Parents' relationships with and parenting of their adolescents following the Anasazi Foundation experience

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Parents' relationships with and parenting of their adolescents
following the Anasazi Foundation experience

by

Martin John Erickson

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Human Development and Family Studies (Marriage and Family Therapy)

Program of Study Committee:
Ronald Werner-Wilson, Co-major Professor
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Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
2004

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Graduate College
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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation of

Martin John Erickson

has met the dissertation requirements of Iowa State University

Signature was redacted for privacy.

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Signature was redacted for privacy.

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Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Major Program
DEDICATION

To my parents, to Patti, and to the adolescent(s) I may one day be honored to parent.
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores parents' experiences with the Anasazi Foundation, a wilderness behavioral treatment program for adolescents and their parents. Other research has studied the effectiveness of wilderness treatment, but very little has been conducted formally with the parents of those adolescents. I sought to find out what has been the nature of these parents' relationships with and parenting of their adolescent after having experienced the Anasazi program. Second, I wanted to know what specifically made the difference, and what made the changes they experienced possible. Third, I inquired about the role of predominant cultural expectations and discourses in their parenting before and after Anasazi. The sample consisted of seven married couples and one single mother. I conducted two semi-structured qualitative interviews with the single parent and with each couple. The methodology constitutes a unique confluence of phenomenological, ethnographic, and action research ideas. The methodology, criteria of quality, and interpretive analyses are informed by the philosophy of C. Terry Warner and the Arbinger Institute, utilizing the postmodern ethos as an approach to ethics, and a social constructionist approach to parenting. The criteria for quality center in validity as an ethical relationship. The parents' responses coalesced into six emergent themes, 1) the relationship influence of the Arbinger ideas as salient, 2) specific relationship changes influenced by the Anasazi program, 3) Anasazi was a spiritual experience, 4) adopted a more critical approach to parenting, 5) disappointments and suggested improvements, and 6) interviews were "responsive" experiences. I offer implications for the Anasazi foundation, for wilderness therapy programs and other therapeutic intervention with parents of adolescents, and for research on the parenting of adolescents. An theoretical interpretive analysis of a pattern parents followed in incorporating the Arbinger ideas into their parenting is given by critically examining "self-justifying images"—their specific relation to the cultural and historical contexts in which parenting takes place, and the necessity of actively dismantling them from a two-pronged Arbinger and social constructionist informed approach. A separate creative interpretive analysis is also given by including a narrative fictionalized story presentation of the findings constructed from the transcripts and from the research experience.
INTRODUCTION: NEED FOR THE STUDY

The parenting of adolescents in Western culture is often characterized as a distressing undertaking, fraught with difficulties and trials. In our culture it is common to colloquially talk about the parenting of adolescents in fatalistic ways—that parents and adolescents are doomed to struggle. In contrast current research shows that although adolescence is a time where stress and difficulties are more likely in families, most parents and adolescents are able to negotiate the transition well (Arnett, 1999; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Eccles et al., 1993; Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Though there may be difficulties, sometimes even extreme, many parents find joy, or at least moments of joy, in the parenting of their adolescents and in the relationships they cultivate with them. With regard to contemporary parenting in general, Terry Arendell notes:

Parenting can be an enormously satisfying, rewarding, enriching, and growth-promoting activity. It also can be frustrating, stress producing, isolating, and lonely. For many (and perhaps most) parents, parenting varies, being enormously satisfying and seemingly easy at times as well as confounding, difficult, and burdensome at other times. (1997, p. 22)

It seems that the parenting of adolescents is somewhat of a mystery. In fact, parenting in general remains somewhat of a mystery in our modern day culture. “Despite the fact that most people become parents and everyone who ever lived has had parents, parenting remains a mystifying subject about which almost everyone has opinions, but about which few people agree” (Bornstein, 1995, p. xxii). To formally research aspects of the parenting of adolescents is a very important program of study as it has the potential to benefit countless lives. This seems especially the case for those families where a teenager(s) is seriously struggling, whether it be with drugs, sexuality, school, the law, friends, and/or where teenagers and parents are caught in relationships of negative feelings and conflicts.

Our culture has become all too familiar with the phrase “troubled teen.” Through the years, numerous interventions of about every kind have been proffered to help these

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1 The phrase “parenting adolescents” in some academic literature refers to adolescents who are parents of their own biological children. To distinguish my topic from this I have elected to use the phrase “the parenting of adolescents.”
struggling youth and sometimes their families as well. Adolescence is a time of dramatic change in a person's emotional, physical, cognitive, and social competencies and concerns (Steinberg & Silk, 2002). At this time of life, it is relatively common for adolescents to have conflict with parents, experience mood disruptions, engage in more risk taking behavior, have school difficulties, and have concerns over self-image (Arnett, 1999; Eccles, Midgely, Wigfield, Buchanan, Reuman, & MacIver, 1993; Steinberg & Levine, 1997; Offer & Schonert-Reichl, 1992; Peterson et al., 1993; Steinberg & Silk, 2002).

I have had the chance to work for the Anasazi Foundation, a wilderness therapy treatment program for youth having struggles that also involves their parents. I have seen Anasazi have some remarkable success intervening in the lives of youth and their parents and I wanted to know more about the parents' experience with Anasazi. Although in this research I focused on unique and specialized experiences of certain parents who have had a son or daughter at Anasazi, I do hope that this research may offer some ideas, thoughts, and understandings that may be far-reaching in their usefulness to parents at large.

Parents tend to have a lot to say about parenting in our society, but many parents find it difficult to find a format or even a voice from which to speak about their thoughts, feelings, and experiences as parents (see Coll, Surrey, & Weingarten, 1998; Hawkins, & Dollahite, 1997), particularly parents who have adolescents who are seriously struggling, as that often brings stigmatization and a further lessening of these parents' voices. This research was positioned to offer a format or place for the parents of adolescents to speak about their parenting experience and relationships with their adolescents, and more specifically to reflect on that following the Anasazi Foundation intervention. Most of these parents' experiences were quite dramatic and life changing and I believe their experiences have a general application to any parents of adolescents. Although I am not a parent, I am infinitely fascinated with parenting and have been ever since I became conscious of my mother's and father's parenting of me. I wanted to learn more about parents' relationships with their adolescent children, and I am particularly interested in the possibilities and experiences of change in those parent-adolescent relationships. These questions have been studied through this formal qualitative research.
Literature Review

Parenting of Adolescents Literature

The writings I am drawing on for this research are part of a much larger discourse concerning both parenting and adolescents in general. The mainstream literature often focuses on concepts of normative parenting, parenting roles, differing parenting styles, and a developmental, cognitive-psycho-social approach to understanding both adolescents and the parenting of them. I will first discuss prominent parenting theories that apply to the parenting of adolescents which will also be utilized in the analysis, including parenting determinants and parenting style. Then I will discuss research on "storm and stress" in adolescence.

Jay Belsky (1984) attempted to address what he saw as "a long-neglected topic of socialization, the determinants of individual differences in parental functioning" (p. 83). Using research on the etiology of child maltreatment he found three determinants, 1) the personality and psychological resources of the parent, 2) the characteristics of the child, and 3) contextual sources of stress and support including the marital relationship, social networks, and employment. Belsky suggested that "parenting is multiply determined... sources of contextual stress support can directly affect parenting or indirectly affect parenting" (p. 83). Belsky's model has been extensively utilized by contemporary parenting researchers (Arendell, 1997; Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Belsky (1984) suggested, "... across childhood, parenting that is sensitively attuned to children's capabilities and to the developmental tasks they face promotes a variety of highly valued developmental outcomes, including emotional security, behavioral independence, social competence, and intellectual achievement" (p. 85).

Richard Abidin (1992) critiqued Belsky's process model and some parenting stress models stating, "theories and models of parenting behavior... need to be developed that go beyond the stimulus-response behavioral perspective and that integrate sociological and

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2 By "mainstream research" I mean positivist and postpositivist research that occupy the mainstream of research on parenting. Steinberg and Silk (2002) and the majority of mainstream parenting researchers do not address social constructionist, critical, postmodern, and poststructural approaches to studying parenting or mothering and fathering. And they tend to not address critical race theory and other important social justice theories as related to parenting. This alternative body of literature will be briefly reviewed in the next section, The Social Construction of Parenting.
cognitive-psychological approaches with behavioral approaches” (p. 408). Abidin proposed a model of parenting determinants building on Belsky’s and other’s that emphasizes parenting role:

The *parenting role* variable (commitment to parental role) in the model represents a set of beliefs and self-expectations . . . . Each parent is seen as having an internal working model of himself or herself as a parent. This model of “self-as-parent” is created out of the individual’s attachment history (Crittenden, 1989) and includes the individual’s goals for himself or herself and his or her internalized expectations of others. (p. 41)

While parenting role addresses the individual psychology of each parent, research on parenting style addresses the style of relationship engendered by each parent with their child. Diana Baumrind and her colleagues are famous for her conceptualization of four main types of parenting style based on parents’ level of responsiveness and demandingness. Parents high in both are called authoritative. Parents low in responsiveness but high in demandingness are called authoritarian. Parents high in responsiveness but low in demandingness are called permissive or indulgent, and parents low in both responsiveness and demandingness are called indifferent. Authoritative parenting is singled out through empirical research as offering the best outcomes for children (Barber, 1994; Gray & Steinberg, 1999; Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Baumrind’s parenting styles are grounded in and best understood within a social learning or ethological perspective (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Nancy Darling and Laurence Steinberg (1993) investigated the operationalization of these styles and note “although the typology originally was defined according to stylistic differences in parents’ orientation toward their socialization duties (i.e. toward control), it actually was operationalized in terms of the management of conflict” (p. 491, note 2). In other words, these four styles define not so much how parents socialize their children in the parent-child relationship, but rather how they behaviorally discipline and manage conflicts in the relationship. Darling and Steinberg (1993) appeal to other research which shows that “the values parents hold and the goals toward which they socialize their children are critical determinants of parenting behavior” (p. 492). They then propose, “the attributes of parenting influenced by these goals are of at least two distinct types: parenting practices and parenting
style.” Parenting practices are “behaviors defined by specific content and socialization goals” (p. 492) and parenting style is “a constellation of attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child and that, taken together, create an emotional climate in which the parent’s behaviors are expressed” (p. 488). It is also noted that parenting style “conveys to the child the parent’s attitude toward the child, rather than toward the child’s behavior” (p. 493). They propose a model of parenting style that accounts for the differences between parenting practices and parenting style:

Parenting practices are the mechanisms through which parents directly help their child attain their socialization goals. . . . In contrast (and in contradistinction to previous authors), the primary processes through which parenting style influences child development are indirect. Parenting style alters the parents’ capacity to socialize their children by changing the effectiveness of their parenting practices. From this perspective, parenting style can best be thought of as a contextual variable that moderates the relationship between specific parenting practices and specific developmental outcomes. (Darling & Steinberg, 1993, p. 493)

Thus parenting style has to do with the parents’ emotional connection with and warmth toward their child, and influences the relative effectiveness of the parenting practices or behaviors.

Although adolescence is often considered a time of individualization and autonomy from parents, Joseph Allen and Deborah Land (1999) conclude “research is increasingly showing that adolescent autonomy is most easily established not at the expense of attachment relationships with parents but against a backdrop of secure relationships that are likely to endure well beyond adolescence” (p. 319, cited in Werner-Wilson 2001, p. 77). Highlighting the significance of a good relationship between parents and adolescents, Blum and Reinhart (2000) summarize their findings from a study of 90,000 American teenagers by stating:

Across all of the health outcomes examined, the results point to the importance of family and the home environment for protecting adolescents from harm. What emerges most consistently as protective is the teenager’s feeling of connectedness with parents and family. Feeling loved and cared for by parents matters in a big way. (p. 31)
Similarly, Steinberg and Silk (2002) summarize what is most significant in the parent-adolescent relationship from a national longitudinal study of adolescent health by stating, “the available evidence indicates that the single most consistent predictor of adolescent mental health and well-being is the quality of the relationship the young people have with their parents.” (p. 120). Unfortunately, some adolescents do not have a warm and positive relationship with their parents and thus are more likely to experience a variety of what a large body of research terms “storm and stress.”

As noted in the introduction, adolescence is often unfairly stereotyped as a necessary time of “storm and stress” for both adolescents and their parents. The phrase “storm and stress” was used originally by G. Stanley Hall (1904), known for his landmark study on adolescence. Whether adolescence is a time of storm and stress or not has been debated among researchers for many years. The overwhelming majority of researchers on adolescent storm and stress are in agreement that most individuals make it through adolescence without extreme storm and stress, but “storm and stress is more likely during adolescence than at other ages” (Arnett, 1999, p. 317; see Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Summing up the storm and stress debate in scholarly literature, Jeffrey Arnett concludes “contemporary scholars disagree not so much with the American public or even with G. Stanley Hall, but mainly with the psychoanalytic theorists of the past, particularly Anna Freud, who can truly be said to have claimed that adolescent storm and stress is universal and inevitable” (p. 324).

There are a number of factors to explain why there is a likelihood of greater storm and stress in adolescence. Predominantly adolescence is a time of dramatic change in a person’s emotional, physical, cognitive, and social competencies and concerns (Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Puberty, cognitive changes, self-definitional changes, social changes, increases in unsupervised time, increased expectations for autonomy in school, and increased exposure to self-selected mass media are all given by Steinberg and Silk (2002) as unique changes in adolescence that can each potentially bring difficulties, trials, adjustments, stress, and

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3 He was also one of the first social researchers to delineate and define a life cycle phase called “adolescence.”
problems. I will discuss other factors that have been explored in recent research to explain why adolescence can for some be a time of greater storm and stress.

Steinberg and Silk (2002) state “intense and frequent conflict is not normative during adolescence; however, bickering or nattering over mundane issues such as chores, curfews, clothing, or rules and regulations appears to be fairly typical in the households of teenagers and their parents” (p. 116). Arnett (1999) takes some issue with this and similar conclusions about conflict in parent-adolescent relationships. He suggests that the “mundane issues” may only appear mundane. Though Arnett acknowledges that “almost without exception, contemporary scholars emphasize that higher rates of conflict with parents in adolescence do not indicate a serious or enduring breach in parent-adolescent relationships” (p. 320), he goes on to explain:

The principle issues of conflict between adolescents and their parents may not be as trivial as they seem on the surface. Conflicts between adolescents and their parents often concern issues such as when adolescents should begin dating and whom they should date, where they should be allowed to go, and how late they should stay out. All of these issues can serve as proxies for arguments over more serious issues such as substance use, automobile driving safety, and sex. (p. 320)

Eccles et al. (1993) advance “the hypothesis that some of the negative psychological changes associated with adolescent development result from a mismatch between the needs of developing adolescents and the opportunities afforded them by their social environments” (p. 90). They conclude by stating “existing research suggests that there is variability in how families adapt to their children’s movement into adolescence and that adolescents fare best in family environments that provide a good fit to their increasing need for autonomy” (p. 99). Steinberg and Silk (2002) point out that many adolescents’ parents are at midlife, and are themselves experiencing a number of potentially stressful or difficult transitions in their adulthood, and that it is parents that find their child’s adolescence much more difficult than do their adolescents.

Throughout the twentieth century to today the structure of the family has been in dramatic change, to the point that it is difficult to even define family (Arendell, 1997; Erickson, 1998; Gubrium & Holstein, 1990; Scanzoni & Marsiglio,1993). Steinberg and Silk
(2002) present diverse research showing that divorce, single-parenting, remarriage, quality of marital relationships, and blended families have been shown to have an impact on parent-adolescent relationships.

Other research questions the taken for granted cultural values of individualism in the West, and that “a substantial amount of storm and stress arises from regulating the pace of adolescents’ growing independence (Steinberg, 1987). Differences of opinion over the proper pace of this process are a source of conflict between adolescents and their parents” (Arnett, 1999, p. 322). Arnett also proposes that if parents assume their child’s adolescence will be a time of greater storm and stress; this may in effect be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Arnett explains that this sets up a quandary for both parents and social institutions:

Although it is true that if adolescence is expected to be a time of “turmoil” there may be adolescents whose problems go unrecognized and untreated, it is also true that if adolescence is expected to be no more difficult than childhood, then adolescents who are experiencing normal difficulties may be seen as pathological and in need of treatment (p. 324).

Researchers have consistently found that a majority of American middle-class people perceive adolescence as a time of relative storm and stress (Arnett, 1999; Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Characterizations in various media of adolescents as troubled, lazy, inarticulate, rebellious, moody, cognitively impaired, angry, violent, criminal, etc. further such stereotypes (Drury & Dennison, 1999; Williams, 2003; Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Scott Scheer and Donald Unger (1995) suggest that “the history and ideologies of previous generations also shapes the way reality and relationships are interpreted” (p. 131). In their research they found that “parents who experienced greater storm and stress as youth had more conflict in their relationships with their children and were less satisfied with their families” (p. 131). This shows that the way parents think and feel about themselves, about their own adolescent history, and about their relationship with their adolescent can have a powerful shaping influence on their relationship with their adolescent and whether their adolescent does experience greater amounts of storm and stress. Steinberg and Silk (2002) summarize the research on storm and stress highlighting the significance of the parent-adolescent relationship:
Although some adolescents and their parents have serious interpersonal problems, the overwhelming majority of adolescents feel close to their parents, respect their parents’ judgments, feel that their parents love and care about them and have a great deal of respect for their parents as individuals (Public Agenda, 1999; Steinberg, 2001). In fact, one-fifth of American teenagers say that their top concern is that they do not have enough time with their parents. (p. 115)

*The Social Construction of Parenting*

Scheer and Unger’s (1995) appeal to cultural discourses of parenting points to another area of focus in the parenting literature which is on the cultural and historical contexts of parenting, emphasizing the socially constructed nature of parenting through a critical theory approach. This literature seems to be more in its infancy as I have found within it nothing that specifically addresses the parenting of adolescents. In an introduction to a chapter on adolescent development Harold Grotevant (1998) states, “adolescence is a social construction. It is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood, but it is long enough and distinctive enough to demand analysis in its own right” (p. 1097).

The gendered nature of parenting is often (but not always) emphasized drawing on feminist and other critical gender research on both mothering and fathering. In addition, a general critical approach, a postmodern approach, or a specific cultural discourse or poststructural understanding of parenting are variously utilized in this research (i.e. Arendell, 1997; Carlson, 2000; Coll, Surrey, & Weingarten, 1998; Dienhart, 1998; Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997; Hochschild, 1997; LaRossa, 1995; Lupton & Barclay, 1997; Marsiglio & Cohan, 2000; Silverstein, 1996; Silverstein & Auerbach, 1999; Weingarten, 1995).

As a part of an introduction to their chapter “Culture and Parenting” Sara Harkness and Stephen Super (2002) state:

Parenting is culturally constructed. . . . Parents in different cultures receive many different kinds of guidance about how to rear children properly, whether in the form of books of advice or simply in training by example. . . . As cultural worlds collide, merge, and struggle to maintain a sense of their own identity, it is becoming ever more difficult to uphold a sense of certainty about the "right" ways to bring up children. (p. 253)
Positivist science explanations of parenting tend to conceptualize it as a static process that can be taken apart and examined according to discreet aspects and life stages. Conceptualizing parenting as a culturally constructed phenomenon offers many possibilities for understanding it as a dynamic moment-by-moment process with contextually bound particularities and wide individual differences.

Cross-cultural approaches to parenting highlight that parenting involves, in Townsend’s (2000) words, “a lifetime of changing relationships.” Parent-adolescent relationships and families are in constant motion, moment-by-moment being mutually constructed and shaped by the active, agentive persons involved. “Families are active participants in the construction of their own cultural settings rather than simply replicators of their wider culture around them” (Harkness & Super, 2002, p. 272). Viewing family members as agentive beings allows for constructs, typologies, and expectations of parenting to be radically reconsidered as not determined, but rather dynamic and with the possibility that any family, any relationship, any parent or adolescent has the power to do other than what the most robust research may predict. Conversely, an eye to cultural discourses of parenting can offer researchers a lens to understand the constraints and expectations parents and adolescents find themselves negotiating within our complex modern culture. Thus, a critical cultural lens is two sided, allowing us to see both constraints and possibilities. Seeing both parents and adolescents as active and agentive can allow us to see how they collectively create and shape the culture. “Rather than consider cultural ‘effects’ on parenting, thus we could more realistically turn our attention to how culture is created across the lifespans of individuals in families and communities” (Harkness & Super, p. 276).

Culture in this sense is largely a discussion of meaning. Our culture offers a plethora of discourses that can delimit, prescribe, proscribe, invite, and provoke certain ways of making meaning of our lived experience, and what we collectively decide is right or good. Therefore what is considered bad or good for parenting (whether by researchers, scientists, therapists, parents, adolescents, governments, institutions, or anyone), must be tempered by the fact that to some extent the labeling of the practice or idea as “good” or “bad” is a cultural achievement. I see this as an important touchstone by which to interpret any research or propositions on the parenting of adolescents. Harkness and Super (2002) explain:
The bottom line is that the psychological "meaning" attributed to any given social behavior is, in large part, a function of the ecological niche within which it is produced. If a given behavior is viewed as acceptable, then parents (and significant others) will attempt to encourage its development; if the behavior is perceived as maladaptive or abnormal, then parents (and significant others) will attempt to discourage its growth and development. . . . All in all, then, it would appear most sensible for the international community of child development researchers not to generalize to other cultures their own culture-specific theories of normal and abnormal development. (p. 275)

Terry Arendell (1997) describes in detail a social constructionist approach to studying parenting which is quite similar to what has been discussed thus far.

The social constructionist perspective sees assessments of and judgments about parenting behaviors and styles as being entwined with the theories dominant at the time that are also cultural products—contextual and emergent. Knowledge, such as about child development and parenting strategies, both reflects and reinforces ideologies. These, too, are always in flux. In brief, parenting and parenthood are inseparable from the cultural understandings of and beliefs about childhood as well as the structural realities within which they are situated. Parenting, then, is constantly changing and being reformed and reformulated. All social phenomena, in sum, are dynamic, mutable, and emergent. (p. 5)

From a social constructionist approach to studying parenting we are able to see that because of competing, conflicting, and complex cultural discourses about the parenting of adolescents, "the activities constituting parenting and its objectives are not necessarily congruent" (Arendell, 1997, p. 6). This is exemplified by the debate in the literature about storm and stress, or the fact that parents are encouraged to both encourage and limit adolescent autonomy, to be in control as parents and also allow their adolescent freedom. A "both-and" perspective from a social constructionist lens can help to alleviate the quandaries brought about by the binary "either/or." Patricia Hill Collins (1998) defines binary thinking as "an either/or way of thinking about concepts or realities that divides them into two mutually exclusive categories, for example, white/black, man/woman, reason/emotion, and
heterosexual/homosexual" (p. 275). Perhaps some other binary thinking concepts in the parenting of adolescent literature would be "child/adolescent," "adolescent/adult," "parent/adolescent," "autonomy/control," "harmony/conflict," etc. Perhaps a both-and perspective can shed light on the limitations and constraints of these and other binaries.

