring Vermont together.*

The “three As” is a progression of Synchronicity experiences that communicates a final action to the individual. Its composition is as follows: 1. “Awareness,” 2. “Acknowledgement,” and 3. “Action.”

The process begins with *Awareness* of a potential Synchronicity experience. Example: a friend unknowingly suggests a twenty-year-old published book to you, which just happens to be pertinent and meaningful to you and your life at that moment.

A second, related Synchronicity experience shortly thereafter results in *Acknowledgment*. Example: while listening to the radio on the commute home that night evening, there is an interview with that very same author about the topic of the book suggested to you earlier.

Yet a third related experience delivers a compelling message that *Action* should now be taken. Example: the next day, while window shopping, you glance down at the display in a used book store and the very first book you see, is that very book your friend recommended, whose author you heard interviewed. These three Synchronicity experiences combined convey the overwhelming message that it is now time to read that book. With regard to *Action*, Beitman elaborates, “coincidences [Synchronicity] are created by matches between the swirling contents of our minds and the swirling images and sounds of our circumstances. Each of these can move quickly. Develop a nimble attention, ready to seize the moment” (Beitman, 2016, p. 244).

### *Research Participants’ Stories of Synchronicity Recognition*

The following Synchronicity accounts offer insights to the reader around the research presented within this study. They are real-life autobiographical accounts from research participants. The accounts of Synchronicity experiences shared during this study’s research findings mirror classic accounts such as that of Wilhelm von Scholz relayed by Jung, originally shared in Chapter Two.

Wilhelm “tells the story of a mother who took a photograph of her small son in the Black forest. She left the film to be developed in Strassburg. But, owing to the outbreak of the war, she was unable to fetch it and gave it up for lost. In 1916, she bought a film in Frankfurt in order to take a photograph of her daughter, who had been born in the meantime. When the film was developed, it was found to be doubly exposed: the picture underneath was the photograph of her son in 1914! The old film had not been developed and had somehow got into circulation again among the new films. The author comes to the understandable conclusion that everything points to the “mutual attraction of related objects,” or an “effective affinity.” He suspects that these happenings are arranged as if they were the dream of a “greater and more comprehensive consciousness, which is unknowable” (Jung, 1952, p. 15).

The following two first-hand accounts offer narrative encounters of personal Synchronicity experiences from participants in the study.

*An Idaho Mountain Bike Journey*

Hayes G. (Spring 2016)

An eighteen-year-old participant in one focus-group session relayed an intriguing Synchronicity story, which exemplifies Jung's concept of coming together in time concept (Jung, 1952). The context in which it was presented also demonstrates the potential of leveraging Synchronicity experiences for future opportunities (Guindon & Hanna, 2001). After Hayes relayed his story, other participants had a better appreciation and understanding of Synchronicity and how it might appear in their own lives. The story included below, happened to a best friend of this participant during the spring of 2015.

*While on mountain biking vacation at a small resort town in Idaho, my best friend was eating lunch in a local diner after a long ride. He was wearing a pair of University of Southern California (USC) gym shorts over his riding gear. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a gentleman approached him after eyeing the shorts, and asked if he attended USC. The friend replied by saying no, but he had submitted his admissions application and it was really where he wanted to attend as a first-year student in the fall. USC was his first choice for college. He was still waiting to hear from the Admissions Office. The gentleman then introduced himself and said he is actually the Director of Student Life at USC! The two then proceeded to have a long and lively conversation about the University. During their conversation, the friend's cell phone began to suddenly vibrate in his pocket. Not wanting to be rude and answer it during this important conversation, he ignored the phone call and let it go directly to voice mail. Shortly afterward the two men parted and they said their good byes, the friend listened to this voice mail message. It was a call from his mother. His mother's voice recording sounded really excited because she was calling from home (also in Idaho) to let him know that a rather thick letter had just arrived from the USC Admissions Office. It was his official acceptance letter to invite him to join the new in-coming fall class of students! He was in!*

*As a follow-up, my friend entered USC that fall and had a great first semester. However, during the course of the semester, he ran into a housing/roommate issue and he needed some advice and help. Naturally, the first person he thought of for help was his earlier acquaintance he met in the mountains of Idaho, the Director of Student Life. The issue was quickly straightened-out and the friend went on to thrive at the university!*

*The Akashic Field*

David L. Cooperrider (August 2016)

This Synchronicity experience involved a discussion between this researcher and David L. Cooperrider on August 25, 2016, which is why it is retold in the first-person voice. The conversation included a discussion about the Synchronicity Principle and research around the Akashic Field and its potential connection to Synchronicity theory. For a background purposes,

the Akashic Field, as formulated by Ervin Laszlo (2004), “has identified how a universal information field connects humans to a greater transpersonal consciousness” (Collins, 2010, p. 320). This discussion opens-up and provides an opportunity for further research into the relationship between the Akashic Field and Synchronicity Theory.

*During a break at the strategic advisory meeting of The Advisory Board for the David L. Cooperrider Center for AI, David Cooperrider and I had sidebar conversation about my research concerning the Synchronicity Principle and Appreciative Inquiry. David told me he was fascinated by the subject and he said that this idea had huge potential in the world of future AI research. He suggested I look into the work done by Ervin Laszlo on the Akashic Field. I thought this idea sounded very interesting and I told David I would most certainly investigate it.*

*We spoke for about ten minutes on the topic, then our facilitator called us back to order. The next meeting session was about to begin. After taking our seats, the facilitator told us the next discussion segment would begin with a brief three-minute video. The video was offered as an interesting point of interest and primarily for us to ponder. What was this video clip? It was about the Akashic Field! David and I looked at each other and smiled in amazement. It was Synchronicity in action, we thought to ourselves. We knew no one had overheard us discussing the Akashic Field topic, and then quickly found and queued the video. The organizers of the meeting had this video predetermined. We laughed to ourselves.*

*That evening when David and I reconnected, he approached me with a “deer in the headlights” look on his face. He asked me, “How and why did that happen? Did you know this video was going to be shown? I had no idea they were planning to show that video. Wow, this is really freaky!” David confided that it was the first time he had even thought about, or mentioned the Akashic Field to anyone in over six years. I told him I had no idea about the video either, but this shared experience was another great example of Synchronicity theory in action—all coming together at the right time! David then mentioned he now more fully realized the efficacy of a Synchronicity Principle in AI. He told me, “In the world of AI research, we’ve only just scratched the surface. To date, we have probably only explored five percent of what’s out there—it’s so exciting! There is so much more out there to investigate and uncover.”*

*After we finished talking, David walked away still looking bewildered. During my research and after hearing so many Synchronicity experience stories, as well as experiencing it a lot myself, I guess I’m accustomed to its presence and its role in life.*

### *III. Enhancement of Synchronicity*

In order to enhance the opportunity for Synchronicity, to make sure it occurs more frequently, the vast majority of group participants explained the need to find quiet time for “more reflection and [to] limit distractions.” This could manifest itself in a number of outlets such as “meditation, prayer, and yoga.” Participants concurred that when they found in this quiet state, they were better able to “see the connections.” Interestingly, six participants in the study described scuba diving, with its relaxed breathing techniques, as a powerful method and setting to foster enhanced Synchronicity awareness. Finding time for quiet reflection is an important

requisite in order to derive greater Synchronicity awareness, as mentioned earlier. This quiet time for reflection appears to be a fundamental setting or environment among participants in the study.