Arendell (1997) gives some of the primary cultural ideologies of parenting in the industrialized West. She notes the "separate spheres doctrine" that conceptualized the family as a "private sphere with objectives, values, and norms distinct from the public sphere" (p. 11). She notes that this doctrine has been "soundly critiqued, particularly by feminist and critical theorist scholars who highlight the irrevocable interrelationships between family and other social institutions" (p. 11), but also notes that this view still persists in the public at large and among some researchers. She lists other enduring cultural ideologies as "the assumptions of a universal nuclear family, the consequence of the biological imperative; family harmony; parental determinism with socialization being one-way, parent to child; and the view that the family of the past was stable and harmonious" (p. 11). The contradictions and tensions of these cultural ideologies can leave people a bit bewildered or even cynical. These tensions have an impact on how both parents and adolescents experience parenting and family life.

The tenacity of the traditional ideologies contributes to the national debates about the state of the family and to the numerous cultural contradictions that surround and shape families. . . . Tensions persist between the values of separation and commitment, competition and cooperation, autonomy and intimacy, utilitarian individualism and love, and obligation and freedom. (Arendell, 1997, p. 11)

A social constructionist lens informed by Marxism or poststructuralism can allow one to see the institutionalization of dominant discourses and practices along with the real material and relational effects of these institutionalized discourses in society. As parenting is a central part of Western society, there are certain institutionalized systems of stratification directly impacting families and parenting including stratification by race, ethnicity, gender and economics (Arendell, 1997). "Race and ethnicity, together with class and gender, constitute interacting hierarchies of resources and rewards that condition the material realities, parenting activities, and subjective experiences of family life" (Arendell, 1997, p. 15).
A number of researchers informed by a critical and/or feminist approach investigate both the practices and institutions of mothering and fathering. For example Judith Loveridge (1990) used the lived experiences of particular individuals and Foucauldian discourse analysis to research “how women and men become constituted as ‘mothers’ and ‘fathers’ through the regulative practices of daily life” (p. 17). Mothering has been a focus of feminist social science literature for some time. Many varied approaches to mothering have been offered by scholars informed by feminism and other critical approaches (Coll, Surrey, & Weingarten, 1998; Hochschild, 1997; Hochschild & Machung, 1989; Marshall, 1991; Radford & Hester, 2001; Sax, 1997; Weingarten, 1995; Woolett & Phoenix, 1997).

“Parenting, as has long been the situation, is done disproportionately by mothers in American society, and both—parenting and mothers—are devalued” (Arendell, 1997, p. 19). Hochschild’s (1997) work on the “second shift” for working mothers illuminates the fact that married women who work full-time tend to do nearly all of the domestic housework and child rearing. In 1993, Galinsky, Bond, and Friedman noted that there have been some changes for men occurring, but for the most part married men as a whole have not increased their contribution to domestic work at home and to child rearing. Arendell concludes “given women’s primary roles in parenting and the slow pace of gender role change, the future increase in parenting burdens will fall disproportionately on mothers” (p. 22). Nancy Chodorow (1978) may have been wise in recommending “shared parenting” as potentially liberating for women and men and their children (cited in Bjerrum-Nielsen, & Rudberg, 2002).

Fathering research from a variety of critical approaches has been increasing significantly over the past decade (e.g., Dienhart, 1998; Gerson, 1997; Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997; Katz-Rothman, 1992; LaRossa, 1995; Lupton & Barclay, 1997; Silverstein, 1996; Silverstein & Auerbach, 1999). Concerning the conservative based fathering movement in the U.S. Ralph LaRossa is leery of its actual positive effects on women and children, and states that there is a critical difference between “the culture of fatherhood (specifically the shared norms, values, and beliefs surrounding men’s parenting), and the conduct of fatherhood (what fathers do, their paternal behaviors)” (LaRossa, 1995 p. 448). He summarizes:
Only when men are forced to seriously examine their commitment to fatherhood (vs. their commitment to their jobs and avocations) can we hope to bring about the kinds of changes that will be required to alter the division of child care in this country. (p. 457)

**Wilderness Therapy**

Wilderness therapy programs have proliferated throughout the United over the past 30 years, and especially in the past 15 years. Some initial research indicates that Wilderness and Outdoor treatment programs have more success with adolescents than both residential and outpatient treatment approaches (Williams, 2000). Yet there has been a paucity of research comparing wilderness therapy with other modalities of treatment (Davis-Berman & Berman, 1989, 1991; Edgmon, 2002; Rough, 2002). This is partly due to the fact that there is no consensus on what defines “wilderness therapy” (Bacon & Kimball, 1989; Rough, 2002; Russell, 2001). There are many therapeutic modalities that incorporate some type of outdoor or wilderness component, but these modalities may have little in common beyond that.

Some programs offer what is most often termed in the literature as “adventure based therapy” (Burg, 2000; Gass, 1993; Glass & Myers, 2001; Mason, 1987:). Adventure based therapies most often consist of one or a number of various types of experiential challenges, games, projects or activities that are done in an outdoor or wilderness setting. These usually involve groups rather than individuals.

Wilderness therapy programs (Bacon & Kimball, 1989; Bandoroff, 1989; Berman & Anton, 1988; Berman & Davis-Berman, 1989, 1991; Edgmon, 2002; Kimball, 1983; Rough, 2002; Russell & Phillips-Miller, 2002; Winterdyk, & Griffiths, 1984) may use these experiential adventure based activities, or they may use simply a camping and/or hiking experience, or commonly a combination of both. Adventure based therapies tend to be activities accomplished in a few hours, a day, or a few days, and are often a component of a larger treatment program. Wilderness therapies tend to be of a longer duration where living in the wilderness setting is the center of the treatment program, and there is often an admission to the program which is for a required length of stay – basically a residential treatment program in a wilderness setting. Keith Russell and Dianne Phillips-Miller (2002) state that:
Wilderness therapy typically involves immersion in wilderness or comparable lands, group living with peers, individual and group therapy sessions, and educational and therapeutic curricula, including backcountry travel and wilderness living skills, all designed to reveal and address problem behaviors, foster personal and social responsibility, and enhance the emotional growth of clients. (p. 415)

In some instances “wilderness therapy” and “adventure based therapy” are used interchangeably in the literature. In terms of these definitions, Anasazi is a wilderness therapy program. Anasazi does not use any of the adventure based activities, instead opting for a simple hiking and camping in the wilderness in a semi-primitive living structure.

It is also difficult to trace where psychotherapeutic ideas involving wilderness got their start. It seems that Fritz Riedl, known for his advocacy of residential treatment programs, suggested the therapeutic advantages of camping as an alternative component to standard residential treatment programs (Riedl, 1966; Becker 2001). Adventure based therapies have a legacy in the Outward Bound program (for examples of psychotherapeutic research on Outward Bound see Hattie, Marsh, Niell, & Richards, 1997; Howard, 1984; Marsh, Richards, & Barnes, 1984, 1986). In my discussions with Larry Olsen, Ezekiel Sanchez, and Lance Wells at Anasazi, I have learned that most wilderness therapy programs currently operating in the United States and abroad have some type of root or affiliation with the outdoor survival classes developed by Larry Olsen and Ezekiel Sanchez and offered at Brigham Young University in the late 1960s through the 1970s. Many of the founders or directors of current wilderness programs for youth have some type of affiliation with those original outdoor survival classes at BYU. Thus, many wilderness therapy programs in the United States and abroad have a common ancestry in the Anasazi Foundation ideas that were originally created by Olsen and Sanchez.

Many wilderness therapy programs employ a romantic approach to wilderness and nature, and incorporate some type of “rite of passage” metaphor (Van Gennep, 1960; Turner, 1969). Wilderness therapy programs have a common ideal of offering the chance to separate from the stresses and constraints of modern life and live in a more simple and much more primitive wilderness setting. This is often the central therapeutic aspect of wilderness therapy programs, a simple walking through, learning from, living with, and communing with nature
Wilderness therapy has been utilized for many different populations. It is most often utilized in intervention for adolescents. It has also been utilized for women and children who have suffered sexual assault and incest (Levine, 1994), for children and adults who have been given psychiatric diagnoses (Berman & Anton, 1988; Pawlowski, Holme, Hafner, 1993), and as a component of family therapy (Bandoroff & Scherer, 1994; Mason, 1987).

There have only been a handful of outcome studies published on wilderness therapy (Berman & Anton, 1988; Byers, 1979; Davis-Berman & Berman, 1986; Edgmon, 2002; Hanna, 1996; Pawlowski et al., 1993; Russell, 2001, 2002; Russell & Phillips-Miller, 2002; Rough, 2002). Each of these outcome studies show positive effects of wilderness therapy on a variety of presenting problems. Keith Russell and Dianne Phillips-Miller (2002) studied four established wilderness therapy programs for adolescents (one of them being the Anasazi Foundation) to investigate how these programs effect change in problems and behaviors. They utilized a variety of qualitative research methods with adolescents who had completed the programs. They found that “physical exercise and hiking, primitive wilderness living, peer feedback facilitated by group counseling sessions, and the therapeutic relationship established with wilderness guides and therapists were the key change agents for the adolescents” (Russell & Phillips-Miller, 2002, p. 415).

With regard to effectiveness of the Anasazi program, the following information about outcome studies comes from the Anasazi web page (http://www.anasazi.org/osite/index.html):

In November 2001, the University of Idaho (Keith Russell, Ph.D.) published a study of client outcomes in eight participating Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare programs (OBO) including the Anasazi Foundation [Russell, 2001, 2002]. Treatment outcomes were evaluated through client reports and parent assessments of adolescent’s well-being at admission and discharge utilizing the Youth Outcome Questionnaire (Y-OQ). Results of the study indicated that participation in OBH programs led to statistically significant reduction in the severity of behavioral and emotional symptoms. When comparing the results of this study to other outcome studies using
Y-OQ, Anasazi showed greater score reductions in shorter treatment durations than alternative interventions.

Current and ongoing outcome studies are conducted by Mark A. Widmer, Ph.D., at Brigham Young University using data collected from admission social histories and surveys taken at six weeks, one year, and three years after discharge. In data collected July 1, 1996 through June 31, 2000, 83% of parents reported they are satisfied or extremely satisfied with their experience at Anasazi. Less than 5% reported placing their child in inpatient care after Anasazi.

It should be noted that these data may now be dated and may not necessarily reflect current outcome reports of parent alumni from Anasazi. In addition, the Aftercare program at Anasazi has been keeping informal statistics over the past two years concerning the relative well-being of the youth after completing the program. A rough average is that approximately one-third of the youth who have completed Anasazi have moderate to severe recurrence of problems during the first year following discharge, but rarely serious enough for additional in-patient or residential placement (less than 5%). It should be noted that recurrence of problem behavior is not the best measure of effectiveness of the program. Many parents, and their youth, remain very pleased with the Anasazi experience despite recurrence of problem behaviors, whether on the part of the adolescent, the parents, or both. Anasazi seems to offer them a rich and meaningful experience that they can return back to. Anasazi is in need of additional research concerning its effectiveness. This qualitative study was positioned to research parents’ experiences with Anasazi’s effectiveness.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research has been in a state of striking developmental change for a number of years in which there have been significant theoretical and paradigmatic movements and eras. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2000a) discuss what they see as seven distinct “moments” of qualitative inquiry in North America in the 20th century. Lincoln and Denzin (2000) note that defining the periods or moments of qualitative research is difficult, because such moments are not clear.

The history of qualitative research is defined more by breaks and ruptures than by a clear, evolutionary, progressive movement from one stage to the next. These breaks
and ruptures move in cycles and phases, so that what is passé today may be in vogue a decade from now, and vice versa” (p. 1047).

Within qualitative research there is a multiplicity of differing philosophical and theoretical paradigms, often sharply debated. Qualitative research “has no theory or paradigm that is distinctly its own” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000b, p. 6). In this research I have drawn on various philosophical and theoretical positions in order to explicate the unique methodological paradigm I have used for this research. Because every qualitative researcher is a unique person, and because their personhood leaves its stamp on their methodology and methods of inquiry, each qualitative inquiry is a unique and personal production.

Qualitative researchers are united in their general opposition to what has been called the “foundationalist-empiricist-representationalist nexus of beliefs” (Schwandt, 2000). Current qualitative research is located within the range of postpositivist to postmodern and beyond philosophical paradigms that focus on interpretivism rather than foundationalist positivist science (Christians, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a; Schwandt, 2000). Highlighting this, Lincoln and Denzin (2000) outline four stances of current qualitative research of which they (speaking on behalf of the field) “continue to be certain.”

1. The qualitative researcher is not an objective, authoritative, politically neutral observer standing outside and above the text.


3. Meaning is “radically plural, always open, and . . . there is politics in every account” (Bruner, 1993, p. 1).

4. Qualitative inquiry is properly conceptualized as a civic, participatory, collaborative project. This joins the researcher and the researched in an ongoing moral dialogue. (p. 1049)

I have adopted these statements as the guiding stances for this study.

Lincoln and Denzin (2000) outline five themes or issues that they feel will remain central in charting the future of qualitative research. These are 1) text and voice; 2) the existential, sacred performance text; 3) the return to narrative as a political act; 4) text, reflexivity, and being vulnerable in the text; and 5) inquiry as a moral act, ethics, and critical
moral consciousness (p. 1048). There is notably an emphasis on the ethics and politics of qualitative research. Subsequently, there is a central emphasis on ethics in this research study. Lincoln and Denzin’s (2000) call to the qualitative research community regarding the ethics of our practice is sobering, “The moral imperatives of such work cannot be ignored. There have been several generations of social science that not only has not solved serious human problems, but many times has only worsened the plight of the persons studied.” They continue with this charge to qualitative researchers, “We face a choice, in the seventh moment, of declaring ourselves committed to detachment or in solidarity with the human community. We come to know, and we come to exist meaningfully, only in community.” (p. 1062). I accepted this charge in this research and have sought to make this not just a scholarly research study, but an experience for the parents and myself to bring forward something meaningful and worth continuing to pursue. Throughout this research I have sought to take into account these contentions and confluences of the histories of qualitative research as a guiding ethic to inform this project.

The Anasazi Foundation

From February 2001 to March 2003, I had the opportunity to work full-time as a family therapist for the Anasazi Foundation in Mesa Arizona. Anasazi is a unique youth behavioral treatment program which utilizes an outdoor wilderness primitive living experience. Appendix A contains a detailed explanation regarding what the youth and their parents do in the program. The structures of the program make it as non-coercive as possible. The program also significantly limits the use of contrived activities such as Gestalt therapy ideas, ropes courses, trust exercises, military “boot camp” practices, and the like. The contrivance of the program lies in the fact that it takes place in the wilderness, and focuses primarily on hiking and camping in a semi-primitive life-style. In addition Anasazi does not use Behavior Modification or any Cognitive-Behavioral theories or practices.

The program is a minimum six weeks for the youth (ages 12-17) where they have a unique primitive outdoor wilderness experience. Their hiking is rigorous off-trail hiking. They also participate in a semi-structured psychological, academic, and spiritual based program which involves individual and group therapy, reading, writing, book work, writing to their parents, journal writing, personal reflection (a lot of time to just think), and group
discussions. The program is centered in providing a gentle, caring, and loving environment, yet also a physically and emotionally demanding experience. Anasazi is a non-profit organization and is licensed by the Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Behavioral Health and the Department of Economic Security, Administration for Children Youth and Families. The program is accredited nationally by the Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children (COA).

Parents of the youth are required to be intimately involved in the program through attending a tow and one-half day parenting seminar, weekly family therapy sessions, workbooks and readings, letter writing, and then spending the last three days of their adolescent’s experience with them in the wilderness area. Anasazi focuses around helping children and their parents have a change of heart, particularly toward one another. Anasazi utilizes the philosophy of C. Terry Warner and the Arbinger Institute. This research study has also centered partly in these philosophical ideas. The Anasazi program has a spiritual emphasis and has developed its own unique approach to Native American ritual, lore, spirituality, and teachings (influenced by Navajo, Anasazi, Nez Percé, and Hohokam cultures—although a unique creation of the founders) which is intermixed with Judeo-Christian teachings and principles. The co-founders of the program, Ezekiel Sanchez and Larry Olsen, began doing wilderness excursions with college age young adults in the late 1960s through offering classes in the recreation department at Brigham Young University. The unexpected therapeutic benefits of their excursions became known, and they thereafter began receiving referrals from juvenile courts to offer treatment for juvenile offenders. Later on in 1988 Olsen and Sanchez founded the Anasazi program in Mesa, Arizona, specifically to offer an intervention program for struggling teenage youth.

Currently the youth participants come from all over the United States and Canada, with heavy representation from Arizona and Utah. The program is structured to serve most any family, from any religious or spiritual tradition. There is a clear spiritual focus and it is rare for families who have no interest in religion or spirituality to enroll. Anasazi’s clientele are youth and families who have most often been experiencing severe struggles including substance and alcohol abuse, failed residential treatment and other failed treatment program placements, major parent-adolescent and family conflicts, oppositional and defiant behavior,
severe anger, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation and attempts, sexual experimentation and sexual addictions, school problems, gang involvement, criminal activities, attention-deficit disorders, and eating disorders.

As an employee my title was a “Shadow” which is the term used at Anasazi for an M.S. or higher level counselor/therapist. The term relates to some Native American imagery and lore, and has been purposely chosen to distance what is done by Shadows at Anasazi from traditional or mainstream counseling and therapy. As a Shadow I met face-to-face each week with each Young Walker (Anasazi term for youth clients) that I “shadowed.” I would spend two days a week in the wilderness area with them, and would camp and cook with one of the groups of Young Walkers each week. I was also a part of group sessions with Young Walkers weekly. In addition, I conducted weekly family therapy sessions with the parents (by phone or in person).

Anasazi’s byline is “the making of a walking.” This relates to the vision of the co-founders concerning the primary metaphor for the experience: “walking forward” versus “walking backward.” The following quotation, from the Anasazi web page (www.anasazi.org), speaks to the meaning of this metaphor:

In the Native American tradition, life is a “walking.” One’s walking is determined by how his [sic] heart is with all that is around him -- his relationship with God, family, and Mother Earth. Anasazi gives young people an opportunity, through a primitive living experience, to effect a change of heart -- one’s whole way of walking in the world.

Anasazi ([pronounced] na.ха.са.зи) noun. A Navajo word commonly interpreted as the “ancient ones” or “wise teachers.” According to legends, these wise teachers taught that a man’s [sic] walking is individual - forward for right choices and backward for wrong choices - and a forward walking can only be achieved with the help of the “Great Spirit.”

Today, in the desert and high mountains of Arizona, carefully selected men and women give “Young Walkers” an opportunity to overcome depression, suicide ideation, drug and alcohol abuse, school failure and anger while living and learning as the “ancient ones.”
During the proposal of this research, I explained the research idea to the CEO of Anasazi, Mike Merchant, and to the vice president of operations, Lance Wells. I explained to both of them that some of the results could reflect negatively on Anasazi, particularly for the parents interviewed that are continuing to experience problems with their adolescent. Both were excited about the research, and supportive of allowing the research to tell all aspects of the parents' experiences. In May 2002 I spoke with the now former director of operations at Anasazi, Jacob Pope, about the same issue. He emphatically stated "good, because we are interested in the truth, not propaganda. Whatever you find in this research will be a benefit to Anasazi." Appendix B contains a formal agreement between me and Anasazi indicating that the data will remain the property of Iowa State University.

The Focus and Purposes for this Research

While I worked at Anasazi, I saw that the parents most often experienced a genuine turning point in their relationship with their adolescent. In addition, Anasazi often has a profound effect on the youth. Anasazi involves a rigorous philosophical, theoretical, and practical treatment plan for the youth and parents which emphasizes personal agency. The treatment program and overall philosophy of Anasazi is called "the Anasazi Way." The Anasazi Foundation has yet to have an in-depth qualitative study conducted with the parent participants.

Most current interpretive research ideas require a foundation of personal and ethical reflexivity on the part of the researcher (Bloom, 1998; Christians, 2000; 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a; Lincoln, 1995; Richardson, 1997; 2000). Anasazi utilizes the philosophy and teachings of C. Terry Warner and The Arbinger Institute. This tradition of philosophy (from Warner) and the practical applications of it (through Arbinger) focus on the study of "way of being," or in other words the personal moral and/or ethical way we regard one another in human relations. The Anasazi Way invites parents and youth to personally and critically reflect on the moral quality of their relationships with one another and with all people in their lives. This research has required me to critically reflect on my role and influence as a researcher and on the relationships I have engendered with the parent participants. Since these parents' Anasazi experiences were heavily influenced by the concept of "way of
being,” I believe this then clearly implicates my way of being with these parents as a researcher. I will explain more about this in the methodology and methods.

This research focused on examining two sets of questions. The first set are questions that could only be answered by the parent participants and the second set are questions that were for me the researcher to answer following the responses of the parents. The following is the primary question asked of the parents, what is the nature of these parents’ relationship with and parenting of their adolescent after having experienced the Anasazi program. And within that overarching question, specifically I have investigated these questions: What is different, if anything, in their relationship with their adolescent? What, if anything, is specifically different in their parenting of their adolescent in their day to day lives? And lastly what made the difference or made this possible for them?

I also wanted to investigate the influence of societal and cultural expectations and discourses on their parenting both before and after Anasazi. To find out what is their opinion of and approach to those expectations and cultural discourses about parenting now, and how this was influenced by their Anasazi experience. It is important to note that some of these parents have had continued difficulties; most of the adolescents have continued to have problems to differing degrees, and the parents and adolescents have continued to have problems in their relationship together to differing degrees. I allowed them the space to talk openly about all of this.

The questions that I investigated were first, what are the possible implications of the parents’ responses for: 1) the Anasazi Foundation, 2) the parenting of adolescents, and 3) wilderness therapy and other therapeutic intervention with parents of adolescents? And second, what influence did my way of being and the parents’ way of being during the interviews have on the inquiry process and the validity or trustworthiness of the research? I wanted to ensure that the research not only researched the parents’ experiences but also was critical about my relationship with them. Centering this study in ethics requires that I be clear about my own personal influence and role as the researcher.
RESEARCHER AS INSTRUMENT

Qualitative research requires that as a researcher I situate my beliefs and my theoretical orientations, so that I can be transparent and clear about the place I stand in and from which I make sense and meaning of this research. “The gendered, multiculturally situated researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that he or she then examines in specific ways (methodology, analysis)” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 18). I will explore the way I am situated in the culture of my life—my beliefs and preferences both personally and theoretically. I will then in subsequent sections take up the situating of my preferred theories and paradigms that will serve to cover my approaches to ontology, epistemology, methodology, and analysis.

Situating Myself

“Ethnographers can find social and cultural understanding only if they are aware of the sources of the ideas that motivate them and are willing to confront them—with all that such a confronting entails.” (Vidich and Lyman, 2000, p. 62). One thing that I have confronted is the fact that in this research at every turn my way of being as the researcher has been called into question. Lincoln (1995) identified “critical subjectivity” (also given as “transformative subjectivity” or “critical reflexivity”) as a then emerging criteria for quality in qualitative research. Such critical subjectivity is defined as being “absolutely required to understand one’s psychological and emotional states before, during, and after the research experience” (p. 283). I will show that critical reflexivity about the researcher’s own “way of being” is also foundational to the qualitative research endeavor. “Way of being” is central to the relationships formed, developed, and fostered between myself and those researched. This requires me to situate myself clearly, both personally (my own beliefs and culture) and theoretically (my preferred theoretical paradigms).