Participants described Synchronicity enhancement in the following responses:

- *“Learn to be more relaxed. Take time to relax, chill/reenergize/leverage energy stores. Lead a healthy lifestyle—recharge in a purposeful way.”*
- *“For better enhancement, you need to build-in more time for reflective practice. This will help both in personal and professional life. Need to find time for quiet time. Come to need solitude to be by myself. Need more time to process. Now I don't have thinking time for meditation. Having time to process Synchronicity will be a huge help. I'm too busy to find time now at work. I need to be more present. I need quiet time, and I will be more successful in the identification of Synchronicity if I'm able to do this.”*
- *“Meditations documents this—getting slow enough to see the times. If you have too many green lights you go so fast you don't see the red lights. Slow down and find the right pace—it's a spiritual mission. Understanding the Source is true to be able gain more mastery and drop into a meditative state more easily. Be more quiet in a meeting and be meditative.”*
- *“I need to be more mindful and present to learn how to enhance Synchronicity. I have to be in a mindful place and do more energy work. Good energy to put focus on the positive and be mindful.”*
- *“I leverage Synchronicity by restarting my yoga practice. I center my mind and make it calm so that I can be more aware of the Synchronicity signals and cues that are actually present everywhere.”*
- *“Having time-off is a blessing to notice things. Meditation and living in the moment is vital. As a very left brain person, I can now focus on the right brain stuff—painting, writing, photography, etc. This allows things to flow-in and more happens.”*

Study participants' responses related to meditation and finding quiet environments is in line with descriptions in the literature reviewed supports these findings (Collins, 2010; Corner, 2009; Coward, 1979; Liang, 2012). Author and medical physician Jean Shinoda Bolen, described one such experience: “Whether I am lying under the stars or sitting in Zazen meditating, or at peace in prayer, the intuitive knowledge that there is a patterned universe, or an underlying meaning to all experience, or a primal source, to which ‘I’ am connected, always evokes a feeling of reverence” (2004, p. 2).

“Trust” was also a prominent theme in the discussion of enhancement of Synchronicity. The “trust” theme was also identified when connected to intrinsic “emotions,” “feelings,” and “intuition (an inner voice).” Participants expressed the importance of trusting more completely in these feelings and in the process—“when I trust my intuition, things always work-out in ways I never expected,” one participant exclaimed. Among participants, the “trust” theme also arose relative to “vulnerability” and learning to “let go” of self-control. Some participants described the knowledge of being a very small part of a much larger and more powerful infinite universe. By allowing a “God” or a Higher Power” to assume control, some participants found solace and comfort when in a place of “vulnerability.” Whether it be spirituality based and/or Synchronicity based, participants expressed a need to “trust” more in the process for greater enhancement of their Synchronicity awareness. Participants described “trust” and “intuition” as follows:

- *“The rational approach perspective says “no,” but I feel like I want to follow my gut. Trust your instincts. You must be more willing to make changes. Trust more, not less. Use intuition/gut feelings more often. With age, I’ve learned with more experience. I found my biggest mistakes are when I don’t trust my instincts. In getting older, I’ve learned to trust more instincts. The biggest mistakes were made when I didn’t trust my instincts.”*
- *“I want to follow the intuition of Synchronicity for a healthier life with a purpose and an open mindset.”*
- *“There are also past successes that help with the future—listen to that inner voice because you know better than others about what you need. Be aware of the inner voice. This helps you to learn and overcome fears and do the things that are right even though it’s scary.”*

In addition to creating a relaxed state of mind, and the necessity to take time for meditation, prayer, and spiritual communication to enhance their ability to recognize Synchronicity, participants described listening more intently to a surrounding energy, an inner feeling, or an internal voice. These findings were found to be consistent with literature reviewed in Chapter Two (Grewe, Nagel, Kopiez, & Altenmüller, 2007; Liang, 2012; Pikovsky et al., 2003; Schwartz, n.d.). In addition, the relationship between spirituality and Synchronicity relationship is consistent with the literature reviewed (Cavanagh & Bandsuch, 2002; Lindorff, 1995a; Main, 2007a; Pielstick, 2005; Schwartz, n.d.).

The following quotes from interview and group participants describe the varied energies, feelings, mindsets, and spiritual connections recalled for a Synchronicity awareness.

- *“Focus on giving the energy. I try to do it all the time, but was told to focus more on receiving energy and not giving it away. I try to focus more on what you want like the spiritual energy.”*
- *“Be true to yourself and when you can be that way, you can attract Synchronicity into your life. As long as you feel it’s the right thing, things will happen and you have to also understand that words are nothing but energy—this is an AI philosophy.”*
- *“Create the environments and allow Synchronicity to happen. Get in the flow. Scuba Diving allows that time. Create the environment and invite the ‘source’ to allow Synchronicity to come in. Group Synchronicity to create the opportunities to happen. Meditations documents this—getting slow enough to see the times. If you have too many green lights you go so fast you don’t see the red lights. Slow down and find the right pace—a spiritual mission.”*
- *“Spirituality is the unseen order of things” (William James). You have to have faith, because you don’t know who’s going to show-up and when. It’s not random. There are spiritual tools for a shared reality.”*
- *“Understanding “the Source” is true. To gain more mastery and drop into a meditative state more easily. Be quiet in a meeting and be meditative. The real next frontier is the Spiritual Frontier—a force for good.”*
- *“A lot is spiritual and a greater awareness of Synchronicity will help me to forge deeper and more loving ties with my family and friends. There’s a great likelihood to take advantage of Synchronicity for greater knowledge of how to behave in order to benefit my relationships. These benefits of my relationships will create an even greater awareness of Synchronicity.”*

Bolen encourages possessing an optimistic outlook fueled by positive emotions to help promote more Synchronicity opportunities. She explains,

*When a person is following a path with heart, his or her dreams are usually nourishing; they seem interesting and pleasant, often imparting a sense of well-being. Synchronistically, opportunities seem to open fortuitously, the people we should meet accidentally cross our path, a flow or ease accompanies our work. Each facilitating, unsought event then begins to confer a feeling of being blessed, each serving as a lantern along the way, illuminating the path with heart (Bolen, 2004, p. 94).*

Participants in both interviews and focus-groups consistently described finding quiet time to listen more intently to the energies, signs, and symbols that surround them. In doing so, learning to trust more in that “inner voice,” and paying closer attention to the intuition that is felt and present. These are some of the methods discovered and explored to enhance a greater Synchronicity awareness. The following autobiographical narrative describes that intuitive feeling to trust that “inner voice.”

The following story from a personal interview session represents the presence of intuitive feelings that may communicate certain future decisions or directions to pursue. During the course of this research study, participants’ stories relayed varying messages they received around pending Synchronicity events or experiences. The message in this narrative is communicated by a particular intuitive feeling (Pikovsky et al., 2003) that provides clarity for a future direction.