Personal Interest in Parenting, Spirituality, Morality and Ethics

My personal interest in parenting has taken many forms through the years and has most recently been augmented by my experiences as a Shadow for Anasazi, and by developing and conducting this research. In addition, I have a strong personal belief in the power of parenting to effect good in the world. I believe that children who are born into this
world deserve, have an inherent unalienable right, to kind and loving parenting from their mother and father. I also acknowledge that this is not always the case for each child. I personally believe that loving effective parenting may do wonders to stem the tide of some of the social ills of our modern culture. I have a strong desire rooted in my own spirituality, and in my desire for social justice to help, serve, relieve suffering, and promote positive change in the world (at least to some degree) with regard to parenting. This was much of the impetus for my choice of topic for this research, and my passion in accomplishing it.

I deeply value spirituality, and Christianity, specifically Mormonism (a non-mainstream approach to Christianity), is the center of my life. I see that my spirituality acted as an ethic present throughout this research. My own spirituality acted as a personal underlying ethic in the relationships I have formed with the parent participants (Carlson, Erickson, & Seewald-Marquardt, 2002). In addition, spirituality is a lens of intelligibility for the “Anasazi Way.” The Anasazi Foundation is an openly spiritual and Christian program which incorporates in part a spiritual understanding of problems, change, families, and community life. Some of the aspects of both spirituality and Christianity are articulated in a more formal sense in the methodology and discussion.

My personal beliefs are in many ways centered in both my interests in spirituality and in the moral domains of life. Personal morality and personal ethics occupied a central place in the foundations of this research. Dictionary definitions of “moral” and “morality” seem to reflect an individualistic approach to relationships, ethics, identities, and reality. To me, to be moral is about goodness and about virtuousness, but I prefer to define it in terms of the quality or character of our way of being with others in relationships, not simply in terms of individually oriented right or correct behavior according to particular standards. I define morality as deeper and more important than behavior or standards, drawing on the philosophical work of Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas, and C. Terry Warner, which will be explained in more detail in the methodology section. In short morality, and to be moral, is about the heartfelt, ethical, respectful, and humane quality of our relationships with one another, how we regard the humanity of one another and how we ethically treat one another in human relations. I believe peace can be found in recognizing the relational nature of the self, living in such a way that recognizes the equal humanity of others, benefiting and helping
others in moral ways, and turning away from living in ways that promote destruction, violence, hate, disconnection, and self-absorption. I have not come to this definition of morality on my own. Some of it is due to my own spiritual and religious beliefs. Some of it is due to the main philosophical and theoretical influences on my life.

*My Experience Working for the Anasazi Foundation*

My experience working as a Shadow for Anasazi had an impact on me personally in a way that is important for me to situate as a part of this research. I regard my time at Anasazi as a good experience which offered many wonderful opportunities for my life. I am grateful for my work at Anasazi, because it gave me the opportunity to stand as a witness to beautiful and genuine changes of heart in the lives of many of the youth and their parents. This was the impetus for designing and conducting this research. Working at Anasazi encouraged changes of heart in me as well. I have found my personal and spiritual life profoundly benefited by both my relationships with the youth and parents who I worked with as well as by the unique tenets of the “Anasazi Way.” In contrast to this, Anasazi also has had numerous struggles. In fact during the time I worked for Anasazi, the company had some major financial, business, and structural problems which at times negatively impacted the effectiveness of the company. During that time, Anasazi underwent a major structural change in terms of staff, policy, and vision/direction. These changes have taken the company to a sounder place, but the changes are still in process. Some of this upheaval was difficult and trying for me, and sometimes draining and discouraging. In the end though, it was a growing and good experience for me to be a part of all the positives and negatives of this company. My positive and negative experiences working for Anasazi do impact the way I interacted with the parents in these interviews, some of the probing questions I asked, and the direction of our conversations. In all the interviews some of the negative situations at Anasazi were discussed, and in each interview I invited the parents to reflect on how Anasazi could have served them better.

Since I worked at Anasazi as a Shadow I needed to ensure an ethical experience for the parent participants by avoiding conflicts of interest. I conducted interviews with parents for whom I was not the Shadow, (although I had some contact with each of these parents previously through our interactions at the Anasazi office during intake, and I had vague
information that had been previously shared about these parents by other Shadows in clinical staffing meetings). In conducting the interviews I sought to talk openly about any potential situations of a conflict of interest. Having situated myself personally, I now turn to situate the theoretical orientations that have most influenced me.

**My Preferred Theoretical Orientations**

Situating myself academically in terms of my preferred theoretical orientations is for the purpose of being transparent about the lenses of intelligibility I have utilized in this research. I have chosen to draw a distinction around my personal beliefs and my theoretical orientations, when in actuality that distinction is somewhat blurred. My personal beliefs have clearly influenced my chosen theoretical orientations both academically and in my work as a therapist and researcher. And my chosen theoretical orientations have likewise influenced my personal beliefs (see Carlson & Erickson, 1999; Hayes, 1990; Vasco & Dryden, 1994; Vasco, Garcia-Marquez, & Dryden, 1993). Here I will briefly list those theories that are meaningful to me and influence my world-view. In the methodology section, I have taken up a detailed description and discussion of each of the orienting theoretical paradigms and perspectives for this research.

**Theories and Philosophies of Ethics**

My personal interests in morality also embody a philosophical and theoretical interest in ethics. I am particularly interested in moral-ethical approaches to philosophy that center human agency. The work of Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas, and C. Terry Warner are of particular interest. I prefer qualitative research and MFT theories that center the ethics of the relationship between the therapist or researcher and the clients or participants. I am personally convinced that only in the morality of human relations are we able to make sense of human agency (Christians, 2000; Warner, 1990).

**The Postmodern Ethos and Social Constructionist Ideas**

My philosophical interests in morality and ethics are in part a result of my interests in the broad postmodern ethos and social constructionist ideas in the social sciences. The most salient of these ideas for me is the focus on situating the self as inextricably relational, that we are primarily relational beings. The postmodern ethos, and social constructionist ideas and critiques continually come to bear on my chosen theoretical orientations in both MFT
and qualitative research. A general postmodern and social constructionist ethos tends to in part orient my own world-view and is a significant piece of the “lens” by which I make sense of the world, although I do not believe in all of the ideas that are proffered as postmodernism or social constructionist.

**Narrative Therapy Ideas**

Narrative Therapy and Community Work is a particular theoretical approach to MFT (White & Epston, 1990; White, 1993; 1995; 1997; 2000) which is influenced by the poststructuralism of Michel Foucault, the postmodern ethos, cultural anthropology, feminism, narrative theory, critical theory, social justice, and community building. While this research is not centered in the ideas of narrative therapy, these ideas have been a general ethic influencing my relationships with parent participants. It has also been a helpful structure for some of my questioning in the interviews, and in part a theoretical lens I have utilized in the analysis. I have been involved with narrative therapy ideas since 1996. These ideas acted as my first thorough introduction to postmodernism, poststructuralism, cultural anthropology, narrative theory, and issues of social justice (gender, race, class). Since this is my preferred theoretical orientation in my clinical work, it has become very difficult to separate the ways this perspective has influenced both my worldview and my personal values and beliefs. Narrative therapy tends to be more a way of relating and being with people, an ethics of psychotherapeutic practice, and less a structured technique or formalized model of therapy. Over the years I have sought to embody these ideas in my personal life. Thus my somewhat natural way of being in relation to others, professionally or personally, is informed in part by narrative therapy. I believe narrative therapy ideas have potential to inform the processes and purposes of qualitative research to some extent.

**Theories that Promote Social Justice**

Owing partly to my interests in narrative therapy, and partly to my own personal desires to promote goodness and peace, I have been interested in both a formal and a personal politics that embodies a call for social justice. Specifically I have a desire to assist in promoting greater equity among peoples on both macro and micro levels, to be a part of causes that will help reduce violence, abuse, discrimination, prejudice, oppression, tyranny, and socioeconomic inequity. Much of my work as a family therapist and as a qualitative
researcher is spurred on by this desire. Because of these personal beliefs and commitments, I have been interested in some formal academic theories that I feel embody these ends, primarily ideas from gender and culture focused approaches that center relationships and morality.

"Relationalism"

I am particularly interested in literature that embodies what is sometimes called "relationalism" (Gergen & Gergen, 2000; Lincoln, 1995; McNamee & Gergen, 1999). The way I am defining relationalism is centered in morality and the significance of relationships. Rather than an already codified definition of "relationalism," I am piecing together a loose description from a variety of sources. Many "relationalism" ideas come from feminism. While there are many feminisms, the feminist ideas that I find most interesting are those that draw on the postmodern ethos and embody a call for social, relational, and institutional equity and morality, and offer conceptualizations of the self as constructed, multiple, and relational. Examples of this are the work of Leslie Bloom (1998), Patti Lather, (1993), Nel Noddings (1984), Yvonna Lincoln (1995), Laurel Richardson (1997, 2000), and the Stone Center (Jordan, 1997; Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991). These authors demonstrate variously that women's experience is deeply relational, that the self is relational, that we are known and know ourselves within relational contexts, and the morality and ethics such an understanding invites us to in teaching, theorizing, and research. Similar to narrative therapy, the relationalism I am articulating calls for ethics and community building to be central to qualitative research methodologies. For instance, Denzin (1997) and Christians (2000) define a "feminist communitarianism" approach to ethics in qualitative research that articulates much of this relationalism spirit I find most intriguing. Having provided a literature review, situated myself personally and theoretically, I now turn to discuss the particular research strategy of qualitative research I have used.
RESEARCH STRATEGY

This was an emerging methodological design that took shape as I conducted the first and follow-up interviews. This research does not fit nicely into one particular research strategy, but rather it utilizes a few different research strategies in a pragmatic, yet philosophically commensurate way in studying these parents’ experiences. I have conceptualized this research as a unique Phenomenological-Ethnographic-Action Research study that centers ethics and morality in theory, research practices, analysis, and action.

Much debate in qualitative research revolves around whether mixed paradigmatic approaches are viable. Lincoln and Guba (2000) ask:

Are paradigms commensurable? Is it possible to blend elements of one paradigm into another, so that one is engaging in research that represents the best of both worldviews? The answer, from our perspective, has to be a cautious yes. This is especially so if the models (paradigms) share axiomatic elements that are similar, or that resonate strongly between them.” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 174)

This research is a blend of elements from differing paradigms. The orienting focus of these paradigmatic elements is their approach to ethics (axiomatic elements). I have purposely chosen research strategies that center ethics as this is one of the central foci of the research. Even though I am borrowing from research strategies that differ somewhat in focus and technique, I believe they do indeed resonate strongly with each other.

Paradigms in qualitative research are messy in that the very labels of the paradigms can have the effect of creating distinctions that in the end may be mostly nominal rather than philosophical, or they can be distinctions that hide possible confluences. Schwandt admonishes:

Such labeling is dangerous, for it blinds us to enduring issues, shared concerns, and points of tension that cut across the landscape of the movement, issues that each inquirer must come to terms with in developing an identity as a social inquirer. In wrestling with the ways in which these philosophies forestructure our efforts to understand what it means to “do” qualitative inquiry, what we face is not a choice of which label . . . Rather, we are confronted with choices about how each of us wants to live the life of a social inquirer. (Schwandt, 2000, p. 205)
This resonates with my convictions to center this research in ethics, philosophically and more importantly relationally, in the relationships I have engendered with these parents.

Phenomenological

Since I am focusing on a unique experience these parents had through the Anasazi Foundation and its effects on their parenting, this research is loosely a phenomenological study. Classical phenomenological qualitative research centers in the formal philosophy of Phenomenology and Existentialism in order to study how people experience a phenomenon (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). This research instead focuses on a pragmatic approach and more recent developments in the ethical and relational philosophy of C. Terry Warner. In addition, this multi-theoretical approach draws on other philosophical and theoretical literature that centers ethics, morality, and the relational self from social constructionism, the postmodern ethos, MFT, and recent developments in qualitative research in order to study these parents’ experiences.

A phenomenological study focuses on the lived experiences of the persons studied (Creswell, 1998, p. 54; Moustakas, 1994). In developing this study, I explored some of the philosophies and theories of most interest to me, including those utilized in the Anasazi program. I then developed research questions that explored the meaning of these parents’ experiences and invited them to describe their lived experience of Anasazi and its possible effects on their relationship with and parenting of their adolescent. For the data analysis, I have not elected to utilize classical phenomenological techniques, and instead oriented the analysis according to the philosophies, theories, and ethics that underlie it.

Many phenomenological studies are directed toward finding the invariant structure or essence of the respondents’ particular experience (Creswell, 1998, p. 55). This study has focused on these parents’ Anasazi experience and its influence, but has not focused as much on finding the essence or invariant structure of these parents’ experiences, although it has in a broad manner focused on the multiple meaningful aspects or “essences” of their experiences. While many phenomenological studies focus on one phenomena, this research has been somewhat more broad focusing on these parents’ relationship with and parenting of their adolescent following Anasazi, as well as their Anasazi experience in general.
Unlike many phenomenological studies, it was important for my methodology to not require me to completely "bracket" my "preconceptions so as not to inject hypotheses, questions, or personal experiences into the study" (Creswell, 1998, p.33). Since I worked at Anasazi for over two years, I learned a lot about parents' experiences with Anasazi, most directly from the parents I worked with. Thus I had certain preconceptions, informed directly by the parents I worked with, about what these parents might say. Some of these preconceptions informed me directly in designing this study. But I have sought to partially "bracket" these preconceptions enough so as to not limit all that I could learn from the parents I interviewed. In addition, some of the philosophical ideas utilized in this research question the viability and even possibility of completely "bracketing" one's preconceived notions. Instead, I have sought throughout this study to be transparent about these, and incorporate this transparency into the interpretive process. One way I have attempted to partially "bracket" my own preconceptions about their experience has been to specifically honor and respect the parents' voices in the interviews and in the analysis.

**Ethnographic**

An ethnography is "a description and interpretation of a culture or social group system" (Creswell, 1998, p. 58). As such this research has studied and interpreted the culture sharing group of parents who have had a son or daughter at Anasazi. This research is ethnographic in the broad definition of the term, in the sense that most qualitative research is ethnographic, i.e. *ethno* (culture) and *graph* (writing) the writing of a culture or culture sharing group. Barbara Tedlock (2000) offers the following as a definition of ethnography:

Ethnography involves an ongoing attempt to place specific encounters, events, and understandings into a fuller, more meaningful context. It is not simply the production of new information or research data, but rather the way in which such information or data are transformed into a written or visual form. (p. 455)

In this study I have attempted to place the experience of these parents into a more meaningful context by asking them more specifically about their experiences, finding out more about what their experiences has meant to them in their day to day lives, and writing up a report or presentation of their collective as well as individual experiences. This research is not ethnographic in the traditional sense of the researcher going to a culture sharing group
and studying them through immersed observation of behaviors and language, and through prolonged association and fieldwork. The fieldwork for this study was two open-ended interviews and follow up correspondence through member checks. Like an ethnography, I did attempt to locate key informants, parents who would be interested in speaking about their Anasazi experience and about their parenting and relationship with their adolescent. I sought out parents who had various experiences with the program, and that would be open to talking about it.

Reciprocity, an important practice in ethnography (Creswell, 1998; Tedlock, 2000), has been important to this study as I have sought to provide the parents with an overall worthwhile experience, which they have all agreed it has been. In addition, I have invited them to be a part of the process through member checks and also making or writing a visual or narrative presentation which has invited them to present an answer to the central question of the research from their own “voice” with little interpretation from me (see the methods section). In addition, reciprocity has been a part of my methodology which has incorporated a focus on finding out from the respondents their moral or relational experience of the interviews, sharing my own moral and relational experience, and relational accountability practices I have utilized to promote my own ethical and moral way of being with them (see the methods section for a description of these). Lastly, reciprocity (Lincoln, 1995) is also invoked as an important criterion for quality, which is discussed in the methods section.

Action Research

Similar to the aims of reciprocity in ethnographic research, action research calls for the research to have an applied focus, so that something good comes of it in the lives of those researched and/or society at large. According to Lincoln and Guba (2000) “... the shift toward action came in response to widespread nonutilization of evaluation findings ...” and “... embracing action came as both a political and an ethical commitment” (p. 174). Action researchers Davydd Greenwood and Morten Levin offer the following critique:

... most qualitative work becomes mired in intraprofessional rivalries and ends up chasing the latest trends in the literature, trends that rarely coincide with the felt needs of any particular social group for analysis and support. Although antipositivist in
attitude, qualitative research has not yet succeeded in reconstructing the relationship between the social sciences and society in any fundamental way. (2000, p. 93).

Action research has a strong pragmatist focus of conducting research for the express purpose of social change (Greenwood & Levin, 2000).

We define action research as research in which the validity and value of research results are tested through collaborative insider-professional researcher knowledge generation and application processes in projects of social change that aim to increase fairness, wellness, and self-determination. For us, action research is the only form of social research that enacts this agenda adequately.” (p. 94)

The same authors go on to state unequivocally, “Action researchers reject arguments for separating praxis and theory in social research. Either social research is applied or it is not research” (2000, p. 94).

Though this is not primarily an action research study, I am impressed by the call for research to be purposed toward social change. This motivated the design and conducting of this research. It has been my hope throughout that the experience would be personally meaningful for the parents involved. I invited them to take part in the research for the purpose of helping other parents who have had a child at Anasazi, other parents who are considering Anasazi, and perhaps even parents of adolescents at large. The primary action results for this research will be the detailed report/presentation I will give to Anasazi following the conclusion of the dissertation defense, and the Journal Story which will be part of that report and something Anasazi can utilize with staff training and with current and future parent participants as well as alumni. It is my hope that these results act as a catalyst for the ongoing work at Anasazi, perhaps toward the implementation of a program that Anasazi staff can tailor to their ongoing needs to extend the action elements of this research to the parents they work with. An articulation of the research strategy now leads to a discussion of the methodology and the methods used for this research.
METHODOLOGY: THEORETICAL PARADIGMS AND PERSPECTIVES

Although "methods" and "methodologies" are sometimes used interchangeably in qualitative research, I am defining them as two separate things. In articulating feminist methodologies, Leslie Bloom (1998) explains a distinction between methodology and methods:

Methods are research techniques, procedures, and practices, and methodologies are the theories or perspectives that inform the production of particular kinds of research and justify it in terms of its knowledge making. The distinction between methods and methodology is critical because methodology is deeply rooted in and should be consistent with the epistemological beliefs that a researcher brings to her inquiry. (pp. 138-9).

I will first discuss the theoretical paradigms and epistemological beliefs that informed this research and then discuss the research techniques, procedures, and practices I utilized to carry out the research.

This research has been structured around a qualitative interview methodology informed by my own preferred theoretical orientations and the theoretical and paradigmatic requirements of the research. Thus the methodology is partly idiosyncratic to my own personhood as the situated researcher. I argue that such is the necessary case for qualitative research because the researcher's personhood is implicated at every turn. My personhood is inherently enmeshed in the idea for this research, the development of it, and how it was carried out. I believe it is important to recognize that even if I were following a very structured protocol and methodology not developed by myself, the research project would still bear my hand, mind, and heart imprints throughout.

The false division between the personal and the ethnographic self rests on the assumption that it is possible for an author to write a text that does not bear the traces of its author. Of course this is impossible. As Geertz (1988) has demonstrated, all texts are personal statements. (Lincoln & Denzin, 2001, p. 1051)

Since the methodology is to a certain extent personal, then to that extent the methodology is less about the academic as it is about aesthetics. "The methods of qualitative research thereby become the 'invention,' and the telling of the tales--the representation--
becomes the art” (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000, p. 1061). This quotation resonates with my desires for this methodology to create a space for the representation (the analysis) to be personal, creative, and artistic.

I have made sense of the theories I am using in my methodology in terms of a “buffet analogy.” I have utilized these theoretical orientations buffet style as applicable (required by the research), meaningful, ethical, and practical. My methodology is informed by theories and practices situated in morality and personal ethics.

Theorizing Morality and Personal Ethics

If morality is relational, and relationships are central to communities and culture, then culture has everything to do with morality; as Raisa Gorbachev once stated, “culture is both an intellectual phenomenon and a moral one.” I have strong personal beliefs about the role of culture and morality in parenting. I believe the culture in which we live has powerful ways of living us—usurping our own values and ideas unless we take stands of critical reflection and accountability in our relationships. I am particularly interested in the cultural discourses, practices, and ways of being in relationships that parents experience as problematic in their parenting—those that would keep them from following their own deeply held moral convictions. Amidst the negative cultural influences, there are also positive and generative cultural knowledges and practices which offer real hope for parents in their situations. As an example of this, I have asked the parents in this research to reflect on their parenting and relationship with their adolescent now and the possible contrasts of their parenting and relationship before Anasazi. And I have encouraged them to consider what were the cultural ideas and practices which most influenced their parenting before Anasazi as compared to now. This practice to encourage a critical consciousness and a moral reflexivity on the part of the parents is discussed in the Methods section. I believe ethics cannot be an “addendum” to qualitative research. Ethics is inextricably tied to the purpose, design, methodology, methods, analysis, and discussion of this research project. In the next sections I discuss the theoretical and philosophical approaches I utilized in situating this research in a personal and relational approach to ethics. I interviewed these parents about their personal experiences. In doing so I entered their meaning making of it. I believe this is sacred space.
For each of the parents interviewed, there was something spiritual and sacred about their experience with Anasazi. It is my sense that for them to discuss their experiences of change in their relationships with their daughter or son easily evoked a discussion of things meaningful, spiritual and sacred to them. Perhaps it is that any discussion of genuine change in human relationships for most people evokes something of the sacred. The description of morality and ethics in this research centered in the personal connections between people, in the emotions of the experiences and connections in our lives, in the responsibilities and accountabilities we have toward one another as fellow human beings, in our felt needs to give and or care for the other. By interviewing these parents about the experiences of their lives, I entered into sacred spaces. Sacred not in terms of formal religion or personal spirituality per se, but sacred in that to enter into the stories and experiences of another’s life, to walk with another through their lived experiences, is to be in a sacred space, a relational space of meaning-making, emotions, needs, hopes, fears, wishes, struggles, and desires. It is a space in which, gratefully, these parents allowed me to tread. It is in this broad sense that I believe qualitative inquiry partakes of the sacred (Christians, 1998, 2000; Lincoln, 1995; Lincoln & Denzin, 2000; Reason, 1993).