### *The Wrong Job for Me?*

Jenni C. (Spring 2016)

*“You know when you’re on the wrong road or path, because it doesn’t feel right. There’s a wrong feeling.” Jenni was unhappy in her current marketing position. A number of issues had led to this and they included the company’s leadership as well as the negative attitude with some of her co-workers. Jenni decided to look for other career opportunities in the marketing profession. After some extensive searching, she found the perfect position! It was an opportunity that suited her talents, it had great growth potential, and it was with a globally respected company producing socially responsible products. This was a dream job opportunity for Jenni. After a series of in-depth interviews, Jenni learned she was one of the finalists for the position. However, there was something that did not feel right. Something deep down inside her that kept nagging and giving her a generally “bad feeling.” She kept trying to override or remedy this negative feeling by continually asking her friends to confirm for her that this is job really is the right career step. “Is this the right job for me?” she’d ask, or “do you think I should continue to pursue this opportunity?” Her friends thought she was absolutely crazy to think this way and told her, “of course it’s perfect, this job was made for you.” Nevertheless, Jenni just couldn’t reconcile the ill-feeling intuition she felt present deep-down inside. Eventually and much to everyone’s total surprise, she formally withdrew her candidacy for the position. She suddenly felt a sense of relief.*

*Immediately after her decision to withdraw, the environment at her current job changed dramatically for the better. All the problems with difficult personnel seemed to melt away. Positive changes in the leadership structure quickly ensued and other problem employees either left the organization, or moved to other departments within the company. As Jenni said, “the*



*problems seemed to magically go away.” With these changes, Jenni soon grew and developed within her current job and it’s the generative and positive environment she really loves now.*

Further methods and recommendations for a personal recognition and enhancement of Synchronicity are discussed in Chapter Five.

#### *Post-interview and Post-focus-group Qualitative Data Response Findings*

The qualitative data suggests a measurable improvement in participants’ Synchronicity awareness after the interviews or focus-group sessions. This qualitative data was collected to see whether there was a heightened level of Synchronicity awareness and interconnectivity among participants’ post-interview and post-focus-group (supplemental participant responses are found in Appendix M). Listed below are illustrative responses collected from *Post-interview* and *Post-focus-group Survey responses* related to personal observations relative to this Synchronicity awareness. They are grouped according to topic:

##### Professional and/or Work-life Focus

- *“A colleague and I ended up in a discussion about professional development. When I inquired about if she was headed to a particular conference, not only did she reply yes, but she ended up being the head of another professional association that I’ve been meaning to reconnect with. It’s a small example...”*
- *“I have been unhappy in my job for some time. I was walking down the hall and overheard a discussion about a new security office at my work. I went home and started working on my resume. Then, I was in a staff meeting and my manager announced that a new security officer was going to be hired. I “knew” what my next course of action needed to be. Not sure this is the best example of Synchronicity, but taking the class [focus-group] has kept me more aware in my daily life about possibly interconnections.*
- *“I looked at a LinkedIn request that showed up for the second time and it came from the former Exec. V.P. of the hotel chain I was working with on 9/11. She is now the CEO of the chain and I will be meeting with her next time I am in New York.*

##### Connections to Friends and/or Family

- *“I thought of a long-time friend and was going to email her and the next day she emailed me.*
- *“A personal situation with friends who knew another friend...who knew another friend...who had important information that I could share.*
- *“After my interview that morning, I called to talk to one of Bishops in Vermont about my brother who’s an Episcopal priest in S. Sudan and has been sick for over 3 years and needs help. Surprisingly, he told me good news of a Bishop from South Sudan coming to visit Vermont. Four days later, I finally meet the Bishop here and he turns-out to be from my home town in S. Sudan and we realized we were best friends when we were little! We had a good reunion after 15 years and he will see that my brother gets the proper medical care.”*

## Connections to Nature and/or Things

- *“Just this morning, I was looking out from my bedroom window at the lake and noticed how the birds were dancing from tree to tree. It was like a bird ballet. I'm sure there are other instances where if I open myself to notice, incredible things are happening.”*
- *“A connection with Nature story: I was sitting in a friend's back yard talking about spirituality—a deep nature connection. At one point, I got animated and moved my hands. A dragon fly landed and stayed for a very long time. She looked back and forth between me and my friend. Then she hugged. Moving her legs to hug me more tightly. Near the end, she was hugging me with legs and wings. A few days later, I was with my husband and another friend hiking in the Adirondacks. My friend and I were on the top of a fire tower and my husband had descended. When we re-joined him at the bottom. He said, I wish you got here sooner, a dragonfly landed on my chest (near his heart) and stood looking up at me for a longtime.”*
- *“One example of Synchronicity I have experienced since our discussion is my further, unexplainable affinity to animals, particularly horses, cattle, and dogs. I am finding more and more ways to connect (communicate?) with them through emotions and "visions of what I want them to do." It is difficult to explain, because at various stages of my life, I was terrified of each of these animals.”*

## New Perspectives and Viewpoints

- *“The biggest difference for me now, since the conversation, is that I'm more aware of Synchronicity in general. I think previously I would only really notice it if it happened on a grand scale. But now, I see it when it happens on a smaller scale as well. For instance, my favorite drawing pencil broke in my pocket. I was bummed out. But as it turns out, my wife just happened to buy me a new pencil for no specific reason. In the past, I never would've thought of it as Synchronicity.”*
- *“The focus-group was a Synchronistic event for me. I was feeling lost and unsure of how to develop new goals. I signed up for the event, not know what the topic was, and found that it was just what I needed to help refocus and develop clear goals. I have outlined goals and already seeing the value of looking for the signs and being open to Synchronicity opportunities.”*
- *“My friend and I were discussing impactful "moments" on the ride home from the Synchronicity gathering. Within that topic (already meaningful to me), the words she used were words I had used in the past as well. I also have seen the concept of linking vs. ranking come up several times—not as in those words, but the meaning keeps coming-up.”*

An analysis of all the qualitative data collected from participants illustrates a heightened Synchronicity recognition and awareness after interviews and focus-group sessions. Qualitative responses vary from participant to participant as does their perception of Synchronicity awareness and its applications. However, from this data, there appears to be a collective positive correlation between the presentation of AI-constructed questions posed during interviews and focus-groups, and the participants' heightened awareness of Synchronicity. This is exhibited when interacting with ideas, nature, and other people. It is the hope of this researcher that AI-constructed questions about Synchronicity awareness will help many others to realize similar experiences.

*SECTION III: Research Hypothesis 2*

From preliminary foundational research, there appears to be an unseen and untested opportunity to develop a “Synchronicity Principle” within the emerging Appreciative Inquiry framework. In order to address this hypothesis, specific qualitative questions pertaining to the development of a Synchronicity Principle were addressed to AI practitioners and researchers in the field of AI. Their cumulative feedback and recommendations follow.

## Research Proposition #3:

*The value of creating and presenting a “Synchronicity Principle” concentration within an Appreciative Inquiry framework*

The possibility of developing of a Synchronicity Principle within an AI framework was addressed in the focus-group sessions. Within these sessions, a uniquely-developed educational format supported the creation of the Synchronicity Principle to be used in an AI methodology. These focus-group sessions comprised the initial development and testing of such a pedagogy. Additionally, after the conclusion of an Advisory conference, August 24-26, 2016 for the *Cooperrider Center for AI* at Champlain College, questions about this concept were posed to board members. The seven responses to the three questions sent to AI practitioners and researchers on August 24, 2016, yielded qualitative results detailed below.

## Question 1:

Question #1 was intended simply to gather a sense of how aware AI practitioners were of Synchronicity.

Do you have any examples of "appreciative Synchronicity" that have happened to you in connection to our gathering last week?

*I look on the concept as something almost magical, don't understand "why" instances might happen and just love when they do happen. An example to explain what "Synchronicity" means to me is within the following story: For months I have been calling and writing to this company in Canada about a cheese board that my sisters and I wanted to give to a niece for her wedding. Time after time I would be told, "Oh, Chantal is away, but she'll call you back"—or—"Oh, Chantal is at a trade show in Toronto and will get back to you when she returns to Montreal," etc., etc. Last week, a couple of days before one of my sisters had to leave for the wedding, I got an email from Chantal saying our cheese board had come in from Portugal, where they're made. The timing was "magical" as the "attending" sister had originally wanted to take the gift out West to the wedding and actually could have—had another wait in correspondence from Chantal not followed. I had been ready to call Chantal "one more time" before I definitely gave up on ever hearing from her again. Why did Chantal's email come in "right before" the wedding, assuring us that in fact she was able to get it for our niece? I don't remember anything of this kind happening that was "bad" - so I relate "co-incidences" or "Synchronicities" like this one as surprising and very positive experiences (M.G., 2016).*

*My story (R.S.B., 2016):*

*It's to do with the term “abundance” - the value that came up for us when we did that particular activity during our Dreaming session. “Abundance” and what that means*

*really resonated; and I've been living with it and mulling it over and talking about it. As I did that, the most beautiful, powerful, enlivening, meaningful people, resources and experiences have been popping into my life ever since. I know I actively pursued the exploration, but as I put my attention to the value of "abundance", the word just appearing in my inbox, inviting me to webinars and blogs; conversations I was having people, books I was interested in. Some key events below:*

- *I chose "my relationship with abundance" as the topic of a coaching session I was offered by a former student who was looking for a practice session. It was really exciting to "unpack" the term and how it shows up in my life—both abundance and lack of abundance.*
- *"In conversation with a friend, she recommended I read Lynn Twist's book The Soul of Money, which I could not put down. I read books on my iPad's Kindle app, so I also bought the audio version as well, so I could truly immerse myself in its content. That book was overflowing with stories, traditions and practices from all over the world that broadened and deepened my understanding of "abundance.""*
- *"I came across several Internet "personal development" personalities who were selling trainings and courses on increasing abundance in one's life"*
- *"I met a guy in the local park, who is deeply into the spiritual side of wealth, abundance and flourishing."*
- *I have scheduled a call with P.S. to talk more about abundance as it was she who brought up the term.*
- *Within my own products offerings and work, I'm now looking at integrating a whole segment on how we appreciate "abundance." I am really grateful for this Synchronicity.*

#### Question 2:

Question #2 was intended to gather feedback about whether there was a place for Synchronicity in AI.

How might greater awareness of Synchronicity play a role in Appreciative Inquiry methodology and philosophy?

*AI's 5 foundational principles and 5 emergent principles all overlap in varying degrees, as I experience them. I would imagine that The Principle of Synchronicity would also overlap, complement and support the other principles. For example, without the awareness of "Synchronicity" I would say that my experience last week was evidence of the Constructionist Principle— words create worlds. I might also say it was an example of the "Poetic principle"—what you focus on grows; and, I might also say it was the Awareness Principle—I became conscious or aware of "abundance" and began to put my attention to it and see more of it. The Wholeness Principle comes up as well—I am becoming open to the emerging whole through my focus on "abundance." In the quantum field as I understand it (so little), all of these resources, ideas, people, are there for us already; so does Synchronicity open me up to my inner knowing of the deep interconnectedness of all things to help me begin to accept what is already there, yet until the Synchronous event, it was outside my knowing? I use all the principles to help me make sense of my experience and its unfolding once I became so conscious of it (Robin S-B., 2016).*

*I am very excited by the possibilities of Tom's research on Synchronicity. We often talk about the importance of developing one's "appreciative eye" when doing Appreciative Inquiry...the idea of seeing those gems in our world that have often gone unnoticed. Tom's work on Synchronicity is inviting us to scale up that appreciative eye and take even further notice of those meaningful coincidences, which are perhaps more than coincidences! He is pushing forward the theory of AI with the proposition bringing Synchronicity into the emerging principles of AI. Personally, I am constantly amazed by the Synchronicity that emerges within a system that has embraced AI; it is as if connections are opened up in new ways between individuals once we tap into our positive core and begin to dream together. Tom's work is helping us better understand these exciting realities and giving us new frameworks to not only cultivate, but leverage Synchronicity in meaningful ways in both our personal, as well as organizational lives (Lindsey G., 2016).*

*Awareness of Synchronicity can assist people in understanding the appreciative value of inquiry. At times in AI, questions are crafted ahead of time with an expectation of a perceived result. However, as people go in the direction of questions, not all of their paths are related. Understanding Synchronicity would allow further exploration, perhaps, of wonderment in the value received. For example, why was a certain question asked? Why was a certain response given? Why were certain behaviors observed? Why were certain actions taken? Initially, the responses, behaviors, or actions may appear to trace back to a question. However, an awareness of Synchronicity might reveal otherwise (William H., 2016).*

*I must admit, I've been struggling a bit to get back to you. To be honest, I usually do best with verbal interviews about topics like this. Maybe that is part of the Synchronicity of speaking with someone vs. disconnected communication mediums like email. Anyway, I totally believe in this concept in all aspects of my life. Especially when it comes to my dreams for continuing to embrace and learn more about AI and use it (Rod E., 2016).*

### Question 3:

Question #3 was intended to elicit insights into the viability of developing a new AI Principle.

What potential do you see for the development of a "Synchronicity Principle" within the AI framework?

*My wondering: why the 5 emergent principles seem to receive less attention than the 5 foundational principles? And perhaps it's because AI's traditional and original focus has been in scholarly contexts and in organization development. My deep sense is the 5 emergent are only now coming into significance—and very much needed. I know I am beginning to integrate them into my work more and more. They are more easily talked about in a more personal development space versus OD [Organizational Development], yet just as needed in OD. I did a survey recently on what people wanted to learn more about AI and I was delighted to read people were asking for more AI in personal, one-on-one situations, and in relationships. In my survey with 142 responses*

*as an indication, I am excited to think of the possibilities for these still esoteric principles in our future applications of AI. Our times are calling for them (Robin S-B., 2016).*

*I can see a “Synchronicity Principle” being added as a reflective principle to our growth. Not that people would reflect on how they might do things differently, but instead, they would reflect on how things became possible. Again, the Synchronicity discovery would be generated from the wonderment and questions asked. For example, when I think of Synchronistic events in my life, they were changes that led me to my passions, some of which were aspirations and others that were newly discovered. Some were invitations and others fell on my lap. My awareness of Synchronicity has helped me become more present in the moment, has helped me take more risks, and has helped me become more reflective (both past and future).*