I believe qualitative research is positioned to bring forward a “sense of the sacred” for the purpose of change and human flourishing (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000, p. 1052). Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba (2000) suggest “We may also be entering an age of greater spirituality within research efforts” (p. 185). Considering the role of values and ethics in qualitative research paradigms, Lincoln and Guba state that they would now “make values or, more correctly, axiology (the branch of philosophy dealing with ethics, aesthetics, and religion) a part of the basic foundational philosophical dimensions of paradigm proposal” (p. 169). They explain further:

Doing so would, in our opinion, begin to help us see the embeddedness of ethics within, not external to, paradigms . . . and would contribute to the consideration of and dialogue about the role of spirituality in human inquiry. . . . This is the place, for example, where Peter Reason’s [1993] profound concerns with “sacred science” and human functioning find legitimacy; it is a place where Laurel Richardson’s [2000]
"sacred spaces" become authoritative sites for human inquiry; it is a place—or the place—where the spiritual meets social inquiry . . . (p. 169)

These ideas are similar to the work of Parker Palmer (1993) an educational reformer who sees education as a spiritual journey. From a progressive Quaker tradition his ideas center the building of community and the pursuit of truth in teaching and education. His words about "authentic spirituality" may help to elucidate what a focus on spirituality and/or on the sacred may mean for qualitative research, and how this disciplines may be seeking some similar inquiries:

Authentic spirituality wants to open us to truth—whatever truth may be, wherever truth may take us. Such a spirituality does not dictate where we must go, but trusts that any path walked with integrity will take us to a place of knowledge. Such a spirituality encourages us to welcome diversity and conflict, to tolerate ambiguity, and to embrace paradox. (p. xi)

Each of the parents in this study has some type of spiritual and/or religious focus in their personal and family lives. Religion and spirituality were significant themes they spoke of in the interviews. There was an openness about both spirituality and religious beliefs in our interviews although I was cautious to not impose my own spiritual and/or religious beliefs in the interviews. It was meaningful for me to draw on my own relational experiences of spirituality as a resource in building relationships with these parents (Carlson, Erickson, & Seewald-Marquardt, 2002). It was freeing for me to speak with parents openly about their spiritual and religious beliefs and what this has meant to their parenting and their relationship with their adolescents. The influence of Anasazi on their own spirituality ended up being a main theme in their responses. For reasons of both ethics and accountability then this research required me to allow an openness to the parents' spirituality and an openness for theorizing the sacred here in the methodology. I found it very helpful to draw on particular theories and philosophies that allowed openings for not only spirituality but also ethics and morality.

*Ethics and Agency: The Philosophies of Buber, Levinas, and Warner*

The work of philosopher C. Terry Warner is utilized extensively in the Anasazi program for parents. Their participation in the Anasazi program most often revolves around
these unique philosophical ideas. Many parents have experienced Warner’s and Arbinger Institute’s ideas as spiritual or sacred, even though Warner and Arbinger do not appeal to any religious or spiritual language in their scholarly work nor their publications, seminars, or workbooks for the public. It should be noted that Terry Warner does often write and speak from a religious, spiritual, and ethical perspective informed by his philosophy for LDS (Mormon) audiences. Warner’s work builds on the earlier relationalist philosophies of Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas. Each of these philosophies center relational ethics and human agency, and each of these philosophers were/are persons who deeply value spirituality and religion.

Though postmodernism is sometimes equated with an anti-spiritual and anti-religious ethos, interestingly the work of Levinas has been considered one of the first formal philosophies to be a postmodern approach (Bauman, 1993). In like manner, the work of Warner has recently been considered a unique approach to postmodernism (Arbinger, 2003, *The Choice in Personal Growth and Well Being*). I will provide a brief introduction to Buber and Levinas in order to set a philosophical grounding for the work of Warner; each of these philosophies center in relational ethics.

One of the common features of the ethics of modernism is to reduce ethical questions to that which can be rationally summarized and objectively verified. When moral questions arise in qualitative research and MFT, prevailing approaches to ethics are most often constructed outside the relational context under consideration, and are subsequently imposed on the ethical relationship from outside. A relational ethics offers instead a relational view of morality which moves ethical considerations from the realm of the public to the private, the general to the particular, the absolute to the uncertain, the universal to the relational (Bauman, 1993).

*Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas*

The relationalism of Jewish German theologian/philosopher Martin Buber has only recently gained some recognition among marital and family therapists (Carlson & Erickson, 2000; Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986; Fishbane, 1998), though English translations of
most of his work have been available for many years (Buber, 1970). Buber proposes two ways of engaging with, or being-with, others (1970). One of these ways of being-with can be described as a “more utilitarian I-It relationship in which ego and self-interest dominate” (Fishbane, 1998, p. 41). Buber contrasts this I-it relation with the relational potential persons have to be engaged with one another in an I-Thou relationship (Buber, 1970). When we engage with others as an I to a Thou, we engage with them as persons like ourselves, with like hopes, dreams, fears and joys, and recognize the interdependence and mutuality that bind us together. This engagement invites empathy, a seeing from the eyes of the other, a seeing of the other as equal and as deserving of our best selves. Thus the relationship of the “I” to a “Thou” invites the “I” to an ethical stance toward the other. It invites accountability to the relation, the being-with the other (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986). It invites reconciliation, reparation, respect, even reverence (Carlson & Erickson, 2001; Warner, 2001). This ethics deviates from modern ethical formulations in that the grounds for the ethical are placed in the relationship, in the felt obligations that emerge in our being-with others.

Emmanuel Levinas goes beyond Buber’s work in a thoroughly complex proposition of the ethics of relationships. Whereas Buber’s philosophy is tied to modernism, Levinas’s philosophy represents a radical, though deeply relational, departure from modernist Western philosophy. Levinas, a Lithuanian born French speaking Jew and holocaust survivor, wrote the majority of his work between the 1950s and 1980s. What follows is necessarily an oversimplification of his work. Levinas’ philosophy is radical in that he assumes ontology to be inextricably bound up in our fundamental relationalism, thus ontology as ethics (for detailed descriptions of Levinas see: Bauman, 1993; Beavers, 1995; Levinas, 1981, 1984, 1985; Manning 1993; Peperzak, 1993; Schroeder, 1996).

Ontology can be described as the comprehension of Being (Dasein), or, in the classical non-Heideggerian sense, the study of essence, or what it is to Be (Manning, 1993). Levinas contends that ethics is prior to Being (Levinas, 1981). Indeed, he critiques the essentialism of ontology and according to Bauman (1993) proposes a radically postmodern ethics. Levinas directly confronts the primacy of consciousness of being, arguing “that all consciousness, all thought, is a consciousness of something. All thought is always already
directed or engaged with the world” (Knapp, 1999, p. 63). Before any act of reflection or consciousness about being, an agent “is a being which, inasmuch as it exists, is already in the presence of the world” (Levinas 1973, p. 88), in the presence of others, in a relation Levinas refers to as “ethics” in a completely new sense, as the morally-saturated relation that precedes knowing. For Levinas, the placing of ontology before ethics (as in all philosophy that precedes Levinas, including Heidegger and Buber) leaves ethics as forever an addendum to the human condition, always dependent upon social knowledge of the other, always an artifice, alien, awkward, and questionable (Bauman, 1993). For Levinas, social knowledge is preceded by our encounter with the Other. Which invites the “I” to be, not just with (Buber), but for the other.

The human otherness of the Other in Levinas’s ethics calls upon us to “responsibility for the Other which arrives before the Other herself had the time to demand anything” (Bauman, 1993, p. 85). As manifest by her face, the “I” is invited to an ethical response in a call “without specification of precisely what one must do” (Knapp, 2000, p. 194) other than if one is to be moral one must be for the Other. Thus the call is infinite, without finite limitations and objective assurances that one has ever done the “right thing.” This ethics, rather than being founded in societal notions of fairness, justice, and reciprocity, invites the “I” beyond reciprocity, to being “for” the other before questioning, before the asking of “why is it that my responsibility is so great?” (Levinas, 1981, p. 87).

C. Terry Warner and the Arbinger Institute

The above description of Buber and Levinas sets the foundation for a description of the work of Terry Warner. Warner’s ideas are akin to Buber and Levinas in many ways, and his work is clearly indebted to both. Warner’s philosophy expands on being “for the Other” and ethics as ontology, to providing a conceptualization of “way of being.” As humans we are clearly not always for the Other, in fact we may be very rarely so. Warner’s ideas support the possibility of being for the other at any moment, and provide practical means by which we may utilize our agency to choose our way of being. A practical day to day living of Levinas’ philosophy may be improbable. Levinas was seeking to answer fundamental philosophical questions about ontology and ethics. He was not attempting to propose daily practices of living in relationships. It is here that Warner’s ideas depart somewhat from
traditional formal philosophy. Warner is not only attempting to answer fundamental philosophical questions, he also has a practical emphasis to provide something applicable and meaningful to real persons in the real contexts and relationships of life.

For about 25 years Terry Warner has been developing an academic and logically rigorous way of thinking about "way of being" and the influence of such on every day-to-day relationship we are in, with every person we encounter. Warner began his work on this in the 1970s at Brigham Young University and in 1979 founded the Arbinger Institute. Warner spent time at Oxford University developing his philosophy. He continues to be a professor of philosophy at BYU, and has since sold the Arbinger Institute, but remains on its governing board. The Arbinger Institute is a management training and consulting firm and scholarly consortium. Their work involves primarily business and education consulting, and offering public seminars for families and parents to improve relationships (see www.arbinger.com). The Arbinger Institute has taken the work of Terry Warner and created consulting, training, and relationship seminar materials to both elucidate and to further develop Warner's philosophy for practical lay readership (Arbinger, 2003).

The thrust of Warner's ideas revolve around self-deception, which put simply is "not knowing one has a problem" (Arbinger, 2000). Arbinger claims to have broken new ground in solving this age old problem of self-deception, which has often been referred to as resistance (i.e. primarily in the psychologies). "The problem is this: how can people simultaneously (1) create their own problems, (2) be unable to see that they are creating their own problems, and yet (3) resist any attempts to help them stop creating those problems?" (Arbinger, 2000, p. 169). In the following paragraphs, I will attempt a quick sketch of the foundational principles of Warner's philosophy. The structure I am using to give this brief sketch is taken from the ideas presented in Arbinger's flagship relationship seminar entitled The Choice, and from their publication Leadership and Self-Deception (Arbinger, 2000).

Two ways of being: resistant and responsive. Way of being is deeply moral because it is always in relation to others. As alluded to above, way of being according to Warner and Arbinger has to do with the moral quality of how we regard the humanity of others we are in relation to. There are two fundamental ways of being, the Resistant way, and the Responsive way. In the resistant way we see other persons as objects, as impediments to or problems for
us, as vehicles for us, or simply as irrelevant. In the resistant way we see others as less than human, less legitimate than ourselves; we fail to be touched by the humanity of others and responsive to what their humanity calls us to. In the responsive way we see others as persons, as people not unlike ourselves. This is a moral sense of compassion and understanding. It is a knowing and feeling that others have hopes and dreams, struggles and difficulties, just like I do; they are just as legitimate as me.

Way of being is deeper and more important than behavior because we can do almost any behavior from either way of being. For example, we can give a compliment from the resistant way of being, and we can give a compliment from the responsive way. Or we can give correction from the responsive way or from the resistant way. In both scenarios we may say and do the very same things, but the person we’re complimenting or correcting will likely feel a qualitative difference, even if it is hard to articulate or name that difference. Because way of being is always deeper and more important than behavior, the responsive way does not mean “soft” behavior (i.e. kind, gentle, non-confrontive, positive, encouraging, gracious, etc.) and the resistant way “hard” behavior (i.e. directive, confrontive, negative, critical, exacting, adamant, severe, etc.). Both hard and soft behaviors are behaviors that can in most cases be done from either way of being.

Self-betrayal. We get into the resistant way by actively resisting the humanity of others. It can be through feelings of anger, blame, or hatred, but it is also, and perhaps more often, subtle and almost instantaneous. The way we get into the resistant way is through what Warner has called “self-betrayal,” which is defined as “an act contrary to what I feel I should do for another.” It is a betrayal of self because we dishonor the personal sense or feeling we have to do something for another person. When we betray the moral sense we have to do something for another we then enter the resistant way of being, because by refusing to do what we sense to do for another we begin actively resisting their humanity. In this way of being we see the world qualitatively different, our sense of reality becomes distorted and we see the world from an un-truthful perspective; un-truthful because we are actively resisting the humanity of others, the truth that is continually before us in the face of all other persons. We begin to see the world in a way that justifies our self-betrayal. Arbinger has simplified the description of the resistant way by calling it “being in the box.” Being in the box is to be
primarily in a state of blaming, to be blaming toward others. This does not mean that others may not actually be at fault, they very well may be. But even if others are at fault, even if they have done wrong or are actively doing wrong this does not require that we be resistant to their humanity, and see them as less than human, less legitimate than ourselves. We choose our way of being with others. It is an act of agency. Life may be very hard, we may suffer, often for no reason, great difficulties, problems, prejudice, discrimination, tragedy, misfortune, adversity, abuse, hatred, cruelty and so on. And these are clearly experienced to greater or lesser degrees due to a world steeped in inequity and injustice. Yet each of us individually decides whether the oppressions and trials of our lives become justification to resist the humanity of others.

*Self-justifying images.* Quite often we find ourselves in the resistant way when we have not actively betrayed ourselves. We are in the resistant way immediately, or suddenly, and cannot find any sense we have betrayed. Because self-betrayal is so common, perhaps one of the most common human experiences, over time certain idiosyncratic ways of being resistant become characteristic of us. Over a lifetime of self-betrayal we begin to see ourselves in terms of the images we have created of ourselves that justify our self-betrayals. Such images are idiosyncratic to our individual life experiences and personalities. We then “carry” these “self-justifying images” with us into most situations, in a sense carrying those ready made self-justifying images that will justify our present, past, and future self-betrayals as needed. These self-justifying images are often quite subtle and hard to notice, unless we take a morally reflexive position on our lives. These self-justifying images can be stated as any images we have of ourselves that we use to justify resisting the humanity of others to any degree. For example thinking of myself as “I’m the sort of person who ________” with the purpose of this image being to justify my resistance of the humanity of others. But this is different than simply acknowledging aspects, qualities, talents, characteristics, problems, or failings we have. It is seeing ourselves as the sort of person who, for example, is a good worker, is better than others, is friendly, is a good neighbor, is worthless, etc. in a way that has our view of the world always turning back on ourselves, seeing the world through self-absorbed ways that we use to justify our resistance of the equal humanity of others. Self-justifying images are at play in our relationships when we are thinking about how we are
being perceived by the other person(s) rather than being genuinely for the other(s). To see ourselves in terms of these self-justifying images is to portray ourselves in a self-referential way to justify our self-betrayals. Therefore we are very likely to strictly defend such self-justifying images, because to not do so requires that we end our self-betrayals and be responsive to the humanity of others.

*Collusion.* When we are in the resistant way, our very way of being provokes others to be in the resistant way as well. It does not cause or make others resistant, but rather gives a provoking invitation to others to be in the resistant way in response to us. Interestingly, when we are in the resistant way toward others, and they in turn are in the resistant way toward us, we each provoke and invite in one another the very things we say we don’t want or don’t like in one another. In the resistant way, we invite mutual mistreatment, and obtain mutual self-justification. Warner calls this “collusion,” not in the sense that it is a thought-out illicit agreement, but rather that it describes the consequence of being mutually in the resistant way toward one another, as if both persons tacitly agree “I’ll mistreat you if you’ll mistreat me so that we can give each other clear justification for our self-betrayals.” *Self-deception* is the state of being we live in when we betray ourselves over and over, carry our self-justifying images with us into new situations, and get into these cycles of collusion with others.

*Becoming responsive.* In self-deception we live in our world of relationships untruthfully (Warner, 1990; Williams, 1992, 1994). All that we can think of to do, change, focus on, or to cope comes from our distorted, self-deceived perspective. But, in every moment we are also in relation to others past or present, to whom we are responsive. This is the truth that makes becoming responsive, getting out of the box, possible in every moment. In every moment I am in the resistant way, resistant toward the humanity of an other, I am simultaneously responsive to others in my life, whether in person or in memory. If I can connect to these responsive relationships, or go to these responsive places of my soul, I can use this as my moral stepping stone to becoming responsive to those I am resisting.

Now in a way . . . this is quite a miraculous thing. But in another way, it’s the most common thing in the world. It happens all the time in our lives—usually on very small matters that are quickly forgotten. All of a sudden, because of the basic “otherness” of the people who continually stand before us, *and* because of what we know as we
stand out of the box in relation to other people, our box is penetrated by the humanity of others. We know in that moment what we need to do—we need to honor them as people. And in that moment—the moment I see another as a person, with needs, hopes, and worries as real and legitimate as my own—I'm out of the box... I can now choose the other way. I can now choose to honor that sense [to do for another] rather than betray it. And that... is the key to staying out of the box. (Arbinger, 2000, p. 144)

*The Parenting Pyramid™*. The Arbinger institute has utilized Warner’s core philosophy in developing a model of parenting called the Parenting Pyramid™. This model addresses parent’s intervention in their relationship with their children, and focuses on the moral nature of the parent-child relationship. The model is utilized in Arbinger’s auxiliary seminars for the public including *The Choice in Intervention* (which is the second day of a 2½ day seminar for parents at Anasazi) and *The Choice in Families*. The model is also reworked and utilized in Arbinger’s auxiliary seminars *The Choice in Personal Growth and Well Being, The Choice in Teaching and Education, and The Choice at Work*. Arbinger has also published an article detailing the parenting pyramid that is available to the public (Arbinger, 1998).

The concept rests on two fundamental questions that parents ask when it comes to intervention in their children’s lives. The first type of question is fundamentally “what do I do when things go wrong?” This tends to be parents’ primary question about parenting and intervention, though it may take many different forms (e.g., What do we do to stop our children from fighting?, What do we do when our children don’t come home on time?, What do we do when we discover our child has lied?, What do we do if we find out our child is using drugs? etc.). This question addresses correction, discipline, or punishment. The second type of question is fundamentally “how do I help things go right?” “When asked which type of question is primary, most of us realize it is the second. But when we are asked which question we actually spend more time on, we typically say the first... *the key to effective parenting is to reverse this order in expenditure of time and energy.* (Arbinger, 1998, p. 3, emphasis in original). The parenting pyramid consists of four basic questions which form a
hierarchy of concerns. The model is in the form of a pyramid to emphasize that the *most* time and energy should be spent on the lower (larger, foundational) levels.

"Am I correcting my children without teaching them?" Correction and punishment are endemic in our culture (Hardy, 2002). Most interventions involve some type of correction or discipline. Arbinger (1998) notes "the effectiveness of our correction of our children, whatever method we use, will always depend on the effectiveness of our prior teaching of them" (p. 3). Effective correction requires effective teaching; otherwise it is just punishment for the sake of punishment.

"What is the quality of my relationship with my children?" Teaching that is meaningful and effective, teaching that invites and encourages, is built on a foundation of a good relationship between the parent and child. Children are not likely to learn from their parents’ teaching if they do not like their parents. When parents attempt to teach without a strong relationship between them and their child, they tend to end up provoking them or their children tend to resent their teaching, or both.

"What is the quality of my relationship with the other parent(s)?" The quality of a parent’s relationship with his/her children depends largely on the quality of the relationship between the parents. When parents are embroiled in collusions with each other, this has an influence on their relationships with their children. It is hard to be an effective parent when children know that the primary persons caring for them do not care for each other. This does not mean that the parents must remain married, or even that they were married in the first place. It does not mean that the children and each parent must reside in the same house. It does not mean that there can be no conflict between parents. What this means is that collusions between parents will have a negative impact on the parents’ ability to parent their children. Even if parents have been divorced, if they are a step-parent, or if the parents reside in different homes, etc. effective parenting (correction, teaching, and the parent-child relationship) requires the parents to be actively seeking to end their collusions with one another, and seeking a harmonious relationship.

"How pure is my 'way of being'?" The foundation of the pyramid is the moral quality of the parent’s relationship with their child. "Who we are is a function of our deepest attitudes and sensibilities toward others. It is the very way we see and experience the people
in our world” (Arbinger, 1998, p. 6). Parents may ask themselves such questions as the following, “Do I regard the humanity of my child as equal to my own? Do I see my child as a person with hopes and dreams, wants and needs, fears and struggles as real and as legitimate as my own? Do I honor and reverence the humanity of my child?” Parents’ way of being will directly affect each level of their parenting in the pyramid. To summarize, the message of the parenting pyramid is:

1. Although correction is an important part of parenthood, it is the smallest part.
2. The key to effective correction is effective teaching.
3. The key to effective teaching is a good parent-child relationship.
4. The key to a good parent-child relationship is a good relationship between parents.
5. The key to good relationships between parents is each parents’ personal way of being.

“Indeed, this quality affects every other aspect of the pyramid; this is why it is the deepest foundation.” (Arbinger, 1998, p. 6-7)

Parents can thus use this model in their parenting to help things go right by focusing their parenting efforts on actively working up the pyramid; the foundation is their way of being. When things do go wrong, parents can target where on the pyramid the problem seems to be and actively work down the pyramid in solving it.

This brief snapshot description of Warner’s philosophy and the Arbinger parenting pyramid shows the intimate relational and moral nature of our way of being, and the way in which our way of being influences our relationships, in every context, and at every moment. Warner’s work is sometimes called “agentive” because moment by moment we are choosing our way of being. Agency from this perspective does not mean a simple freedom to choose among the myriad alternatives in our lives, because those alternatives will be seen and experienced qualitatively different depending on our way of being, and in addition such choices are merely behavioral. Agency is deeper than choice among alternatives and deeper than behavior; agency is our fundamental ability to choose our way of being (Warner, 1990).

Through my associations with Anasazi, I have developed a personal interest in Warner’s and Arbinger’s philosophical ideas. I have incorporated them into my own personal “theory of change.” This philosophy has had an important impact on my work as a family therapist, and on my personal life and relationships. These ideas influence much of what
takes place at Anasazi both in the intervention provided, and in the way the company runs and is structured. The parents I interviewed spoke a great deal about their experiences of the Warner-Arbinger ideas and the impact of these in their parenting and relationships. Indeed this became a central theme in these interviews and is taken up at length in the discussion section.

*The Postmodern Ethos as an Approach to Ethics*

Though this research is not centered in postmodernism, I have drawn on the postmodern ethos in a number of ways. This research utilizes postmodern ideas in that the work of Levinas and Warner are each considered unique postmodern approaches to philosophy (Bauman, 1993; Arbinger, 2003). Secondarily, I have utilized other theories that incorporate the postmodern ethos, or ideas resonant with it including qualitative research approaches and narrative therapy ideas. Patricia Hill Collins (1998) gives a useful glossary of terms utilized in feminist, postmodern, and critical theory literature. She defines postmodernism as “a conceptual framework applied to the social world based on decentering power relations, deconstructing universal truths about the world, and recognizing multiplicity or differences of experiences and perspectives on the world” (p. 279). Postmodernism operates as a general lens of critique, rather than a formal philosophy. Many theorists, researchers, historians, therapists, etc. speak of the “postmodern turn” in that it is a historically and culturally situated “time” we find ourselves in. Arthur Vidich and Stanford Lyman note, “the postmodern is a cultural form as well as an era of history” (2000, p. 61).