*The actual meeting was an appreciative Synchronic event, in and of itself. The meeting provided me a space to begin opening up about my AI journey and AI's personal meaning to me. My responses to the introduction questions “Who are you?” and “How did you get here?” revealed a series of synchronistic events. In one moment in the fall of 2000, the right person (Professor C.S., who was a complete stranger to me at the time) entered my life at the right time. C's interest in me led to my AI connection, which led to healing in one sense and rebirth in another. Those led to a graduate certificate and masters in organization development. Those led to an invitation from D. H. to teach at Champlain College, which led to meeting another stranger (L.G.). L's invitation to me to join the CCAI team has led to my current journey of helping others grow through the use of AI principles.*

*Without an awareness of Synchronicity, the present moment would be void of a clear understanding of who I am, why I am here doing what I'm doing, and why I enjoy it so much. My knowledge gained from this awareness has deepened my commitment to my AI journey and allowed me to help inspire students to explore the unknown through questions. Further examples of appreciative Synchronicity might be better exemplified by our students who become exposed to and affiliated with the CCAI in the months and years to come (William H., 2016).*

*I'm not sure we need another AI Principle, yet maybe this concept can be weaved into all the others. For me, it's all about visioning and dreaming about the future (sometimes in meditation, sometimes during the night, sometimes in exercise) and then seeing those things that connect these concepts together in reality through relationships (Rod E., 2016).*

While one response questioned the need for “another AI Principle,” there otherwise appears to be common argument for a new principle within an AI framework. Indeed, further responses from leading Appreciative Inquiry and Social Constructionist researchers bear out this finding:

AI co-founder and researcher, Dr. David L. Cooperrider wrote:

*It's truly an exciting time in our world—so much opportunity for positive change. The future of Appreciative Inquiry to serve humanity is as bright as ever. I still believe we've just barely scratched the surface of the potential research of AI and all it can offer us. A perfect example of this is the innovative research into the connection between AI and Synchronicity theory. It is certainly very interesting and ground-*

*breaking in our AI field. Synchronicity holds a world view that we are relational beings, so fundamentally interconnected that Synchronicity is inevitable—especially when consciousness of connection to all life is empathically attuned. To me, the conception and development of this new, emerging "Synchronicity Principle" perfectly brings together opportunities to create a greater interconnectivity of ideas, relational being, and time within an Appreciative Inquiry methodology. I personally believe in the power of Synchronicity and feel more and more connection to its messages. It's part of our newest understandings in consciousness studies and social construction of reality. I'm excited to watch the progress of this new AI emerging principle within our growing field!*

David L. Cooperrider (April 2017)

Dr. Kenneth J. Gergen, Social Constructionist author and researcher wrote:

*I like to think of Synchronicity not as a special condition or state, uniquely fashioned or isolated. Rather, if we view Synchronicity as acausal relationship, it is the condition of all of life. Wherever we are, whatever our activities, we are immersed in the flowing together of multiplicities. We are situated at every moment in an array of relational processes—with other people, objects, structures, vegetation, micro-organisms, the atmosphere, and so on. It is the synchronous relationship among them that is life itself, transformed from moment to moment. If we think of how we might bring about positive change, we must think wholistically—the relation of all. At the same time, it means that a change in any aspect of the confluence may ripple across time and space.*

Kenneth J. Gergen (July 2017)

From the above responses, there appears to be value in pursuing the concept of a *Synchronicity Principle*, as well as a need for it within the AI methodology. Respondents talk about “overlap, complement, and support other principles,” an “inner knowing and interconnectedness,” to “take notice of meaningful coincidences,” and “Synchronicity that emerges within a system that has embraced AI.” After this question, there does not appear to be dissenting or negative feedback about this emerging AI principle.

Analysis of the qualitative results from this AI practitioner researcher group as well as other experts in the field, appears to yield a positive support for such an emergent principle. As discussed in Chapter Two, AI principles are meant to be developed and improved over time (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001; Martinetz, 2002). As Cooperrider has cautioned in the past, there is no one way to do AI (2005). The intent for AI “was that the inquiry should begin with appreciation, should be collaborative, should be provocative, and should be applicable” (Gervase Bushe, 2013, p. 2).

During this study, Synchronicity questions used in interviews and focus-group sessions were applied using an AI format. Additionally, focus-groups were conducted using an AI-related curriculum built around Synchronicity awareness and enhancement. After the qualitative and quantitative research was compiled and analyzed, there appeared to be an opportunity to develop a Synchronicity education within an AI methodology framework, which could then be applied for a broader audience. As highlighted earlier, while quantitative analysis did not validate this assumption, the qualitative results illustrated a different result. Utilizing the qualitative data from interviews and focus-groups proved useful in understanding the effectiveness of a Synchronicity awareness education concentration in AI methodology.

It is with this knowledge of AI’s origins, the primary and secondary research conducted in this study, as well as the affirmative feedback from AI authors, practitioners, and researchers,

that a Synchronicity Principle is introduced. This emergent AI Principle will be explained in full in the next and final chapter.

#### *Limitations of the Quantitative Research*

The research study had some limitations: its intended purpose was to measure any observable increase in participants' awareness of Synchronicity experiences over time. Analysis of the quantitative data resulted in surprising and unexpected outcomes. Initial positive correlations between pre- and post-surveys in both interview and focus-group participants were expected. However, the opposite occurred. A review of the data through SPSS software showed a statistical decrease in the pre- and post-events. There are a number of research-validated reasons for this:

- The sample size was relatively small, with 31 interviews and 36 participants in 3 separate focus-group sessions (Mason, 2010).
- Due to the designed anonymity of the participants' identities in the research design, an independent variable approach was employed to the data collection and analysis of pre- and post-surveys. In this case, there was a lack of distinct dependent variables (Bryman, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Vogt, 2007). For future research on Synchronicity, an applied dependent variable analysis of participants' responses would be recommended for longitudinal tracking (Howe & Eisenhart, 1990).
- This research design applied an independent-variable approach to each participant group and observed general trends. Going forward, a dependent variable study could yield more closely-linked correlative results by tracking and recording distinct individual's pre- and post-event responses (Babbie, 1990; Creswell, 2014).
- Within the pre-event questionnaires, participants were asked about their experiences with Synchronicity over a lifetime, thus yielding positive responses. However, in the post-interview and post-focus-group surveys, the questions were framed only allowing a one-week post-event time to observe Synchronicity awareness experiences. Generally, participants' responses showed less positive correlation than the pre-event surveys. In hindsight, this may not have been enough time to allow observations of Synchronicity. Going forward, a longitudinal research study of asking participants at intervals of potentially one month, six months, or even a year after each interview/focus-group completion might be advised (Babbie, 1990; Creswell, 2013).
- From this research, it was observed that participants' interpretation and lived experiences of Synchronicity awareness is a matter of subjectivity. This variance of personal experiences may not be accurately measured through applied quantitative research analyses. The qualitative data collected in this study provided deeper insights into the potential drivers of Synchronicity awareness for individuals as compared to the quantitative analysis (Flick, 2009).



### *Summary of Results*

Chapter Four outlined the research findings using a mixed methodological application to address the three research propositions about individual and group relationships to Synchronicity awareness. *Propositions #1* and *#2* considered the general topics of recognition and setting, while *Proposition #3* then explored the potential of developing the Synchronicity Principle within AI.

The final results showed there were limitations in the collection and analysis of the quantitative data. Those limitations were identified and addressed, which will allow for greater accuracy for future research endeavors in this area.

Conversely, data derived from the qualitative research demonstrated and produced a wealth of robust data. This original research data showed:

- Synchronicity is recognized through various multi-sensory means. These ways include: the recognition and sensitivity to positive or negative emotions, feelings, and physiological responses to them.
- A need to trust personal intuitions (“trust your gut”), and listen more attentively to inner voice communications.
- There are subjective methods for acquiring a greater awareness sensitivity to Synchronicity through meditation, prayer, and being in quiet moments, communing with nature, and/or engaging in physical exercise.
- Synchronicity events may more often occur when there is a greater willingness to an openness to new opportunities.
- Synchronicity events may also occur when individuals are vulnerable and able to relinquish control.

Although the individual interviews and focus-groups both provided productive content, the two settings were different. It was observed that the interviews tended to be more “reflective” in nature, whereas the group settings tended to be more “interdependent,” a fact attributable to the Complex Adaptive System (CAS) theory of group dynamics.

Feedback from the interview and focus-group sessions about Synchronicity experiences tendency to occur in threes led to the development of the “*3-A Concept*”—Awareness, Acknowledgement, and Action.

Originating from the qualitative research process, and with feedback from AI practitioners and researchers, the “Synchronicity Principle” was introduced and developed. It is the intention of this researcher that this newly-conceived principle be added to the list of existing foundational and emergent AI principles. Further applications of this experiential work within the AI community will be needed, and this work lays the foundation for greater exciting opportunities ahead.

In the next and final chapter, information is offered about specific actions readers can apply for their own heightened Synchronicity awareness. The chapter will also discuss the final evolution of the Synchronicity Principle in AI and the potential to apply it within an AI methodology framework.

## CHAPTER FIVE—CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“Fato prudentia major”  
 (“Fate is greater than prudence”)  
 Cheney Family Moto  
 (this researcher is a family member)

“Until you make the unconscious conscious,  
 it will direct your life and you will call it fate.”  
 C.G. Jung

“Great things are always done  
 by a series of small things.”  
 Vincent Van Gogh

*Introduction*

After over twenty years of anxious deliberation, Dr. Carl Jung ultimately decided to publish his research and reflections about Synchronicity. He wrote,

As a psychiatrist and psychotherapist I have often come up against the phenomena in question [Synchronicity] and could convince myself how much these inner experiences meant to my patients. In most cases, they were things which people do not talk about for fear of exposing themselves to thoughtless ridicule. I was amazed to see how many people have had experiences of this kind and how carefully the secret was guarded. So my interest in this problem has a human as well as a scientific foundation (Jung, 1952, p. 4).

With this in mind, the current study’s research hypothesis and guiding research propositions were designed and implemented to better-comprehend and evaluate that role of Synchronicity awareness and understanding in people’s lives today, and to evaluate the opportunity to develop a *Synchronicity Principle* within an Appreciative Inquiry framework. It is with a broader comprehension of Synchronicity theory that this final chapter provides a summary of its research conclusions as well as offers the reader prospective recommendations for heightening Synchronicity awareness, both for individuals and for organizational use. This final chapter also introduces the *Synchronicity Principle* and outlines its application within an AI methodology framework. This chapter also presents recommendations for future data collection and methodologies that would address the data collection limitations that arose from this research. Finally, future avenues for innovative research stemming from this current study will be presented.

*Contributions to Research: Purpose and Results*

To restate, this study employed three research questions in order to support the primary two-fold hypothesis regarding a broader understanding of Synchronicity. The twofold primary research hypothesis is as follows:

*Individuals who recognize, understand, and act upon the presence of Synchronicity (seeing the connections) in their lives, can use this awareness to create more fulfilling, positive, and purposeful lives.*

*From preliminary foundational research, there appears to be an unseen and untested opportunity to develop a “Synchronicity Principle” within the emerging Appreciative Inquiry framework.*

Relative to the first hypothesis, it was beyond the scope of this research to effectively quantify the subjective levels of “*more fulfilling, positive, and purposeful lives.*” Perhaps that empirical data could be successfully collected in a more extensive longitudinal study that would track participants over multiple years. Nevertheless, it was observed that participants’ stories and autobiographical narratives presented in this study were able to sufficiently identify and describe how they individually recognize and enhance interpersonal Synchronicity experiences. By taking a generalization approach within qualitative research to this theoretical Synchronicity explanation, this study provided an “application across a broader range of settings” (Turner, Cardinal, & Burton, 2015, p.10).

The three primary research propositions that address the research hypotheses are listed below, along with conclusions from this study and recommendations to the reader for increasing Synchronicity awareness within a personal context. The propositions are included below in the order in which they were presented:

1. *The extent of recognition of Synchronicity (seeing the connections) as a social phenomenon.*

The research results collected for this study from participants in individual and group settings are consistent with literature reviewed for this study relative to the *general recognition of Synchronicity*. Over the course of research, participants described certain signs and symbols present that allowed them to recognize Synchronicity, all or any of which, could be present.

- There are certain prominent feelings that may be realized as well as physical or visceral reactions. This can come in the form of a “gut” feeling or even an “aha” experiential moment.
- There is a presence of shared connections with people, places, and/or things.
- There is a feeling of ease and comfort where it just “feels right.” Attempts and efforts come easily and yield results, everything fits together nicely, and the timing of appropriate connections are made.
- There are moments of vulnerability Synchronistic experiences can come at a time of vulnerability and/or when it is most needed.
- There are noticeable, distinct patterns, repetitions, and timing. As discussed earlier, the discovery that Synchronicity events often arrive in groups of threes lead to the development of the *3A Concept of Awareness, Acknowledgment, and Action*.

With a better understanding of the various ways to recognize the potential signs and symbols of Synchronicity in place, *Research Proposition #2* addresses conclusions around the settings where a Synchronicity awareness may be enhanced.

2. *There are settings where one might acquire a heightened awareness of Synchronicity that provides a new perspective.*

Numerous ways to enhance this awareness of Synchronicity were discovered. The literature reviewed during the course of this research corroborated the participants' descriptions about diverse means of *acquiring a heightened awareness of Synchronicity*. As was the case with the conclusions about *recognition*, (above), all or any of these characteristics could be applied:

- Limit distractions, listen more and find quiet, reflective time. This can come in the form of meditation, prayer, or any time alone in a deeper contemplation. It can also come in the form of subjective physical exercise interactions, such as being in nature, Tai Chi, yoga, or scuba diving.
- Learn to trust intuition and natural instincts. Participants explained, relative to Synchronicity, things seemed to work out best when you “go with your gut.” This statement is not presented to completely discount any form of rational thought. However, too often, logic and rationality take precedence in the human decision-making process (Cambray & Rosen, 2012; Colman, 2011; Xu, Zwick, & Schwarz, 2012). Jean Shinoda Bolen elaborates, “Because thinking and five sense perceptions are processed in one cerebral hemisphere and because symbolic, intuitive functions seem to be located in the other, when we consider input from both logical and symbolic sources we can see the whole picture” (2004, p. 47).
- Become more open to new experiences, people, and places. Participants described that when they entertain an “openness to newness,” even more Synchronistic events and opportunities arrive.
- Become more conscious and sensitive to the patterns that unfold. In particular, participants described witnessing Synchronicity patterns of three interrelated events that often lead to an ultimate decision. From this, the *3A Concept*—a Synchronicity experience progression that communicates a final action to the individual. Its composition is as follows: 1. “Awareness,” 2. “Acknowledgement,” and 3. “Action.”
- Share about personal Synchronicity experiences. Participants described that when they share their experiences, it helps to build stronger connections, and hence, potentially more such meaningful connections with others. This process invites a greater interaction of sharing of, and enriching from, Synchronicity stories.