Charlene Spretnak (1991) offers a definition of postmodernism that centers “a sense of detachment, displacement, and shallow engagement” and seeing the world as “a repressive labyrinth of ‘social production,’ a construction of pseudoselves who are pushed and pulled by cultural dynamics and subtly diffused ‘regimes of power.’” She also assumes “values and ethics are deemed arbitrary, as is ‘history,’” (p. 13-14). I believe such a definition is unnecessarily pessimistic, and ironically confuses postmodernism with vulgar relativism. Though some theorists may define postmodernism this way, this is by no means the necessary consequence of the postmodern turn. Sadly at times postmodernist critique can ironically serve to narrow and totalize understanding and discourse. Kenneth Gergen’s (1994) cautions resonate with me:
Postmodernist thought does not operate as another totalitarian discourse, ruling out certain ways of speaking or acting in favor of others. Rather, it operates as an invitation to reflexivity, encouraging one to consider all propositional realities and dictates as local, provisional, and political. (p. 414)

Speaking of the relativism of postmodernism in qualitative research, Lincoln and Denzin (2000) remind us “relativism is not about paradigm choice; it is about the way we are in the world, about living contingent lives, about finding new rationales for the judgments we make” (p. 1049, referencing Smith & Deemer, 2000). This is quite a significant statement for me. To me it says that postmodernism can actually center in relationships and ethics. I believe this is in part the message of social constructionism (Gergen, 1991, 1994; McNamee & Gergen, 1999), and of Bauman’s (1993) approach to postmodern ethics. Michael White (1995) makes a relevant comment with regard to the ethics of a constructionist approach in psychotherapeutic practice:

I don’t think that there is any constructionist position that can escape a confrontation with questions of values and personal ethics. In fact, according to my understanding, the constructionist position emphasizes these questions, and elevates this confrontation. So, the idea that constructionist positions lead to a state of moral relativism – where there’s no basis for making decisions about different actions – doesn’t fit with what I know of this position. (pp. 14-15).

Though there are many varying approaches to postmodernism, the articulation of postmodernism that makes the most sense to me, logically, personally, and relationally, is an articulation that takes into account the multiplicity of meaning, identities, and realities, a concern with discourse, power, and community, and a focus on the local, provisional, historically and culturally situated contexts of persons’ lives, and that also centers ethics and morality as central to meaning-making, purpose, and action in human relations. Ideas from the postmodern ethos oriented me to a certain degree in developing this research and in the relationships I fostered with the parent participants. In addition the analysis and the discussion section draw in part on postmodern concerns, particularly as an approach to morality and ethics. In this research, a combination of all of these theories and approaches discussed in this methodology section has been utilized as an underlying ethic for all aspects
of the research, particularly the relationships I have had with the participants, and the moral obligations of the research.
METHODS

Methods are the “research techniques, procedures, and practices” (Bloom, 1998) that emerge from the methodologies. The methods answer the specific question of how did I conduct the research, gather data, and what criteria of quality did I use. In this section I will first provide demographics of and introductions to the parents I interviewed.

Participants

This was a purposeful sampling of parents. I had stringent criteria that I needed to meet. Foremost, I wanted to select parents who had varied experiences with Anasazi to get a relatively full-range of parent alumni experiences so that the research interviews represent many different parents’ experiences. It was quite difficult to formally identify parents who had a positive experience with Anasazi, and those who had a less than positive experience because Anasazi does not have a codified structure for making such distinctions. Informally it was somewhat clear to me and to the Anasazi aftercare staff which parents fit in these categories, although it should be noted that our guesses at this would often fluctuate over time, depending on how well the adolescent and the parents were doing. Sometimes parents are very grateful for their Anasazi experience; other times the same parents are more frustrated with Anasazi. The Anasazi aftercare staff members do notice a trend of increasingly positive satisfaction from parent alumni over time following discharge. Both the youth and the parent alumni tend to be more satisfied with Anasazi the longer they have had to incorporate the changes in their family and incorporate the uniqueness of the “Anasazi Way” in their day to day lives.

The aftercare coordinator and I went through the list of parent alumni from the past two years. We identified each parent to interview by informally discussing the parents’ relative experience with Anasazi. This list of parents was also approved by the clinical director. Of the parents invited, the aftercare director and I identified four sets of parents who we believe had a clearly positive experience with the program, two who had a relatively positive experience with Anasazi, and two who had a somewhat mixed or negative experience with Anasazi. It is quite rare that parents have a completely or even mostly negative experience with the Anasazi program. Between the first and second interviews, I had the parent participants fill out a brief demographic form. One of the questions asked the
following. “This question is for broad categorizations of family’s experiences with Anasazi. What statement below best describes your overall experience with Anasazi?” Possible answers were, A. Very positive, B. Mostly positive, C. Somewhat positive and somewhat negative, D. Mostly negative, and E. Other. I felt the three categories of positive, somewhat positive, and somewhat negative were not quite broad enough for this self-report question, and so I expanded the choices. Of the four that we assumed had a positive experience, three of them marked A, one of them marked B. The two that we assumed had a somewhat positive experience both marked A. The two that we assumed had a somewhat negative experience both marked C. So from the self-reports of their overall experience with Anasazi, five marked “very positive,” one marked “mostly positive,” two marked “somewhat positive and somewhat negative,” and none marked “mostly negative.”

The second criterion was that the parents had to be parents whom I did not Shadow. Third, Anasazi has been through a number of internal and structural changes in the past two and one-half years, which have altered the program enough that I wanted to only interview parents’ whose adolescent completed the program between January 2001 and January 2003. Fourth, although Anasazi has clientele from all 50 states, with my research budget being quite small, I could only interview parents in two different states, Arizona (where Anasazi is located and where the largest portion of clientele are from, approximately 27%), and Utah (from which Anasazi has typically had a significant portion of clientele, approximately 16%, due to the co-founders previous involvement with Brigham Young University, and due to the fact that approximately one-half of Anasazi clientele are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). Fifth, I wanted to choose parents who I was relatively sure would be able to participate in the interviews. Some families that fit all the other criteria were in the process of moving, on vacation, in the midst of time-consuming projects, etc. After applying these five criteria to all possible parent alumni in the past two years (N=286), I came up with a relatively short list of parents who fit (six in Arizona, eight in Utah). I invited nine sets of parents total (six in Arizona, three in Utah). All agreed to the interviews. Unfortunately one set of parents in Arizona, who are divorced and live separate, were not able to find a time where I could interview them together within the time constraints I was working under. I interviewed five sets of parents in Arizona, and three sets of parents in
Utah. Seven of the parent couples are married and living together and one parent is a single mother. Two of the families have had more than one child in the program. All of the parents are Caucasian. All of the adolescent sons or daughters who completed Anasazi are Caucasian except for one of the daughters who is African-American and was adopted as an infant. Of all the sons and daughters of these parents that completed Anasazi in the time frame given, five are girls and four are boys.

All of the parents were sent a letter of explanation of the research (see Appendix D), and then were called by telephone and asked if they were willing to participate. Some were quite willing to participate, others were more reluctant but agreed, and none refused. I invited parents in Arizona first and conducted the interviews with them. Then I ended up moving to Utah and at that time invited the parents there and then conducted the interviews. I did follow-up interviews with the parents in Arizona and Utah. For each of the parents the follow-up interviews were approximately two months following the first interviews.

The parents all had regular weekly contact with their Shadow and had contact during the program with Trail Walkers, support staff, the nurse, other Shadows, and leadership personnel including Ezekiel Sanchez and those that taught the Arbinger seminar. Most of the parents have had sporadic to very little contact directly with Anasazi personnel following their adolescent’s completion of the program.

I decided that an introduction to each of the parent participants would need to be more personal for this research. I want readers of this research to have a personal feeling for each of these parents as people. Therefore, in the follow-up interviews I asked parents the following question “I would like to invite each of you to give me a brief description of your spouse. I would like my university committee members who read this report to have a rich description of each of you, so that they, and I, can have a better feel for each of you as people.” Some of the parents were somewhat reluctant to do this, but all agreed and did well. I will introduce readers to each of these parents with some demographic information and then quote their personal introductions.

Terri and Stephen

Terri is 40 years old and has worked primarily as a homemaker, has done accounting for Stephen’s business and has been a student. Stephen is 40 years old and is the owner of his
own business, a business consulting firm. They are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and are active participants in their religion. They have seven children. They have had two sons complete the Anasazi program. Their son Trent attended Anasazi from January through February of 2002 when he was 16 years old. Trent, their third child, is somewhat involved in church. Trent went to Anasazi after experiencing problems with drugs and alcohol, conflict with his parents, school problems, and legal problems. The family has lived in Arizona for 14 years. They originally found out about Anasazi from a friend of theirs who worked at Anasazi. They paid for Anasazi with personal savings. They marked “somewhat positive and somewhat negative” on the question asking about their overall experience with Anasazi. But they had a disagreement about this. Stephen experienced somewhat more negatives with Anasazi than did Terri. Stephen said he would mark “somewhat disappointed” if it were a category, but not “mostly negative.” The following are their introductions of each other.

Terri introducing Stephen: This is Stephen and he is the father of seven. He is a successful businessman - he had owned his own company for six years. He is a very kind, compassionate, smart person. Education is very important to him. He treasures and values his family as well as his clients. He is an asset to his business as well as to our family and the community.

Stephen introducing Terri: This is Terri, she is the mother of seven children. Five of which she gave birth to and two of which we adopted. She has also been a mother of over forty children as a foster mother over the past ten years. During that time she has influenced the lives of many children. She is very compassionate, kind and charitable woman. She is very insightful into the problems and challenges of others. She is also always very interested in growing as an individual and pursues opportunities for her growth in areas of education and leadership opportunities.

Doug and Mary

Doug is 49 years old and his career has been as a Director of Labor Relations for a utility company. Mary is 41 years old and has worked primarily as a homemaker. They are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and are active participants in their religion. They have had six children, five are living. Justin, their third child, is involved
in church. Justin attended Anasazi from November 2002 through early January of 2003 when he was 16 years old. Justin went to Anasazi after experiencing problems with drugs, conflict with his parents, and school problems. The family has lived in Arizona for 10 years. They originally found out about Anasazi from friends and by word of mouth. They paid for Anasazi with personal savings and with a trust fund. They marked “mostly positive” on the question asking about their overall experience with Anasazi. The following are their introductions of each other.

Doug introducing Mary: This is Mary, she’s my wife and she’s the mother of six. She is an excellent mother of six. She takes good care of the kids, she’s very conscientious. She’s very attentive to the kids. In fact I would say that she makes those kids the number one thing in her life and I appreciate that about her. She’s a good mom. And she’s a very caring, very giving person. It’s not uncommon to find her taking dinner to somebody in the ward [church congregation] who’s having a baby or having trouble or just having a bad day. I like that because that way we get a good dinner too (laugh). She’s quite attractive, as you can see. That was the first thing that attracted me to her was the fact that she’s so attractive. And after you get to know her you find out that she’s attractive on both the outside and the inside and so I would describe her as a good wife, good mom, very caring, very giving and currently probably at the end of her rope with one of those six kids.

Mary introducing Doug: This is Doug; he’s the father of six kids, all six kids. That’s pretty uncommon these days (laugh). Doug is a hard worker and spends a lot of time at work. He tries to make up for it in spending equal time with me and with the kids. Today he took the day off and we took the kids to the lake and spent quality time with the kids. He does go out of town, not all the time but at times. He goes out of town so he likes to try and make it up to the kids and spend time with the kids. He likes to stay up and watch movies with the kids or take them on rides on the motorcycle. He’s caring, he’s fun. He gets along with just about anybody. There are not a whole lot of people on his bad list. He gets over things pretty easily. If something bothers him he puts it behind him and moves on, doesn’t go back to it and gets over things. He can talk to just about anybody about anything. Unlike me who doesn’t know what to say to people (laugh).
Laura and Thomas

Laura is 55 years old and currently works as an instructional assistant at an elementary school, but her work over the years has primarily been as a homemaker. Thomas is 59 years old and his career work has been as a chief financial officer of a small company. They are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and are active participants in their religion. They have four children. Their daughters Jill and Jessica are their third and fourth child and they are not involved in church. They both attended Anasazi from March to April of 2002, both were 15. Jill started two weeks before Jessica, and they were in separate groups throughout their program. Jill and Jessica both went to Anasazi after problems with drugs and alcohol, family conflict, peer problems, sexual experimentation, legal problems, and school problems. The family has lived in Arizona for 23 years. They originally found out about Anasazi through a relative and two friends from their church who are Anasazi personnel. They paid for Anasazi with a loan and an Anasazi scholarship. They marked “very positive” on the question asking about their overall experience with Anasazi. The following are their introductions of each other.

Laura introducing Thomas: Thomas is a go-getter. When he wants to do something he goes for it and gets it done. He’s not afraid to try new things. I’m thinking particularly, he’s a handy man from the word go. We call him a jack-of-all-trades. So around the home if there is something that needs to be fixed he will generally attempt to fix it. He’s very handy. I think in his business experience he does the same thing. If there are things that are problems he wants to get in there and help in the thinking and the doing of solving the problems. He is a problem solver. He’s very positive. He looks for the good in situations. He’s the type of person whose cup would be half full all the time rather than mine which would be half empty. He loves life. He loves the earth. He was raised on the farm and we have a mini farm in our backyard. He likes to have his hands in the soil and raising plants and food. He loves his kids. He’s very proud of them and their positive accomplishments and is always wanting to see the best in them and bring out the best in them. What else would I say about you sweetheart? He’s quiet. He’s a thinker. He will, and you probably have observed that, he will sit back and listen to what’s going on and in his mind I see his wheels going as he processes information. He tries to look at the whole before he will speak and say something. He loves
to design things. When we did our home, in fact we redid our home; we designed several homes before we finally built one. So he likes, I think part of his jack-of-all-trades he will try everything. In fact, when we did our home he did the architectural drawing. He tries to do it all but he also knows his limits. For instance, when it comes to electronic sewing machines he refuses to touch them. But he will, he loves to put computers together so he’s not afraid to do that. He loves to help our children in fixing things. When we visit our married son in Utah he usually has a project that he will be doing to help them. He’s always ready to help our son and in fact recently he took several evenings on a Saturday to help our son to put a new clutch in his pickup. So he’s just kind of that way. He loves to help everybody.

*Thomas introducing Laura:* Laura is an organized perfectionist. That’s probably the source of a lot of frustration in her life. But she loves order. She loves beauty. She is extremely caring and compassionate and thoughtful of people that others will overlook. She enjoys experiencing life, seeing new things, doing new things. She loves her children. She cares about her children, prays for her children, cries for her children and gloats over her granddaughter. I say a perfectionist, she’s extremely thorough. There is never a task that she does that she doesn’t put her best effort into it. The comments that I hear from people who work with her and have observed her are that she is a tough act to follow. Because if she has a responsibility she learns everything she can learn about it, studies everything about it and implements it and does it. Nothing is halfway. If she’s going to do it she’s going to do it full energy and full resolve and you don’t stop until it’s done right. . . . In the last year there has been a marked change in her sensitivity toward others and not just the girls, and I’ll be very specific. My wife has a calendar that she keeps of every sister in the ward [church congregation] when their birthdays are and anonymously sends them a card. She has been called as Compassionate Service Leader [in their church congregation] and having spent my whole life in church administration I’ve never seen anybody be more sensitive to people in need and fulfilling those needs in order to see that those needs are met.

*Jim and Sally*

Jim is 54 years old; his career has been primarily as a marketing consultant. Sally is 53 years old, and her work has been at home raising their 12 children. They are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and are active participants in their religion.
Their daughter Nicole is their eleventh child. Nicole is somewhat involved in church. Nicole attended Anasazi from March to May of 2002 when she was 14. Nicole went to Anasazi after problems with depression, conflict with parents, not attending school, and being withdrawn. Jim and Sally also had three other children attend Anasazi, all from November 1991 to September 1992. Their other children attended Anasazi for differing lengths of time, from 8 weeks to 17 weeks, and went for a number of different problems including drugs and alcohol, depression, suicidal feelings, family conflict, school problems, and legal problems. The family has lived in Arizona for three and one-half years, before that they lived in Salt Lake City, Utah. They originally found out about Anasazi through LDS Social Services and due to their own participation in the outdoor survival program (Recreation 480) at BYU run by Larry Olson and Ezekiel Sanchez which they attended in the early 1970s (and was the place they first met). They paid for Anasazi for Nicole with a loan and an Anasazi scholarship. With their other children Anasazi was paid through their insurance. They marked “very positive” on the question asking about their overall experience with Anasazi. The following are their introductions of each other.

Jim introducing Sally: Sally is probably the warmest, most people-oriented person I know. It’s not just that she; we talk to friends and other people who come to visit us all the time about how she’s going to get her 20 questions from them. She can get away with it. She can ask the most personal questions to people and they’ll never be offended and they’ll always give her the answers and talk to her because she really cares. She really cares about the answers. She remembers a lot of that stuff about them and keeps them all straight because she cares about them. She is interested in them, she cares about them, she wants to, she’s not just asking for information or to be social or to pass the time, she’s really genuinely interested. And so for that reason I think that kind of interaction inspires sharing and builds relationships and she’ll also spend, she’s better about talking with our kids than I am. And that’s a source of frustration for her because I’m not better at it. She really gets involved in the nitty gritty details of everything that is going on and is extremely involved. She’s just the best people person I’ve ever seen anywhere. She is oftentimes a very deep thinker, thinks about things that are really important and that are way beyond in depth what you would see almost anywhere—the Gospel, eternal things or whatever. I don’t know how to put this next
statement, I was going to say she’s a creative thinker but that’s not what I really mean. Some of the directions or thoughts take her out of the norm. They’re not what people would expect. I don’t think they’re wrong but they’re way out of the mainstream so she’s not bound by convention in terms of thinking about things. I appreciate that. We have some great discussions and she just really cares and knows how to love. I often think of different kinds of people I could have married and I dated girls who were a lot flashier than she was. And that were certainly more in awe of me. Maybe that’s what attracted me to her. She was pretty hard to impress. Of all the people I’ve met, of all the women I’ve met in my life, I can’t even conceive of anybody else who would have been a better choice for me.

_Sally introducing Jim:_ The first thought that comes to mind is that he is genuine and kind to everyone, I’m not so kind. I’m a real people person and friendly but if someone wants me to do a favor for them I’m not always so willing. He has spoiled his daughters. If people need something done he’ll do it every time. There isn’t a thing I can’t ask him to do that he won’t do. In fact the kids think I take advantage of him. He really is kind to me and always has been to me and I haven’t always been that kind to him. I’ve been more judgmental of him than he has been of me. If we’ve ever been in a box together it’s because I’ve been the one who jumps in the box first. He just, he never expects anything of me. Not that he doesn’t ask me to do things or things like that but he never has expectations such as, “you have to do this, this and this as a wife or mother.” He lets me be the person that I am. I’ve always appreciated that. And as far as, he’s really, really smart. He’s extremely analytical and sees things a lot more clearly. I get more debunked by emotion and that sort of thing; he can cut through it all. He genuinely cares about his family. He puts his family first. I wouldn’t say a lot of men do that, I don’t know, but he does. He will do anything; he’ll go out at 3:00 in the morning if he has to, to take care of someone’s needs. Even if he’s at work and someone has a problem he’ll find a way to get it solved. I don’t know how to explain how helpful he is. He just always puts his family first, always. And not just his immediate family, his extended family, etc. When we lived closer to them, if they had a need he would drop what he was doing and help them. I don’t know how to explain the intelligence part better. It’s like, my one son who is 17 and goes home teaching [a formal Church calling—visiting members of the congregation] with another man and he said, “You know, your dad’s really smart, huh?” My
son looks at him and says, “I guess you could say that.” And he goes, “Yeah when we sit in class together at church, he always has a comment that’s clear and precise and he knows his stuff really well. Does he study all the time?” and my son said, “No, that’s just my dad.” He understands the scriptures clearly. He sees clearly.

Jennifer

Jennifer is 37 years old and her career has been primarily as a Health Unit Coordinator at a hospital. She is Protestant and attends a local church, she is an active participant in her religion. She has three children and Tori is her oldest. Tori is also actively involved in church. Tori attended Anasazi from March to April of 2002 when she was 15. Tori’s biological father has not been involved in her life, which Jennifer states “is a good thing.” He had been abusive to both Jennifer and Tori. Tori went to Anasazi after problems with drugs and alcohol, running away, depression, family conflict, sexual experimentation, school problems, peer problems, and legal problems. The family has lived in Arizona for 17 years. Jennifer originally found out about Anasazi through the hospital where she works. She paid for Anasazi through a loan, personal savings, an Anasazi scholarship, and insurance. She marked “very positive” on the question asking for her indication of her overall experience with Anasazi. I asked Jennifer to introduce herself.

Jennifer: I feel like I have had a chance to live a second life. I did not have a high school diploma and I got my GED. I spent six years getting my GED and after receiving it I discovered that someone close to me passed, life is precious, we can not take it for granted. That was my brother. He was twenty four years old... Now I am stepping into college. I wanted to go to college to work in the hospital. Knowing what I wanted and going from there. It is not anything that bothers you to work for it. I wanted to bring myself up and I saw it as being hard... I am faithful. I am very family oriented. I am hopeful and I would like to think I am humble. I would also like to hope I want to improve myself, looking to always make myself better, growth through goals in wisdom and knowledge. I want to guide my children in those ways and hopefully pass those things to them. To have them always look to Heavenly Father.
Kevin is 43 years old and his career has been as the CEO of his own business selling musical accompaniment recordings and equipment. Stacy is 40 years old and has worked part-time in Kevin’s business and primarily as a homemaker. They are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and are active participants in their religion. They have 5 children. Their son Lance is their second child. Lance is actively involved in church. Lance attended Anasazi from April through May of 2002 when he was 17 years old. Lance went to Anasazi after experiencing problems with alcohol, experimenting with drugs, family conflict, school problems, and peer problems. The family has lived in Utah for seven and one-half years. They originally found out about Anasazi from a friend. They paid for Anasazi with personal savings. They marked “very positive” on the question asking about their overall experience with Anasazi. The following are their introductions of each other.

Kevin introducing Stacy: Stacy went to Ricks College [small LDS college in Idaho]. She studied Elementary Ed. She continued her education at Utah Valley Community College, got her associates degree in Elementary Education. While she was there, as part of the Elementary Education she took a communications class, which I think has helped with our parenting and our relationship, and she plans to continue some time with her education. She was thinking of completing Elementary Education but now . . . she wants to continue in nutrition and speaking of which she’s very much into fitness and nutrition and running. She’s taken up running. She runs the races around here, 10k’s and things like that. She’s the mother of five children, 20 to 8 years old. Currently she is staying home and taking care of them. Stacy likes to be around people and she likes to learn. She wants to always do a good job at the things she does. And she likes music.

Stacy introducing Kevin: We have been married 22 years, I think, next month. Before we were married Kevin grew up in California near San Francisco. After graduating from high school he went on to BYU and studied music there. He took two years to serve a mission in Spain with the LDS church and after returning home from his mission we met soon after and were married in the Manti [LDS] Temple [Manti, Utah]. He did some schooling and did several different jobs. He had a desire to have his own business and also a dream to create some sort of accompaniment – music for people to sing with that couldn’t always find
pianists. He being a vocal major and having a beautiful voice he often had that trouble and had that dream of having a background in professional music. He did some other things, he also had a desire to be a policeman and so he worked for awhile at the prison. Something neither of us liked very well. So he ended that and decided to step right into the business that he wanted and the dream of having his own business. And so we began that. It’s been, we’ve had that business now, 19 years, wow, and we produce music, karaoke, special accompaniment, CD’s and DVD’s and tapes which he sells all over the world and, I would describe him as ambitious, as an entrepreneur. He has a very creative mind and able to solve a problem quickly. He is able to see a reason and come up with solutions. He is very good at that. I guess that’s one of the reasons why he’s been so successful. He’s very good with finances. He’s very caring and kind to our children and me. He has a great desire to do what is right and to do the right thing even when sometimes it might not be comfortable . . . he has that desire, he has a lot of integrity.

Sharla and Dan

Sharla is 50 years old and has worked part-time as a special education teacher, and as a homemaker. She has a M.S. degree in special education specializing in deaf education. Dan is 50 years old and his career has been in computer technical support working for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and are active participants in their religion. They have nine children, 5 of them adopted. Their daughter Kim is their sixth child, she is African-American, and was adopted as an infant. Kim is somewhat involved in church. Kim attended Anasazi from February through April of 2002 and turned 16 during that time. Kim went to Anasazi after numerous other programs and a number of problems stemming from Reactive Attachment Disorder including problems with depression, family conflict, perpetrating sexual abuse, sexually abused by a peer, drugs and alcohol, not attending school, legal problems, and being withdrawn. The family has lived in Orem, Utah for 4 years. They originally found out about Anasazi through LDS Social Services and another mental health agency in Utah. They paid for Anasazi through funds allocated through their church. They marked “somewhat positive and somewhat negative” on the question asking about their overall experience with Anasazi. The following are their introductions of each other.
Dan introducing Sharla: My wife Sharla was born in California but grew up in Utah. She has a very strong heritage in Utah in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She was educated at the University of Utah. She completed a Masters Degree in Special Education with an emphasis in Deaf Education. She is certified in Special Education or Learning Disabilities. She is a very outgoing, friendly person and has always been able to create quick strong friendships with those she associates with. She is a natural teacher in the classroom because she is friendly, outgoing, and excited. She has interest from the students because of her attitude of excitement for the subject and the people in the class. She is open to change and has done a lot of growing. She likes to “live on the edge.” We have adopted five children. We have spent a lot of time investigating and using alternative medicine. Sharla is a strong force in that as she is at home. We have extremely conservative political views [though not mainstream conservative views]. She looks at life from an emotional level more than a thoughtful level. Feelings are important to her in the way she judges and approaches things. Right now she is launching out in doing tutoring for children with learning disabilities. Her emphasis is reading, working with children that have problems in reading. That is what her focus is right now with her strengths in reading plus working in general with special ed. We are working with a company that has some innovative and cutting edge approaches to working with learning disabilities and helping children making some major adjustments in several areas of their lives which will help them in their learning. This will release some blocks that are keeping them from learning. We have discovered through the years that you can not separate things out. Your mental health, your physical health, emotional health, all of those things work together. . . . The company she is working with has some of these directions, kind of helping these children to overcome these learning disabilities. That is what she is working on right now, as our children are leaving home and we are looking at ways to keep occupied.

Sharla introducing Dan: Dan is the cool, calm, and collected person in our home ninety percent of the time. He has been really involved with the children over the years. I have really appreciated this as he isn’t just a sit back and do nothing Dad. He is quite involved with the children. He grew up in Salt Lake and attended Utah Tech College. He has a degree in Commercial Art. After graduation he went to work for the LDS church office.
After a few years it was the advent of the computer era and he picked up computer skills very quickly. They started using Macintosh computers and he became one of their premiere tech support people. He has developed those skills over the years. They rely on him to keep the church’s computers going in the publishing area. He works in the curriculum department. That has been a break because he has always felt like when he goes to work every day he is doing something that has great worth in the world. That has been good for us. He has always loved going to work and has not complained about his job or had a lot of stress. He can come home and be a dad. At least he has not shown stress, he is pretty good natured. I think a good indicator of Dan’s personality is he is not afraid to get down in the trenches and get involved. We have had foster children over the years. We have done group homes and we had some older foster boys that did not even have control of their bowels. He would be willing to clean these fifteen-year-old boys up. He was willing to get in and do the dirty work. If the job was too big or too ugly I would generally say, “Dan would you do this?” He is always willing. He loves to read, that is probably his main hobby. He likes science fiction as well as LDS books. He has a great knowledge; he remembers details which I don’t. He is very good at giving lessons. He is a very good public speaker. He is willing to see weaknesses in his character and work on them. He wants to be closer to his boys and do things that are bonding with them. He tries to think of ways to play with the children more. He is great with teaching, but he wants to play more.

Nick and Angela

Nick is 40 years old and his career has been in management of a small publishing company. He has just recently switched to insurance sales. Angela is 38 years old and has worked full and part-time for a publishing company. She recently became a vice president of sales for another company, and through the years has also been a homemaker. They are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and are active participants in their religion. They have 4 children. Their son John is their first child. John is somewhat involved in church. John attended Anasazi from September through October of 2001 when he was 16 years old. John went to Anasazi after experiencing problems with alcohol, experimenting with drugs, family conflict, school problems, and peer problems. The family has lived in Salem, Utah for 11 years. They originally found out about Anasazi from a friend.
They paid for Anasazi with an Anasazi scholarship, gift money, and a payment plan set up with Anasazi. They marked “very positive” on the question asking about their overall experience with Anasazi. The following are their introductions of each other.

**Nick introducing Angela:** Okay, Angela, I would probably describe her as really the spiritual pillar in our family. Very kind, loving . . . patient comes to my mind quite a bit when I think about my wife and how she interacts with me. She is very helpful in helping me see the different side of what I do instead of just seeing my own perspective. She helps me get a little better grip on reality as far as how I treat my children and talk to them and interact with them. As far as a business person, very business minded, strong character.

**Angela introducing Nick:** Nick likes to have a lot of fun. He likes to play and do different activities with the kids. He is a hard worker when he decides to do something. He is single focused and gets it done and wants it done his way. He does a good job, he puts a lot of effort into making something right. He is not afraid to try new things, and look openly. He has gone to school and is almost through with his bachelor’s degree, in Sales and Marketing. He is starting in a career path; we are both starting new career paths this summer. So he is not afraid to do stuff like that. He has been patient; he has been patient with me. What he left out is that I am dominant. So he has also been patient with me.

**How Data were Gathered**

To introduce this section, I first want to relate an important caution given by Vidich and Lyman (2000):

> The data gathering process can never be described in its totality because these “tales of the field” are themselves part of an ongoing social process that in its minute-by-minute and day-by-day experience defies recapitulation. To take as one’s objective the making of a total description of the method of gathering data would shift the frame of ethnological reference, in effect substituting the means for the end. Such a substitution occurs when exactitude in reporting research methods takes priority over the solution to substantive sociological problems. (p. 38)

Though I may not be able to explain the data gathering in its entirety and specificity, I will explain the main ways I gathered data for this research. I conducted eight interviews, one with each parent couple. These interviews were usually one and one-half hour long (two
went a little over two hours, two were one hour). Later I conducted eight follow-up interviews, one with each parent couple. These interviews were usually 30 minutes to 1 hour. The interviews were each audio taped. I conducted some of the interviews in Arizona at an office at the Anasazi building, and some in the homes of the parents. Two of the follow-up interviews had to be conducted over the phone due to some crisis situations that the two families were facing which did not allow them to attend the scheduled in-person appointments with me. Both of these interviews were recorded directly off the phone line. I conducted all of the interviews in Utah at the homes of the parents. The interviews in the Anasazi office tended to have less distractions and were somewhat more focused. The first interviews were transcribed before the follow-up interviews were conducted. The follow-up interviews were also transcribed and I utilized an electronic copy of all the interviews in the analysis.

Within about 15 minutes after each of the 16 interviews, I dictated, alone, an after-interview journal. In this journal I reflected on my overall experience of the interview and my relationship with the parents. I also utilized an ongoing “dissertation ideas journal” which I kept on my computer. This allowed me to write down thoughts, ideas, and plans for the research whenever I thought of them.

Grand Tour Questions

I developed three grand tour questions (Spradley, 1979, 1980) for the first interviews. These grand tour questions relate directly to the entire purpose of this research to find out how these parents experience both their relationship with and their parenting of their adolescent following the Anasazi experience. The questions were relatively simple, which offered the parents freedom to speak at length.

Grand Tour Question 1

What is the nature of your relationship with your adolescent child after having experienced the Anasazi program?

For this grand tour question I used the following follow up prompt questions, but also allowed these follow-ups to be context specific to each interview and determined in the moment of the interview.
In what way is your relationship with your adolescent different, in either positive or negative ways that you would attribute to Anasazi?

What is specifically different, if anything, in your parenting of your adolescent in your day to day life which you would attribute to Anasazi?

(If positive difference for either) What made this change possible?

(If positive difference for either) Why are these differences meaningful to you?

**Grand Tour Question 2**

Please tell me about the ideas that most influenced your parenting before Anasazi. What is your opinion about what you see as the common ideas and techniques about parenting adolescents in our culture today? Has your Anasazi experience influenced these opinions? If so how?

This second grand tour question invited the parents to reflect on their parenting and relationship with their adolescent before and after Anasazi, and their thoughts about what may have been the cultural ideas and influences on their parenting before Anasazi. I wanted them to reflect on both their own experiences of parenting before Anasazi and what they see as common in society today concerning parenting. I wanted to ensure that they were speaking in part from their own experiences concerning how cultural discourses may have shaped their parenting practices before Anasazi and now.

**Grand Tour Question 3**

In what ways could the Anasazi experience have been more helpful to you in your parenting and your relationship with your adolescent?

This question was important because I wanted to give each of the parents a chance to talk about the things they wished had been different about Anasazi, and what they saw as the shortcomings of the program and how it can be improved. I believe this has provided some initial ideas and direction for improving the effectiveness of the Anasazi program, specifically with regard to parent’s relationships with and parenting of their adolescents.

**Evaluation Question**

Recall the two ways of being idea from the Arbinger relationship seminar at Anasazi [briefly remind parents about this idea as needed]. What would you say has been the feel of our discussion today in terms of responsiveness vs. resistance?
After the completion of these interview questions I then asked a question to evaluate their experience of our interview, similar to a debriefing question. This question invited the parents to reflect on the moral quality of their experience with me in the interview. The purpose of this question was to offer a place in the interviews for the parents to critically consider their own way of being within the interview and how they experienced the interview. In the first two interviews I used the following follow-up prompts:

- In what ways have you experienced me being responsive or resistant to you as a person? (Prompt: This is the way I tended to ask this question. Though I also tended to explain myself as needed in each interview if this was not clear).
- Have you felt heard by me?
- Has it been your sense that I have seen you as persons in this interview time?
- Would you say your responses have come from a responsive place in your heart or a resistant place?

In the first couple interviews I realized that asking the parents to critically reflect on whether I was responsive to them or not was not appropriate, and not philosophically congruent. It was not philosophically congruent because according to Warner (1997a, 2001) and Arbinger (2003) I can only reflect on whether I am responsive to others or not; I cannot accurately judge whether another person is resistant or responsive toward me in their way of being. Even though it may at times seem quite evident, it cannot be completely evident to me because I cannot be in the interior of their mind and heart. Therefore it was not appropriate for me to ask them to judge whether I was responsive or resistant to them, nor did it seem helpful. I noted the following in the after-interview journal after the second couple I interviewed:

I'm having some difficulty with the question of asking them whether they feel I was responsive to them. I'm not sure the parents would say no. So I would like to find a way to be more critical about that and I'm deciding now that these after-interview journals are very key to that.

From then on I only asked the following follow-up prompt for the third interviews, “Would you say your responses have come from a responsive place in your heart or a resistant place?” This follow-up prompt was critical for each interview, and the after-interview
journals were indeed a key part of my own reflection on the moral quality of my way of being with the parents in each interview.

*Follow-Up Interview Questions*

While analyzing the first interview questions into major themes, I developed what would be the questions for the follow-up interviews. I developed in my dissertation ideas journal a number of things that I wanted to find out more about. Some were logistical, some questions came from readings I was doing for this research. Overall, these interviews tended to be both a logistical and theoretical clean-up of the things left out of the first interviews. Each couple or parent said somewhat different things in the first interviews and therefore I partially tailored the follow-up interviews to each set of parents. Unlike the first interview, these questions were not grand tour questions, but quite specific and to the point. The following is a template of questions I used for the follow-up interviews. To better prepare the parents, I sent a tailored copy of this template to them to read over before the follow-up interview. I asked most of these questions to each set of parents; this template did not change dramatically between each set of parents. I did not include question six or seven in the template of questions I sent to each of the parents, but I did ask each in each second interview.

1. To start off, I would like to invite each of you to give me a brief description of your spouse. I would like my university committee members who read this report to have a rich description of each of you, so that they, and I, can have a better feel for each of you as people.

2. After having read or looked over the transcript from the first interview, is there anything you would like to further explain, to clarify, add to, to re-describe, to re-say?

3. Please reflect on the relationships you had with any of the employees of Anasazi (front office staff, financial coordinator, seminar presenters, Mike Merchant, Ezekiel, your Shadow, the other Shadows, trail walkers, the aftercare staff). In what ways did you feel honored, respected, cared for, and treated as people? In what ways did you *not* feel treated as people?
3a. Concerning how the people at Anasazi treated you throughout the Anasazi experience, what influence did this have on your experience? How significant was it to what Anasazi provided?

4. In your opinion, does the Anasazi program and do the Arbinger ideas apply equally to mothers and fathers? to boys and girls?

5. What influence did the Anasazi experience have on your relationship with each other, in your marriage and as parents?

6. Recall our first interview when we spoke of cultural/society influences on your parenting and on parents in general. Some parents have described their experience with Anasazi as being freeing or liberating to them. Would that be true for you also? (If they answered “yes” I asked the following prompt.) In what ways was Anasazi a freeing or liberating experience in terms of your parenting of your adolescent? [5]

7. My last question is the same as my last question in the first interview. Recall the two ways of being idea from the Arbinger relationship seminar at Anasazi. What would you say has been the feel of our discussion today in terms of responsiveness vs. resistance? [Or alternatively] Would you say your responses have come from a responsive place in your heart or a resistant place?

Criteria for Quality

In qualitative research various approaches to validity have been proposed including various terms for validity such as trustworthiness, criteria for quality, standards of rigor, verifiability, legitimacy practices, authenticity, and authority. There is not, and likely will not be, consensus on what makes qualitative research valid. Instead, qualitative researchers have offered a number of different approaches to validity, each applicable within certain interpretive theories, approaches, and practices.

Validity is not like objectivity. There are fairly strong theoretical, philosophical, and pragmatic rationales for examining the concept of objectivity and finding it wanting. . . We are persuaded that objectivity is a chimera: a mythological creature that never

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{5} I recognized after the fact that this was a somewhat leading question. In retrospect I would have asked a less leading, more neutral question.
existed, save in the imaginations of those who believe that knowing can be separated from the knower. (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 178, 181)

Throughout this research I have centered ethics as the primary place of validity or quality, particularly the ethical quality of my relationships with the participants.

**Validity as an Ethical Relationship**

This research centers in the moral and ethical in both the methodology and methods. Pivotal to this research has been centering the criteria for quality in the moral-ethical domain, “validity as an ethical relationship” (Lincoln, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Epistemology is bound up in questions of ethics. For instance Parker Palmer (1987) notes, “every way of knowing contains its own moral trajectory” (p. 24). Lincoln and Guba (2000) emphatically state that in qualitative research “the way in which we know is assuredly tied up with both what we know and our relationship with our research participants” (p. 182, emphasis in original). In other words the quality of the relationship we have with participants will affect what we learn from them.

A good deal of current criticism of ethnographic realism, or what is more generally called the crisis of representation in ethnography, is directed at the moral and political requirements of social research practices, not just (or even) their cognitive demands. At issue is how to answer the fundamental question, How should I be toward these people I am studying? (Schwandt, 2000, p. 203)

In 1995 Lincoln provided seven emerging criteria for quality in qualitative research. It was her intent to “understand the ways in which the ethical intersected both the interpersonal and the epistemological (as a form of authentic or valid knowing)” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 182). With regard to these criteria, Lincoln (1995) states, “. . . all, or virtually all, of these criteria are relational” (p. 286). The relational nature of this current research centers it as an ethical endeavor. Lincoln (1995) sums up the importance of “relationality” in qualitative research in a way that resonates with my earlier discussions of Warner and postmodernism as an approach to ethics, “relationality is the major characteristic of research that is neighborly, that is, it is rooted in emerging conceptions of community, shared governance and decision making, and equity” (p.287).
My intent has been to structure the purpose and practice of this research in inviting an ethical relationship with the parent participants, and to write-up this research in a way that is ethically and relationally accountable. Similar to triangulation in qualitative research, I developed and used a number of practices of moral-relational accountability (Carlson, Erickson, & Seewald-Marquardt, 2002) throughout the research. The purpose of having a number of these practices was to approach validity from many different places and to structure into this process a number of practices of accountability in hopes to produce a “gestalt of accountability practices” with the criteria of quality as a whole being greater than the sum of its relational accountability practices. A number of these practices provides a triangulation of them all. This is also similar to Laurel Richardson’s (1997) “crystalline” metaphor. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) explain this crystalline metaphor in terms of triangulation:

Viewed as a crystalline form, as a montage, or as a creative performance around a central theme, triangulation as a form of, or alternative to, validity thus can be extended. Triangulation is the display of multiple, refracted realities simultaneously. Each of the metaphors “works” to create simultaneity rather than the sequential or linear. (p. 6)

My use of many practices of moral-relational accountability was for the purpose of creating a montage of practices to help ensure accountability in the research and an ethical relationship with participants.

Practices of Moral-Relational Accountability

As mentioned above, inviting an ethical relationship was central to the methodology and the criteria for quality. The foremost way I did this was by simple means of seeking to be kind, understanding, accommodating, and friendly in the relationships with the parents. Also primary, in terms of Warner’s philosophy, I sought to be responsive to them as people. I made it my intent to see them as persons just as legitimate as myself, with hopes and dreams, fears and struggles just as real as my own. I sought to allow myself to be touched by their humanity, and moved by their experiences. I sought to be in a place of genuine curiosity and wonder about all that they had to tell me. I sought to be open to them and vulnerable with them as they shared sacred things from their lives, sometimes joyful or hopeful, sometimes
sad or discouraging. This stance, this way of being responsive the humanity of others, is similar to the stance invited and encouraged in narrative therapy (White, 1995, 1997, 2000; White & Epston, 1990). Each of the practices of relational accountability discussed below centered in inviting and engendering an ethical relationship with the parents.

"I Already Know What I Know" Versus "Genuine Inquiry"

After developing the proposal for this research, one of the main critiques of my committee was that it seemed I was starting from a place of "I already know what I know" instead of a place of honest, genuine inquiry. This has rung in my mind ever since then, and I have used this question to continually evaluate everything I have done in the data gathering and analysis of this research. This has been an important heuristic that has acted as a check and balance on all of my emerging ideas through this research process. The purpose of this check is to ensure that I am learning from the parents I interviewed, not just waiting for them to confirm what I already know, thus helping me be accountable to them, their experiences, and their responses.

Informed Consent

Informed consent is a way of attempting to insure legal-ethical and psychological safety of the participants by adequately informing them about the purpose of the research and the expectations of their participation. As such, the informed consent is one small way to help ensure that the research is accountable to the participants. I used an informed consent form required by the Iowa State University Institutional Review Board adapted to this research. Participants read, signed, and asked any questions before the interviews, and a copy of it was given to them to keep (see Appendix C). I also verbally explained confidentiality and what would become of this research in the write-up. Most all the parents had very few or no questions about the informed consent. A couple of the parents asked more about confidentiality.

Follow-up Interviews

The main purpose of the follow-up interviews was to provide me with the chance to interact with, get to know, and develop a better relationship with each of the parents. In the proposal for this research I had originally chosen to do one interview with each parent set and then two focus-groups, one in each state. After completing the first interviews and
developing the emerging methodology more, I realized that I wanted to have a closer relationship with each of these parents if possible, and so I decided to do follow-up interviews with them. I let each of the parents know that I would not be doing focus groups as noted in the informed consent, but that I would be doing a follow-up interview approximately a month later. In addition, the parents’ responses in the first interviews were so rich I concluded that doing focus groups were not necessary because I would likely not learn a lot of new information, but follow-up interviews would allow me to explore other questions as needed. The follow-up interviews did indeed offer me the chance to have a more prolonged engagement with each of the parents, feel more comfortable with them and they with me, and by so doing allowed me to be more accountable to them simply because I know and understand them a little better.

The first interviews were primarily the grand tour questions. The follow-up interviews acted as a check on the first interviews and were a theoretical and logistical “clean-up” from the first interviews. They also allowed me to ask a few additional questions related to things I did not learn enough about from the first interviews, and provided a place for parents to talk about their experience of the first interviews after some time had elapsed. After doing the first interviews, I was very pleased with the quality and richness of the parents’ responses. In the follow-up interviews, all of the parents had only a few comments about the first interviews. All of the parents responded that they enjoyed the first interview and found it meaningful, though to varying degrees. The follow-up interviews also provided for a triangulation of the data since some of the same information from the first interviews was recapitulated or talked about again by the parents in the follow-up interview. The development of the questions for the follow-up interviews while analyzing the first interviews was also an accountability practice. I had to develop the follow-up interviews while analyzing the first interviews; I could not have developed the follow-up interviews a priori because they were dependent on what the parents said in the first interviews. Therefore in the follow-up interviews I was seeking to be accountable to the things they shared with me in the first interviews to get a more rich description.
Thick and Rich Description

I kept the interviews semi-structured and after the grand tour question was asked I let the conversations go in the direction that seemed most salient to the parents in each particular moment. I asked a number of follow-up questions to probe their responses more carefully and invite them to explain more in-depth their responses. I wanted to invite a “thick description” of what they meant by the things they said rather than make a lot of assumptions about the meaning of their responses. This encouragement for “thick description” comes from Clifford Geertz (1973, 1983). As a cultural anthropologist Geertz sought to understand not only the literal surface meaning of behaviors, language, responses, and rituals but in particular the symbolic and cultural meaning of them. Though my own culture was very similar to these parents (White, Christian, experienced with Anasazi) I sought to limit my assumption making by asking a lot of additional questions to uncover more the meaning of the parents’ responses to them, in their words. In doing so I sought to clarify the cultural meaning of their responses at times when that seemed necessary, and with grand tour question two to invite them to reflect on the cultural influences on their parenting both before and after Anasazi. Although in retrospect I realize that I was not in a mode of garnering thick descriptions in every single moment of the interviews, I did keep this focus as an overall orienting focus throughout the interviews.