*Research Propositions #1 and #2* above, presented conclusions and recommendations drawn from the data collected about the recognition and enhancement of Synchronicity awareness in individuals' lives. With this foundational understanding, *Research Proposition #3* is presented; it argues for the need for an emergent *Synchronicity Principle* in an AI construct. The addition of this new principle in AI will promote Synchronicity awareness and understanding on a larger, more far-reaching scale.

3. *There is value to creating and presenting a “Synchronicity Principle” concentration within an Appreciative Inquiry framework.*

### *The Synchronicity Principle*

After extensive literary reviews, qualitative research from one-on-one interviews and focus-group sessions, along with careful review from AI practitioners and researchers in the field, Synchronicity appears to be a valid emergent principle within the AI field.

Further, using the AI questions developed for this study, the emergent *Synchronicity Principle* could be applied in various AI formats. These formats might include: collaborative and generative groups meeting in a larger “Summit-style” setting (David Cooperrider & Laszlo, 2012), in a more intimate one-on-one personal interview setting, or when applying AI organizational development change practice methodologies (Martinetz, 2002; Diana Whitney & Schau, 1998). There seems to be the opportunity to create greater Synchronicity awareness in group settings, because groups can share information more easily and more fully and they can leverage the Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) and begin to more closely align in ideas. In groups, information is often shared more easily and sometimes more fully. An AI curriculum and PowerPoint slides with a *Synchronicity Principle* educational concentration are outlined in Appendices N and O.

This emergent AI principle builds upon the foundation of earlier core principles. In addition, it introduces new insights into AI’s construct. Below, is a description of this principle, composed in an AI voice, similar to other principles described in Chapters One and Two (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001, pp. 49–53):

The *Synchronicity Principle* proposes that we all live in an interconnected and interrelated world—we are relational beings who connect to one another in multiple ways. By applying generative AI questions, we can recognize and realize Synchronistic experiences as an approach to build stronger connections, both as individuals, dyads, and in groups. Oftentimes, we need quiet and reflective time to hear and to trust our intuition. Taking this time allows us to become aware of these vital connections. Finally, equipped with this heightened Synchronicity awareness, we can become more sensitive to Synchronicity experiences and events, which may occur in patterns of three—Awareness, Acknowledgement, and Action—the *3A Concept*.

The emergent *Synchronicity Principle*:

- Builds on the *Wholeness Principle* with an understanding that we all exist and communicate in an interconnected and interrelated world (Kelm, 2005)
- Builds on the *Constructionist Principle* in that it is relational by nature and actions tend to emerge from relationships (Bushe, 2013)
- Applies AI generative questions to develop heightened awareness of Synchronicity experiences to leverage future opportunities
- Encourages taking the time to listening to, and trust intuitive messages stimulated by quiet and reflective meaningful moments
- Calls attention to an enhanced awareness and consciousness that Synchronicity experiences can occur in patterns of “three”— the *3A Concept* of (1) Awareness, (2) Acknowledgement, and (3) Action.

*The Benefits of Applying the Synchronicity Principle in Organizations*

“When we feel synchronicity, we feel ourselves as part of a cosmic matrix, as participants in the Tao. It gives us a glimpse into the reality that there is indeed a link between us all, between us and all living things, between us and the universe” (Bolen, 2004, p. 103). How can a greater awareness of Synchronicity help others? What is the benefit of applying the Synchronicity Principle in organizations? How can it help businesses and organizations to see new potential opportunities? Can the *Synchronicity Principle* applications foster greater connections among people? How can this be a benefit to a department, a group, and an organization? How can individuals and groups apply it to realize new and perhaps, unforeseen opportunities? Why might it be important to see the connections between people, both within and outside of organizations?

To address the questions above, an approach of the individual components of the Synchronicity Principle is in order. By using the AI questions developed for this research, individuals and groups within organizations can begin to create new and greater connections between each other. This may be accomplished individually in a solitary reflective practice, however using the questions in groups of two or more will provide more effective, as evidence in the studies in Complex Adaptive Systems—where an interdependent approach is most effective (Saadat, 2015).

Outlined below, are potential positive outcomes of applying the AI *Synchronicity Principle* within an organization. Aspects of this new *Principle* can be employed in groups as well as in individual settings.

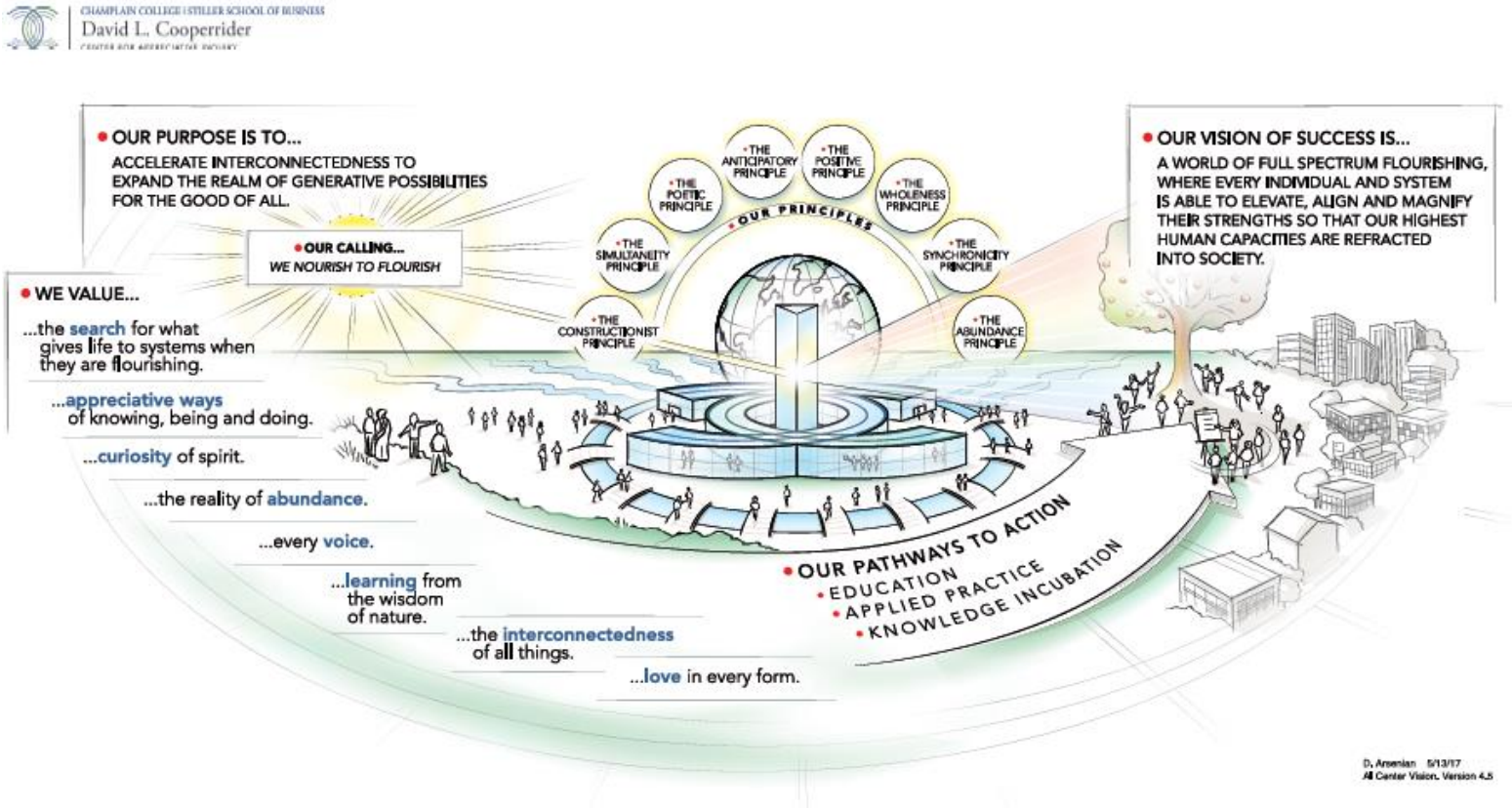
*Benefits of the Synchronicity Principle:*