A similar practice is encouraged in narrative therapy which Michael White refers to as “thick description,” following Geertz, and sometimes as “rich description” (White, 1995, 1997). In narrative therapy this is most often employed in conversations about one’s identity stories and personal experiences to invite persons to reflect on the deeper symbolic and personal meaning of their responses as well as the cultural meanings. Rich description in narrative therapy also involves “thickening the plot” of persons identity stories by creating space for them to richly, more fully describe their lived experience. Because I use this focus in my narrative therapy work, I was able to incorporate this stance toward both thick description and rich description within the interviews with the parents. I believe my attempts at both thick description and rich description created space within these interviews for parents to give responses that were more similar to and resonant with their actual experiences, thoughts, feelings, and opinions, and therefore more accountable to these
parents. Tom Carlson and I (Carlson & Erickson, 2001) discussed rich description as an important aspect of new therapist training and supervision stating “possibilities of creative action in life come as persons are encouraged to develop rich descriptions of their lives that are based in their actual lived experience” (p. 205). Encouraging rich description from these parents allowed them to speak openly, creatively, and with genuine emotion about their experiences and allowed for me to be more accountable to both the “thickness” and the richness of their responses.

After-Interview Journals

The purpose of the after-interview journals was key to the methodology and criteria for quality. It was here that I reflected on the moral and ethical quality of the interview and my relationship with the parents, how I felt about it, how I felt about those I interviewed, and my thoughts I had during the interview (sometimes pertaining to the interview, sometimes flashes of ideas for this research that were sparked by something said in the interview). From Warner’s philosophy, I reflected on whether I was responsive to the parents. Whether I saw and experienced the parents as people, whether I was touched by their humanity, and if I saw them as persons just as legitimate as myself; with hopes and dreams, fears and struggles just as real as my own.

Dissertation Ideas Journal

As I conducted the interviews, read research, analyzed, and theorized, this ongoing journal was the place for me to try to capture the emerging methodology and practices of relational accountability. This was very beneficial for me throughout the research. As an ongoing journal, it became also a place of analysis. Writing in this journal helped me conceptualize and refine the emerging methodology and helped me refine the specific practices of relational accountability that I felt were required by the unique relationships and contexts of the interviews and the entire research project.

Accountability Letter to Anasazi Directors

As I conducted the interviews, two of the sets of parents gave me some very specific feedback about things they were disappointed about with their Anasazi experience that related directly to the services Anasazi provided. These situations were not general critiques, but very specific things that happened in the course of their Anasazi experience with these
two families that were never adequately resolved. I felt strongly that I had an ethical obligation to direct these critiques to Anasazi directors who can make a difference. I asked for permission from these parents to be a liaison with Anasazi and share these things with those in charge. I wrote a letter to Lance Wells (Vice President of Operations), Mike Merchant (Anasazi CEO), and Chris Wallace (Acting Clinical Director) detailing each of the specific situations explained to me by the parents. They were grateful to receive the letter, and were encouraged to help make each of the situations right inasmuch as they are able to. I spoke with Mike and Lance to follow up on these situations on October 31st 2003 and they are in process of addressing them.

"Taking it Back" Practices

Michael White (1997) talks about "taking it back practices" as an important part of narrative therapy. These practices have to do with the two-way nature of therapy relationships, as opposed to the modernist account of therapy as one-way. Therapists’ lives are helped, strengthened, and sustained by their involvement with those who consult them, and it is important that therapists actively structure an accountable way to “take this back” to those who consult them. “Rather than constructing persons as recipients of whatever it is that therapists have to give, reciprocity is invoked” (p. 132). Similarly, Lincoln’s (1995) fifth emerging criteria for quality was “reciprocity,” which Lincoln explained “is argued to be essential because of the person-centered nature of interpretive work” (p. 283). I believe both White and Lincoln are talking about similar things. Research is not a one-way process either. I believe taking it back practices are important practices of ethics, or relational accountability toward the participants. “In these circumstances, therapists [or researchers] become more conscious of the effects, on their lives and on their work, of the trust that is being extended them, and of the acts of inclusion that they are the recipients of” (White, p. 133). My life was influenced, helped, strengthened, and sustained by the relationships with these parents, and the things they so trustingly shared with me. Reciprocity, or taking-it-back practices, has required me to be careful to clearly acknowledge the positive influence and impact of these parents’ responses in my own life and relationships. At the end of each of the interviews, I briefly talked with the parents about my own responsiveness to them as people, and what it meant to me personally to talk with them. In some of the interviews, I shared specific things
that influenced me in some way from what they said, and thanked them for their influence on my life. After the completion of the project, I wrote specific thank you letters to each parent, thanking them for their involvement and the specific ways I felt their responses and my relationship with them have influenced my life as a person, researcher, and therapist.

Theoretical Analysis and Journal Story Analysis

When I began the analysis of the data I began forming plans for organizing the data into themes and drawing out the patterns from these in order to offer a rich description of the parents' experiences with regard to Anasazi, implications for the Anasazi program, implications for parenting of adolescents, and implications for wilderness therapy and other intervention with parents of adolescents. But my plans all focused on the theoretical aspects of this research and I did not want to confine the entire analysis to technical readers within the mental health field. I wanted to find a way to aesthetically present this work so that it could be readable to the parents I interviewed, to all the staff members at Anasazi, to any mental health professionals, and to any parents of adolescents. I realized my analysis and presentation for this project needed to reach all these audiences. I decided to do two differing analysis, and two separate presentations. The purpose is not to have these analyses and presentations necessarily coalesce into one, but rather to offer both analyses and presentations as triangulation or as a crystalline form in presenting this data with the express purpose of it being accountable to all the audiences, especially the parents interviewed. I have done a theoretical/technical analysis and I have done a more aesthetic, poetic, story-form analysis I have called the "journal-story." This is a quasi-fiction with characters I created who represent a typical mother and father who place their adolescent in Anasazi. The primary contents of their personal journal entries (the story-line), are direct quotations and paraphrases from the parents interviewed. This was a narrative metaphor used to alternatively present the data (Creswell, 1998; Hamersley & Atkinson, 1995). This writing of the "journal story" was simultaneously analysis and presentation. It was then this journal story that was the "Findings and Discussion" given to the parents interviewed to read and critique as a member check.

In the Research Strategy section I positioned this research in part as "action research." The primary action results for this research will be the detailed report/presentation I will give
to Anasazi following the conclusion of the dissertation defense, and the Journal Story which will be part of that report. It is my hope that Anasazi may take this research report and the Journal Story and utilize these as appropriate for their ongoing staff training and development of their program. Also these results could potentially be quite helpful in their services to current and potential parent participants as well as alumni parents. It is my hope that these results act as a catalyst for Anasazi to extend the action elements of this research.

*Member Checks*

Member check refers to a methodological process in qualitative research that assists in insuring the credibility, quality, and verification of the research process and interpretation by checking or collaborating with informants concerning the data, analysis, and conclusions of the research to determine if it is accurate and appropriate to them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This allows for the analysis and write-up to be intimately accountable to the informants. I believe member checks defined as this are a way of “structuring ongoing local accountability” (White, 1995b, p. 163) into the qualitative research process. Although as the researcher I maintained a central position in the analysis and write-up, doing member checks and inviting the help and approval of the participants allowed the analysis and write-up to be less centered in my own beliefs and ideas and more centered in the experiences and voices of the participants.

There are a few cautions regarding the participants involvement in member checks. Some parents showed little interest in being a part of the interpretive process. Regardless, accountability to the researcher-participant relationship was fulfilled by simply the offer being made to the parents, giving them the chance to participate in the member checks, and allowing them to decide what they felt would be best. Additionally, it is important to note that I do not mean to erase the boundary between researcher and participant. Instead, using member checks as accountability practices has been for the express purpose of reducing any possible harmful effects of the hierarchical positions of power I am in as researcher. I used several member checks in this research to provide more of a triangulation of the data to assure this criterion of quality.

*Evaluation questions.* One of the primary ways of doing member checks was unique to this research. It involved the asking of the evaluation questions at the end of each
interview. It was in the evaluation questions that I was able to ask for the parents' opinions of "where their heart was" in the interviews, or in other words whether they felt themselves resistant or responsive according to Warner's two ways of being. For most of the parents it was a responsive experience in both interviews, but for a couple they did note some feelings of resistance they had. Drawing from Warner's philosophy (1997; Williams, 1992, 1994), when we are in the resistant way of being we are in the world untruthfully with others. Providing this check was a key piece of assuring the truthfulness of the parents' responses.

Transcripts given for review. Another important member check was giving the parents a copy of the first and second interview transcripts. I encouraged them to read over them, make any corrections, and to tell me any comments they had about the transcripts. Most of the parents noted grammar and spelling changes in the transcripts, but none had additions to make or major corrections. All of the parents felt confident that the transcripts accurately represented our conversations and the intent of their responses. I also encouraged the parents to keep the copy (digital or hard copy) for themselves.

Narrative or visual presentation invitation. Shortly after completing the first interviews I began to think about the fact that the analysis and write up of this whole project would in the end all filter through me. I wanted to find ways to present these parents' experiences and their relationship now with their son/daughter more from their own direct experience, not filtered through me. I decided to invite each of the parents to present some kind of small "presentation" that would capture for them, either visually or narratively, a richly described "slice" of the differences they see, think, and/or feel in their relationship with and parenting of their adolescent, with an emphasis on "feel" since that seemed to be the heart of these parents' relational experiences with their adolescent. I was also careful to note that I wanted this presentation to reflect not just the positives, but their full experience as much as possible.

At the end of each of the follow-up interviews, I explained this invitation to the parents, and asked if they would be willing to do this. Each of them agreed to do it. I also included a letter explaining the invitation more in-depth to them (Appendix E). I emphasized making this an easy yet potent thing for the parents to do, something that they could do over
a weekend that would not take very long. Unfortunately only two of the sets of parents ended up completing presentations.

The presentations that were completed constitute supporting documents to the findings, as a method of triangulation. This invitation to parents was inspired directly by my desire for this research to have an “action research” component to it. I will offer to Anasazi this presentation invitation project idea that they could utilize if they wish with other parents. My hope is that by doing this there will not be an “end” to this research, because hopefully this idea or this research as a whole will be a catalyst for further specific and coordinated action on the part of Anasazi and parent alumni.

Read journal story. As mentioned briefly above, the primary member check was done by giving a copy of the journal story to each of the parents and by inviting them to carefully read it and tell me or write to me their comments regarding it. I wanted to have their approval for the way I have utilized their comments in the story, and their approval for its overall quality and accuracy, if it is meaningful to them, and if it adequately represents their personal experiences in its overall feel. All of the parents agreed to my requests for this. I followed up with additional emails and phone calls and although some committed more than once to give me feedback on the Journal Story, in the end only three of the sets of parents did. Therefore, this aspect of the member checks remained somewhat inconclusive or weak.

Daily Living Practices to Promote Moral-Relational Accountability

One other way that I attempted to ensure an ethical relationship with these parents came in the form of my own personal critical approach to the way I have lived my day to day life during the time of this entire project. Drawing from validity as an ethical relationship, I believe that my ability to invite and participate in an ethical relationship with these parents has been partly influenced by whether I was seeking to live in contingent, ethical, even loving ways with all the people in my life. From the parenting pyramid idea, the second level from the bottom is the parent-parent relationship level. Applying the pyramid to me as the researcher, the second level becomes my relationship with Anasazi staff, my relationship with my committee members, and my relationship with my family, friends, and humanity in general. If I am embroiled in collusions with any person in my life (particularly those closest to me), this would potentially affect my ability to genuinely connect with the parents in the
interviews. There were a couple times at the beginning of the interviews that I felt preoccupied with difficulties in my relationships with persons close to me that had an influence on my way of being in the interviews. These were fairly minor, but had an effect and I was able to relate this in the after-interview journals.

I wanted to be critical about my own way of being in all my relationships during the time I was involved in this research. I wanted to, as encouraged in the parenting pyramid, actively be seeking to help things go right. In my relationships with my fiancée, family, and friends, I sought to actively help things go right, to be kind, caring, and serving. This proved more difficult than I expected because under the stresses of completing this research it was easy to fall out of contact with some family members and friends, and treat them as irrelevancies, or to fail to help and serve those that I did keep in close contact with. In addition, another way I attempted to promote moral-relational accountability was by seeking mind, body, and spirit wellness. I believe this research, all of the reading, writing, and theorizing kept my mind alert. I sought to actively follow good diet and health practices. And what seemed most important to me personally, I sought to live true to my own personal spiritual convictions and live close to those spiritual feelings of my heart through active participation in practices of my own personal spirituality and my own religious observances. This all also proved to be more difficult than I had expected, but I was able to reflect on this in the after-interview journals as an attempt to be critical about these important influences on my way of being.

Sharing the Perquisites

Lincoln’s (1995) seventh emerging criterion for quality is the importance of sharing the perquisites of privilege (i.e. credit, royalties, rights to publication, etc.) with research participants. To address this I included in the informed consent (see Appendix C) the following “if the research is accepted for publication, and only if you desire, I would be glad to indicate you in a byline identifying and thanking you for your participation. Also, if this research is published as a book, you may be given the opportunity to share in the benefits of that publication, which may include royalties, credits, etc. accordingly.” This concludes all of the criteria for quality in this research. I will now explain how the data were analyzed.
How Data were Analyzed

The beginning of the analysis followed a standard data analysis procedure of reading the transcripts through to immerse myself in the data and get a sense for the whole (Agar, 1980, cited in Creswell, 1998), then reading the transcripts and identifying major themes and a number of sub-themes within each theme, then re-reading the transcripts and copying and pasting significant quotations into a table of those themes and sub-themes. As these themes developed, I allowed for the themes to change, made combinations of some themes, and allowed the theme table to be reorganized according to what I was finding in the interviews. I wanted to be cautious about the effect of the themes in constraining how I would interpret the interviews:

As Atkinson (1992, p. 459) points out, one of the disadvantages of the coding schemes used in both interview and text-based analysis is that, because they are based upon given sets of categories, they furnish “a powerful conceptual grid” from which it is difficult to escape. (Silverman, 2000, p. 825)

During the creation of this theme table, I began theorizing the analysis, and making preliminary plans for major themes of the discussion as those were emerging. I read through the theme table a few times and continued theorizing the discussion of the themes according to the patterns that emerged. These patterns structure the Findings section under the discussion of research questions and the implications of the findings for: the Anasazi Foundation, the parenting of adolescents, and wilderness therapy and other intervention with parents of adolescents. It was also during the creation of this theme table that I was inspired with the idea to do the journal story analysis and presentation. For the after-interview journals, I also created an analysis theme table of the major emergent themes in them. In addition, throughout the analysis and theorizing, I used my dissertation ideas journal to write down, develop, organize, and bring together the emerging ideas.

In the journal story analysis I developed each character, husband and wife, carefully, before I wrote the story. I also wrote a background story of them and their adolescent. Then as a kind of performance (Denzin, 2000; Turner, 1986) I got into each character and wrote the story from their character or voice. I used quotations from the analysis theme table, primarily direct quotations changing tenses and structure as needed, and some paraphrasing.
In writing the story I matched the gender of the participants with the gender of the story characters. I also utilized my own experience and knowledge about parents at Anasazi to develop the characters, and fill in the story-line of their experiences. I wanted these characters' experiences to be rich and *experience near* for any parents who had an adolescent at Anasazi, or even any parents of adolescents. I wanted the story to be believable, and an accurate reflection of what I learned from these parents, not grandiose or sensationalized. I wanted the characters to be specific, particular, unique, and real, but have broad universal appeal. As inspiration for this writing, I read and re-read ideas from Brenda Ueland (1938/1987) and Laurel Richardson (1997, 2000).
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Major Emergent Themes

The six major themes that emerged in the analysis of all the interviews are: 1) The influence of the Arbinger ideas on their relationships and their lives, 2) Specific changes in their relationships: Not referencing Arbinger, 3) Adopted a more critical approach to their parenting, 4) Anasazi a spiritual experience, 5) Disappointments and where Anasazi needs improvement, and 6) Interviews were a responsive experience. I will discuss these themes and the sub-themes associated with each.

The Influence of the Arbinger Ideas on Their Relationships and Their Lives

These parents’ experience with learning about and implementing the Arbinger ideas into their parenting and their lives was more significant than anything else discussed in these interviews, despite the fact that in the grand tour questions I did not ask them specifically about their experiences with the Arbinger seminar. Each of the parents in the interviews was impressed by and grateful for the Arbinger seminar and materials, even the two sets of parents that reported somewhat negative experiences with Anasazi. Each of the parents spoke highly of these ideas, and what they have meant to them in their personal lives and relationships. Most significant for these parents in the changes they feel in their parenting and in their relationship with their adolescent were the Arbinger ideas. This theme broke down into five sub-themes, 1) Took time for the ideas to make sense, but are powerful. 2) Seeing their child as a person changed their relationship, 3) Reflective approach and self-determination, 4) Influences on their marriage, family, friendships, and work relationships, and 5) Wished they would have had it as young parents.

Took Time for the Ideas to Make Sense, But Are Powerful

Each of the parents talked about the ideas being significant to them in the seminars, and the seminars being a powerful experience, but also that they took a while to make sense of the ideas and implement them effectively in their lives. These parents spoke to the challenge that these ideas sometimes represented and how it changed their way of making sense of their parenting and all of their relationships.
Even though Stephen and Terri reported a “somewhat positive and somewhat negative” experience overall, they talked very positively of the Arbinger seminar and the book by Warner (2001):

**Stephen:** I think probably the most powerful thing that we were given during the Anasazi experience was this resource with the Arbinger Institute. We bought the book *Bonds That Make Us Free* and read it and really liked it. We like and we very regularly use the terms that are in the book... that describes horribilizing and self-justification, that whole process... I think that probably provided us with the greatest [help], in terms of our parenting and relationship with all of our kids. (p. 4)*. 

... and I use the language all of the time, even in a business setting because it’s a very applicable language to a lot of different facets I think of our lives. (p. 5)

Doug talked about how he felt the ideas were simplistic and did not seem to apply at first, but then ended up being profound for him.

**Doug:** What surprised me is that I think about it and watch since then that how, when you act on those impulses [one’s in-the-moment sense to do something for another person], it makes a huge difference in your relationship with those people. I was surprised at what a powerful idea it was. It seems so basic and so shallow I didn’t think it could have that big of an impact on your relationships with people, but it has a huge impact and I don’t know why. I don’t know what there is to that. It creates either such a good relationship or such a barrier [discussing whether we betray or honor that sense to do something for another]. (p. 6)

Sally explained that the changes she and Jim have felt (speaking of their marital relationship and their parenting) have been gradual, and sometimes difficult to notice.

**Sally:** I think there’s been a definite difference. But I think it’s been hard for us to see it because it’s gradual. If we changed overnight we would know. But I think because it’s a gradual, over the years, as you learn more and more and put the principles into practice, then the change is gradual. Because I know that our kids, when they were at

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*References for the interview quotations in the format “p. #” indicate the first interview page number, and references in the format “2p. #” indicates that it is the follow-up interview (2) and the page number.*
Anasazi, our older kids, said that we fought a lot. . . . We don’t do that anymore. We just see more eye to eye on things. Once in awhile we’ll have a little bit of an argument over how somebody is taking care of something or a situation with the kids. But not really . . . So I think the more you learn to be out of the box in every relationship then all relationships in the family should improve. But I really think it’s a gradual thing. It’s not something you can say, “Wow, look at the difference in our family” over night. It’s having this discussion and these interviews that made me sit down and think, “Wow, we really have changed”. (2p. 8-9)

During our first interview, both Kevin and Stacy talked about little things, ideas specifically from the Arbinger seminar that come up for them in their lives that help them. Not things they always remember, only sometimes, but that make a real difference.

**Kevin:** . . . little things pop up in my mind that are clearly from Anasazi that I remember as I’m doing things. One of those is the idea of doing, and again I don’t remember all of the details about it but doing something for somebody because it’s the right thing to do instead of saying, “that’s something they should be doing.” I don’t remember the exact,

**Marty:** Yeah, the idea of self-betrayal.

**Kevin:** The idea comes up that that’s the right thing to do. “I should do that for that person because it’s the right thing to do,” and I know that’s clearly Anasazi and every now and then something like that will pop up in my mind and it helps me make a good decision around the house with the family and such. (p. 5)

Nick talked at length about how he did not get the ideas at first, not in the seminar or during the whole Anasazi experience. It was not until almost a year later, when he and his wife were considering divorce, that he re-investigated the ideas and had an awakening about how they fit for him. Like Stephen and Terri, this came particularly after reading Warner (2001)

**Nick:** It was when we went through all of the Anasazi seminars. I could get to this point, I could get to here [linear hand motion] and I could understand and apply all of this [space between his hands]. I couldn’t get over that hump. And that’s the hardest
thing. I think that’s when I worked the hardest. After reading Bonds That Make Us Free I could see the big picture

Marty: What would you say that hump was? The application of it?

Nick: I could probably grab any of my books [workbooks from seminars] and I could see exactly where it was. Because I understood all of the material, and every one of the books I could get to this point, in the outline,

Marty: so up to maybe getting out of the box, becoming responsive?

Nick: Yeah!, [Angela laughs in confirmatory response] getting out of the box. And if I’m out, then how do I get you out? . . . But it’s not about getting you out. As long as I’m out, that’s where I had my biggest problem and I think Bonds That Make Us Free is what helped me to get over that hump and helped me further my experience. (p. 9)

Nick explained this more in our follow-up interview:

Nick: . . . until I read Bonds I did not get it. I think that was most frustrating to me. Sometimes I know it, but I can not apply it. That is when it all clicked together for me, as opposed to the seminars or when John was on the trail. (2p. 6)

*Seeing Their Child as a Person Changed Their Relationship*

The Warner and Arbinger concept of responsiveness, defined as seeing others as persons, was a very significant experience for these parents. All but one of the sets of parents spoke of seeing their daughter or son in a way that qualitatively changed their experience of them and their relationship with them. These parents all spoke of what this meant to their relationship then and what it means now. For example Doug explained how this change of seeing his son as a problem, then as a person made a difference.

Doug: One of the things that I focus on and make a conscious effort is, . . . what Mary and I were learning as part of that experience with the seminars . . . was looking at Justin as a person rather than Justin as a problem and clearly before this experience I looked at him, and dealt with him a lot of times, as a problem rather than a son with issues and feelings and so forth. So that’s probably the biggest change I’ve made is trying to look at him as a person. I tell you what, since he’s been home he has been so much fun to have around and we have been able to have a good, not just father son relationship, but being good friends. (p. 1)
According to Thomas, *The Choice* seminar and the focus on seeing others as persons was the foundation of the changes in his relationships with his daughters as well as others.