- Leverages the strengths of the AI *Wholeness* and *Constructionist Principles* and brings them to life
- Greater interconnectivity of relational ideas within an AI methodology
- Greater interconnectivity of individuals who can build a deeper level of empathy between members of a group or an organization
- Manifest unforeseen connections and latent creative strengths in individuals and in organizations
- Creates a heightened awareness and recognition of signs, symbols, and patterns of Synchronicity events to leverage and to take advantage of new opportunities
- Provides a cognition that Synchronistic events may come at a vulnerable moment in an individual’s and/or organization’s life, that can lead to a resolution for future action
- Can lead to an earlier alignment of the Complex Adaptive System (CAS) approach to group activities, where greater cooperation and efficiencies are realized

*Early Adoption of the Synchronicity Principle in Organizations*

Figure 5-1 below, provides an example of an acknowledgement around the *Synchronicity Principle* and its early adoption into AI philosophy. The David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry has included the *Synchronicity Principle* (see center right) into a graphical illustration of their “Vision for the Future” (Arsenian, 2017). Discussions continue around future applications and research on the subject of Synchronicity and AI.

Figure 5-1. The David L. Cooperrider Center for AI’s Vision for the Future



### *Limitations of the Research*

During the course of the data gathering process for this study, limitations in the research were observed. Recommendations are provided here to address these limitations, so they may be avoided in future research. These observed limitations were as follows:

- A narrowly defined geographic vicinity, Vermont, located in the Northeastern region of the United States. While some personal interviews were conducted long distance by phone, the majority of discussions and group sessions took place in Burlington, VT.
- Financial and time constraints. There was limited financial support and a limited time-frame available to conduct any longer-term study of individual Synchronicity observations.
- The number of available research participants with broader racial diversity, age, and class diversity.
- Lack of identifying more distinct dependent variables ahead of time (Bryman, 2007). In part, this was due to anonymity in the survey administration. The quantitative data collection process used a general dependent variable for the pre-and post-event surveys. It would have been more beneficial to measure pre- and post-events experienced by each participant with additional qualitative data to supplement the results.
- Pre-interview and pre-focus-group survey question #5 asked participants “have you witnessed incidences of Synchronicity,” which spanned a lifetime. However, in the post-interview/group survey, corresponding question #7 asked participants the same question allowing only a one week time frame. Quantitative data results demonstrated a measurable declining trend in affirmative responses. A longer time frame of potentially a year or more to collect quantitative data could yield a more meaningful measurement.

### *Recommendations for Future Research*

There are a number of intersecting and related opportunities for future exploration and investigation into the Synchronicity theory. Many of these suggestions below were beyond the scope of this current study. However, from this researcher’s point of view, the following research concepts offer thought-provoking and groundbreaking potential:

- Investigate the application of Jungian-style typology assessments, such as Myers/Briggs Type Indicator and measure Synchronicity awareness among the various personality types (Briggs & Myers, 1988; Myers, 1962; Virmozelova & Dimitrova, 2013). An example to research would be the “intuitive” versus the “sensing” dominant form in individuals. Could one personality type be more sensitive to Synchronicity experiences?
- Explore broader global perspectives in Synchronicity awareness. For example, this research could entail investigating Geert Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions (Hofstede, 1980) or Holistic Perceptive Affordances (Miyamoto, Nisbett, & Masuda, 2006) across regions of the world to better understand Synchronicity awareness within and across diverse cultures.
- Finally, it would be interesting to investigate Synchronicity awareness in a multi-generational approach. Questions could be answered such as: Does Synchronicity awareness expand with age and/or experience? Do younger generations rely on more information technology and social media to aid in their Synchronicity awareness? And to that end, does an artificial intelligence (the other AI) technology currently exist that would support greater Synchronicity awareness among humans?



To this researcher, the opportunities seem endless for future Synchronicity-related research. Out of this current work, more opportunities for future research will unfold.

### *Autobiographical Reflection*

Throughout this research journey, I have explored and reflected on the many ways I have observed and recognize Synchronicity. In fact, many passages and sections of this dissertation were written utilizing Synchronicity awareness. The signs and symbols “appeared” to me at times when I least expected it, but needed it most. Throughout this research journey, I met the right people at the right place and the right time to offer ideas and inspiration for my research. Often times I allowed connections and time to flow naturally, without my control. Instead of intently pushing through my daily agenda and schedules, I gave in and let go of my concrete expectations. Despite this disconcerting lack-of-control feeling, the perfect answers and solutions came to me. The benefit of time was one of the major assets of this investigation that proved to be an added advantage. I learned to disregard the urge to rush the process and allow time for the most elegant answer and/or resource to appear. I learned to become more effectively attuned to this art of Synchronicity awareness, which has yielded untold opportunities.

One such opportunity was to share this early research in an online podcast. In September 2016, I was interviewed about Synchronicity awareness research and the potential for a *Synchronicity Principle* in AI. This conversation with author and researcher, Robyn Stratton-Berkessel, who is founder of *The Positivity Strategist* (September 2016) can be found here: [Synchronicity: An exciting emergent principle in Appreciative Inquiry with Tom Myers, Champlain College](#)

I have grown tremendously through this research process in both academic and intellectual avenues. After only just minimally scratching the surface of Synchronicity theory research, I now feel drawn to dig deeper into this infinite field.

### *In Conclusion*

The purpose of this research was to simply “open the doors” for a new understanding of the role and power a heightened Synchronicity awareness may play in individual’s lives. Developing the consciousness, creating a broader ability to “see the connections” in both our psychic and our physical worlds, may just help to bring people closer together. Fueled with this broader understanding of our connectedness, we can recognize our mutual interrelated existences, while all synchronized in time, in order to generate deeper, more meaningful and interdependent relationships. This can be interpreted as including not only humankind, but also our surrounding natural environments. It is with these deeper and more potent connected relationships that we might imagine and ultimately achieve a healthier and more peaceful world.

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