**Thomas:** I think the intellectual understanding of *The Choice* has had a major impact. It's a powerful insight to recognize a person as an individual rather than as an obstacle or being irrelevant. I think the other thing is the training of *The Choice* really brought home the fact that we can't be the person doing the changing. We can only change ourselves and how we react to it determines our own comfort level. So I would say that the learning and the training of *The Choice* has a major impact on understanding... So I think that understanding is probably the basis for most of the change. (p. 7)

Jim and Sally had a large number of parent training classes, workshops, etc. when they were younger parents. They noted it all was traditional behavior modification that they now do not like. They talk of the power of seeing others as people as having your heart right with them. They explained:

**Jim:** ... And that's the huge difference in the parenting approach is that in the traditional way of parenting you can't fix the problem and the reason that Anasazi is successful is that it absolutely turns the traditional things on their ends and says, "No, that's not, you have to let go, you have to see your children as people, you have to," it just takes all those things and turns them completely around. For us that's the difference between night and day. It's a huge difference... It's hard, it's like the seminar. People say, "Well, what do I do in this circumstance," and the answer is, "You'll do the right thing, if your heart's right" that's the problem with the parenting classes [referring to the traditional behavior modification courses they had], they try to reform us, they try to say, "If you have this thing that happens, this is what you do to deal with it." And it doesn't matter what you do if your heart is wrong. If your view of that child is wrong it's not going to work.

**Sally:** It also doesn't matter what you do if your heart's right because then you do, even if it's not the best thing in the world it works out if your heart is right. (p. 18)

Kevin explained how seeing his son as a person helps him to deal with difficult situations with him.
Kevin: One of the things that stuck out for me that we learned there is seeing Lance as a person rather than being controlled as much as we did before. I try to remember that. So even though at times he’s making bad choices, I try to see him as a person and try to understand his feelings a little bit better. That helps. (p. 4)

Angela explained that seeing her son and her husband differently was what was most important about her Anasazi experience.

Angela: The thing that had the most effect on me was my Shadowing sessions. Our Shadow being able to help me see John for who John is, not what I want him to be or what he’s not doing or what he isn’t. And not just that, she also helped me see Nick [husband] and be able to look at things like that.

Jennifer explains the power of seeing her daughter as a person and what it has meant to her personally, and how it is something she has to continually go back to and remind herself about.

Jennifer: It is true, you do forget that they are a gift, you do... Part of her success, was me having to change my mind and change my heart and see her differently. If I did not have that mind and heart and soul altering experience and was able to truly see her differently and give her that back when she came back, then I don’t think she would have been able to be as successful and then that’s something that I had to continually work at and work with myself so that I didn’t fall back into that old nature and those old ways because they become habit... When she came back into my home it was wonderful. It was a honeymoon stage for the first couple of weeks or so but then I find myself going back into the old nature and I have to go back to those books and I have to go back to remembering and saying, “No,” and telling those thoughts, “No, she’s changed and I’ve changed and not only is she not the same, I’m not the same. And we have both changed.” Therefore these thoughts are lies and that, to me, is the key. And with time it became easier and easier and now it’s just second nature. It will still try to pop back up because Tori’s not perfect, she’s got two major, major pitfalls [after Anasazi] and boy I’ll tell you what, those thoughts come up and go, “Oh, she’s fallen back into that old nature, and she’s falling and failing,” and I’m just like, “No she’s not. No she’s not. I know her heart,” and then I remember the
Word [Bible], “God looks at our hearts.” Who am I to look at anything else but her heart? I have to look at her heart. I fail, why should I look at her any different? He doesn’t look at me any different. He looks at my heart, why should I not look at her heart? . . . No, her heart is good. It’s just a process. (p. 3)

Jennifer spoke more about this and to me her comments exemplify the power and feeling of genuinely seeing others as people and being touched by their humanity despite their struggles and problems.

. . . Tori will come home from being at school and have the most horrible day and it would be as if she had not had one ounce of Anasazi on her and literally would come in like she was my daughter from the past, but yet when she would walk in that door I would refuse to look at her in any other way except the way that I looked at her when she came down that hill from Anasazi with that glow and that radiance of looking so beautiful the way I saw her. Oh my gosh, she was so beautiful [weeping]. She found herself. She had found herself, my daughter had finally found her spirit and she found herself and I refuse to look at her in any other way than the way she looked when she saw me that first day. You just got to keep looking at them that way, you can’t stop looking at them like that. And they know, they look in your eyes and they know if you look at them differently too. They see, they see. . . . She has found herself and she has found her spirit and she is not of this world. She is that beautiful creature of what she found there in the wild, she found herself and became herself out there. And that’s who she is and that’s who I want her to always, always. That’s who I want her to grow into and to become. (p. 9)

Reflective Approach and Self Determination

I noticed that many of the parents spoke to how the Arbinger ideas allowed them to take a more reflective approach to their parenting and their lives, and from that to be more purposeful and intentional about their parenting in a self-determined way. All but one of the sets of parents spoke to this. A significant aspect of the Arbinger seminar and training is that it provides parents with the ability to step back from their lives, reflect on their parenting, and question their motives and intents. This then allows these parents to actively choose their way of being and be more intentional about their actual behaviors and parenting practices.
Predominantly, a number of the parents talked about the significance of the ideas helping them step back and realize that they cannot control others, they can only change themselves.

**Doug**: ... and I think it relates a lot with what Mary is talking about, recognizing the things that you control versus the things that you influence and don’t get frustrated by not being able to change the things that you don’t control. You’ll still try to influence them and you’ll still try to make changes in your own life but don’t get frustrated because you can’t change the other person. (2p. 7)

Laura said similar things, and points out that this reflective position is possible, perhaps even needed, in each moment:

**Laura**: ... but probably in a way the Anasazi experience was kind of a, cleansing is not the right word but to some degree cleansing in that “okay I can let go of these things over here, I can own my own behavior, my own attitudes and go forward from here.” It’s opened up a lot of things that were closed. But I can reopen them.

**Marty**: Um huh, I notice myself doing that a lot.

**Laura**: That was the beauty of interacting with the people at Anasazi, particularly the instructors saying, “I just did this yesterday” it’s like, oh you people who know the program inside and out? and it’s a daily process. It’s almost a *minute-ly* process of making those choices of however you’re going to respond. (p. 18)

Sharla talked about the importance of stepping back from the situation and contemplating one’s motivations and reactions.

**Sharla**: I was remembering how I need to see my motivations for my reactions and not being in the box, that was good. ... it was soul searching to the way you react. Get yourself clear before you interact with your kids. That was good, new stuff. I guess as a parent you assume you’re always right and that’s your first mistake. You’re not always right. And so I think that a good balance came from Anasazi. With your motivations, you look at why you’re reacting and get that worked out before you react to your child. (p. 14)

Angela talked about how reflecting on her parenting techniques has allowed her to be more effective with correction particularly with reference to the parenting pyramid.
Angela: Another thing is discipline and that goes back to the pyramid when they talked about that and how to discipline. Before John went, he was always grounded or we took things away from him. And it’s not so much that way anymore. It’s more looking at what the problem is, fixing the problem then not having to do as much grounding. He hasn’t been grounded since Anasazi. It doesn’t mean that there aren’t problems but we address the problem differently. We try to work through the real problem, not just the surface. Less confrontation. (p. 2)

*Influences on their Marriage, Family, Friends, and Work Relationships*

A few of the parents talked about the influence of the Arbinger ideas on their marital relationship in the first interviews. I was interested to know if the rest of the parents might have things to say about this as well, so I purposefully asked this question to the others in the follow-up interviews. All the married parents noted that the Arbinger ideas have influenced their marital relationship, some much more so than others. Those whose marriages were most influenced by the Arbinger ideas tended to be those who had experienced some significant struggles in their marriages. In the first interviews I had not thought to ask about their marital relationship specifically with regard to the Arbinger ideas, but thankfully Terri offered it on her own in the very first interview I conducted for this research.

Terri: I think it [Arbinger] probably was a real bright thing in our relationship [pointing to her husband]. I think our communication really improved. I think Stephen was able to see things in himself that he didn’t see before and I think our relationship and, which of course when you improve the mother and father relationship then everybody wins, you know. So I think that communication between the two of us really improved. . . . I think that we have just taken step upon step and we’ve actually done other things since then that has just added to our Arbinger experience that has just really helped to open communication. . . . Arbinger was like the first step in really opening some deep communication between Stephen and me. Arbinger is awesome. *Bonds That Make Us Free* is awesome. (p. 10-11)

Laura talked about how applying the Arbinger ideas to her marriage is an ongoing process, something that takes time and continual effort. She also noted that the improvements in their marital relationship has had an important impact on their daughters.
Laura: . . . I think that as the principles are applied, as we worked individually to apply those principles, I think that they have made a difference. I personally think that it’s again something that you have to go back and review because it’s easy to slip back into the way that our relationship has been for years which needs some improvement. But I think that the principles are, as you use them, but it’s like you’ve got to use it. You’ve got to apply them. You just can’t say, “Oh I’ve learned it” and that’s it. And I think as we individually go back and reflect on that and realize it’s not just for our relationship with our daughters but it helps our relationship, it’s for our relationship with each other, our relationship with anybody that we come in contact with. . . . When our daughters realized that we were both trying to see the best in each other all of the sudden they realize, “Maybe there’s some unity here between these two people,” and I think they recognized that we were trying to be, what I would say, on the same page and work together and respect each other. So I think it was a positive thing for them. It still is when they see it. (2p. 4)

Many of the parents talked about the spreading out effect of the changes in their relationship with each other on their children and the environment of their home. For example Sally said:

Sally: Within a family if you’re in the box with one person, like if the mom and dad are in a box about how to handle kids, it affects the whole family. So even if you’re in the box with one of your kids, it doesn’t just affect that one child, the negativity, the frustration, the emotions and the mood that they put you in when you’re with them, it affects everybody else in the family. (2p. 8-9)

Angela and Nick both talked about how the ideas were a tremendous impact on their marriage, because they were planning on getting divorced. This was a number of months after their son returned from Anasazi, but it was the Arbinger ideas that helped them start to heal their relationship, particularly as they both took time to seriously study and understand the ideas, especially Nick. Angela explains:

Angela: . . . Had we not taken those classes we would be divorced. That would have made a big difference. Last year we were real close and got back to those principles reading the book, Bonds That Make Us Free and just evaluating. So yes, it has made a
difference in our relationship and we talk more... we don’t always agree with each other but we do talk more and focus on our relationship as well. Because if we don’t have a good relationship we can’t have the family good. (p. 3)

As partially indicated already, many of the parents talked about the effect of the Arbinger ideas on their family relationships other than their marriage and relationship with their adolescent. This was a spreading out affect from those relationships to their other children and relatives. Mary explained:

Mary: ... when there is the tension it seems like nothing goes right, even between you and your other kids, your spouse, you and anybody. So that’s one reason why it’s so important and meaningful to have that good relationship because it’s not just between me and him it affects my relationship between everybody else. (p. 4)

Thomas puts this into the broader context of society, and the negative influences in society that act against family cohesion and peace.

Thomas: I think the training of The Choice and understanding those types of relationships, when applied properly, do in fact do a lot of compensating for the pressures of society that pull a family apart. Because you’re forced to see them as individuals rather than as obstacles, or vehicles, or irrelevant. (p. 13)

Sally explained that the changes in their family relationships over the years after first going to the Arbinger seminars were gradual, even imperceptible to her, until other friends started to comment on the closeness and love they see in her family.

Sally: They will come in and say, “Your family is so close. There seems to be a real bond here, a real unity, a real love. You love to hang out with each other. You like to be with each other. You support each other.” And I never really thought of it that way until I started hearing people say that and then I looked at it and I thought, “Boy what a switch,” because it wasn’t that way before. There was always more contention in the home, there was more, the kids were fighting more, more like competing for our time or attention. (p. 2)

Nick briefly summed up the ways the ideas have influenced their family relationships:
Nick: To me it has made our [marriage] relationship different, it has made our relationship with our children different. It has given us abilities to talk with our children a lot more openly than in the past. (2p. 7)

This spreading out had a continued effect for a number of these parents on their relationships with friends, co-workers, and other people in their lives. For example, Doug and Mary both talked about this:

Doug: And not only with Justin [son]. There are other people that I associate with at work, home, church that I treated as problems or things instead of people and so there really has been some, for me anyway, there has been some benefit in the training and that eye opening that if you have a tendency to treat people as things rather than as people then it strains your relationship in a lot of ways. (p. 1)

Mary said something similar later on in the same interview:

Mary: It goes back to your way of being and everything, like I said earlier. You can’t have a relationship with anybody when you’re at ends with one person. It affects you and everybody else. (p. 15)

Sharla also explained how important this is to her as she starts a new business:

Sharla: Something else, the relationship, seeing people as objects or vehicles and so, that helps me look at my other relationships, particularly as I’m starting a new business and trying to get people to buy a program that helps with learning disabilities. I have to be really careful that I’m seeing people as people and not as objects or vehicles, so it’s helped me in my relationships. (p. 10)

Wished They Would Have Had the Arbinger Seminar as New Parents

Though it was not a part of the questions and not something I was thinking about for this research, a number of the parents offered in the interviews that they now wish they would have had the Arbinger training early on in their marriage and even before having children. Many of them talked openly and candidly about this and strongly recommend this to any new parents and newlyweds.

Both Stephen and Nick talked about how having these principles and training may have helped them avoid some of the difficulties they had with their children.
Stephen: I think when we went through the seminar and got some of the fundamentals about the “Parenting Pyramid” and building relationships . . . and discipline . . . there are certainly things that I think had we better understood earlier, as younger parents, may have averted and helped us to not have some of the challenges that we’ve had with our kids. (p. 7)

Nick: I guess what I think about that experience, as parents, had we been able to learn more about these things far earlier in our marriage, before our children are 16 years old and having problems, maybe we would have been able to change our parenting and help our children to not walk backwards. (p. 6)

Nick: It is almost like that people should understand this even before they get married. (2p. 7)

Both Sally and Laura said very similar things about how the ideas may have benefited them early in their parenting.

Laura: My feelings after the Anasazi experience is, it could be a profound influence on a young couple’s parenting skills to go through The Choice if they could have those things instilled in them and realize that they are based on truth [meaning spiritual or religious truth] and based on the way that we need to treat each other . . . I would have treated my kids and seen my kids differently. I think I came from the school of “well I’m the parent and you’re the child,” rather than seeing them as equals and in reality they are. . . . And I think knowing what I know now, of course that comes from the experience of having some unfortunate experiences with our daughters, and then which brought us to, the focus that The Choice brings. I think there’s just a whole different perspective that it can bring into a person’s life. (p. 11)

Sally: . . . I think if we had had the seminar before we had kids and had really internalized it, I don’t know if you can because you kind of have to be in the parenting process to see how it goes or at least, unless you’ve done it in a relationship of your own in your family growing up somewhere in there, but to internalize all those process, I think we would have parented our children differently, I think they wouldn’t be different than they are but they would have had different experiences and
maybe less struggles. But the struggles make up who they are and their character. (p. 10)

*Specific Changes in Relationships: Not Referencing Arbinger Ideas*

The parents also talked a lot about the specific changes they see in their relationships and parenting of their adolescents that were not due specifically to the Arbinger ideas, but more so to the overall Anasazi experience. In this theme, the parents talked about what made a difference, and what was most meaningful to them from the whole Anasazi experience. This theme includes two major sub-themes. 1) Anasazi experience takes time to sink in for youth and parents, and 2) Quality of relationships with Shadow and other Anasazi staff.

**Anasazi Experience Takes Time to Sink in for Youth and Parents**

Each one of the parents spoke openly about the fact that the Anasazi experience for their youth took, or is still taking, time to sink in. They all spoke about how the experience was meaningful and profound, even those whose sons or daughters are now not doing well. Many hope for the future as the Anasazi experience is distilled and understood better in the hearts of their youth. And recognizing this fact makes it possible for these parents to keep perspective, to realize that it takes time for them too, that Anasazi provides just the foundation, the starting point from which to grow for all of them.

Doug and Mary’s son Justin had some major setbacks with getting back into some drug use which had just began at our first interview, and had become serious by the time of our second interview almost two months later. This was quite discouraging for them, perhaps more so for Mary. Doug shared the perspective that kept them hopeful.

**Doug:** That [current drug use] has nothing to do with the program. I still think this is just an incredible program and it had a positive impact on Justin and I think long term it still will. I think, we were talking with some parents the other night and I thought one of the parents we were talking to put it really well that their son went through Anasazi and has now gone through a longer program and the way they described it is the kid has a sickness and they need an antibiotic and sometimes six weeks will do it and sometimes they need a stronger antibiotic. I think Justin, the antibiotic that Anasazi gave him certainly had a positive impact for a period of time and I think it
will again. I think it will all come back and in the long run I think it will be a good thing but I think he needs a little heavier antibiotic at this point. (2p. 7)

Thomas and Laura hold on to hope for their daughters, even though their daughters have continued to significantly struggle. Thomas shared:

**Thomas:** We know that they had a period of time on the trail when they were at peace with themselves. And I think that knowledge that they have experienced peace, we know they’re not at peace now, but knowing that they have had that experience gives us, if you will, hope that as they mature, that having experienced it once it will be something that they will desire to want to come back to. So I guess as much as anything, there is a lot of hope there and a lot of confidence that in fact will, at some point, happen. It’s much easier for me to accept their current choices and love them in spite of themselves because I have a very firm hope that the seeds have been planted and the harvest at some point will be reaped... They did change. They experienced a change. They know it and you can see it by the fact that they still like Anasazi. They like the people. They want to. If they had the power within themselves I think they would choose friends like they had at Anasazi. But they don’t have the power within themselves to pick those types of friends at this point in time (p. 3) ... I have a confidence that at some point in time the experience they had will be remembered because it is part of them. And it will come back to the forefront once they get to a point where they want to bring their life, and make something more of themselves and get more of a long term perspective instead of just this hour. (p. 7)

Jim and Sally echoed the same thing. Though they had one child who had a dramatic “night and day” change, for their other children they have seen a gradual improvement over time.

**Jim:** They actually get better over time. ... I know we kind of wondered with our first ones, we were a little bit nervous when they came home because if it’s not really perfect when you get home it probably is as good as it’s going to get. And that’s not really true with Anasazi, I didn’t believe that. I think that what happens is that they learn lessons that get internalized or got internalized and sometimes to apply those to every day life maybe takes a little bit of time ... the wilderness just does something that nothing else does and even though you may not see all of the gains that you’re
going to get immediately, it's an experience that they've had that will stay with them. And over time it will have that effect.

Dan and Sharla felt that Anasazi was not nearly as helpful for their daughter as it could have been because it did not provide her with the specialized care they felt she needed due to them believing she has reactive attachment disorder. Nevertheless Dan noted:

**Dan**: I really appreciated and thought it was a wonderful program. Everything about it that we went through was wonderful. A great experience for us and I know it was a great experience for Kim. Even though it wasn’t the answer to all of her problems it was a very necessary piece in her progress. And I know it will be something that she can look back to and it will make a difference in her life. The amount of confidence it gave her to take care of herself will really make a difference as she faces challenges in the future. (p. 16)

After Anasazi Lance, Stacy and Kevin’s son, has also had some continued struggles that lead to him choosing to no longer live at home. This has been sad for them, but they share a similar hope to the other parents.

**Stacy**: . . . but I know that he draws to it at times and I found a bunch of pictures [photos] when I was going through his room after he left and there were a bunch of pictures and I took them over to him and he told me later that he cried. He said, “I couldn’t handle it, I just wanted to go back,” and he even said, “I have to put all of the pictures away,” [Stacy crying] because he missed it so much and so he put them all away. So I know that he made a turning point there in his life, that that began the process and I think he will return to it for the rest of his life. The lessons that he learned and just endurance and the feeling there, being a part of that group with the people he loved . . . I don’t feel like it was a waste at all (p. 3). . . . looking at our lives as a journey, one step forward, one step back, and really trying to focus more on the steps forward is one thing that I learned there. (p. 4)

**Quality of Relationships with Shadow and Other Anasazi Staff**

While theorizing about the first interviews and what I wanted to follow-up with, I started thinking a lot about “way of being” related to specifically how these parents have felt treated by any Anasazi personnel, and what the significance was of these relationships in
what Anasazi provided. Each of the parents talked openly about being treated with respect and as people. A couple of the parents also noted instances where they did not feel treated as people and what was done at the time about that. The relationships that these parents had with Anasazi staff, and the way the staff treated them was crucial to these parents’ experience and to the relative success of the program in their and their adolescents’ lives. It is the Shadow that the parents all had the most contact with, and so this relationship was particularly significant. A few of the parents simply stated “We loved our Shadow.”

Laura talked emotionally about her relationships with Anasazi staff from the beginning and what this has meant to her:

**Laura:** I’ve always felt anytime that I’ve been around the Anasazi people that they are genuine and caring about me as an individual, about our daughters and that for me has been very gratifying because a lot of people that we know, they care about the girls but they don’t know how to show it at this point in their rebellion. It’s just like, it was just so gratifying to recognize that they [Anasazi staff] can love these girls for who they really are inside and see past, in my estimation, to see them as the Savior sees them. And I appreciated that. Any time I have seen any of the Anasazi people, they have been just so genuine. . . . Tremendous personnel . . . I think it was critical because . . . at least I personally feel . . . you’ve got to feel accepted and loved and cared about in a program like this because we’ve turned our heart and soul over to you with our kids. For me, they’re my life. And, sorry, I just felt very comfortable trusting them to the people that were here [crying]. And even though the changes haven’t lasted we know that in their hearts they felt accepted and they felt loved and I know that they were accepted and loved and they still are loved by the Anasazi people. (2p. 3)

Doug shared:

**Doug:** one thing that really stands out about the staff here is how much they treat you like a person, not like a client, not like a customer . . . Everyone . . . all the way down the line. (2p. 3)

Thomas said:
Thomas: ... 100% positive, I think that’s the best way to put it. Across the board, everybody. (2p. 2)

Terri was somewhat disappointed with Anasazi’s overall effect on her son and with some of Anasazi’s weaknesses, but the relationships with Anasazi staff were positive and very important, she notes:

Terri: I think for any parent, those relationships were vital for us. I mean it was like those relationships were exchanged for our child. We had hopes and dreams and fears. The first day we took Trent there we cried and cried along with other parents and the close relationship with those people [staff] were very very important for us to feel like the program that he was in he was safe, he was learning, he was growing. That there was hope of a better future. (2p. 2)

*Anasazi a Spiritual Experience*

All of the parents shared that there was something spiritual about their experience with Anasazi. Six of the sets of parents talked specifically about the experience as spiritual for them. All of the parents were grateful for the spiritual aspects of the Anasazi program. This theme grouped into three sub-themes. 1) Directly related to their own religious faith, 2) Experiences of unconditional love and forgiveness, 3) Spiritual experiences with Anasazi staff.

*Directly Related to Their Own Religious Faith*

Five of the sets of parents talked about the ways they saw both the Arbinger ideas and the overall Anasazi program being very similar to their own religious and spiritual beliefs. These parents talked about how they directly related and integrated the Anasazi experience and the Arbinger ideas into their religious faith. At different times in the interviews, both Mary and Doug talked about how they felt the Arbinger ideas relate directly to their LDS beliefs.

Mary: I relate the whole seminar to the Gospel and to our beliefs anyway and it’s like, “This is stuff I’ve been taught”. (p. 10)

Doug: We thought it would be a recipe about when your kid does X you do Y and it wasn’t. It was just about having you look at how you see people and how you serve. I think there was a lot of service woven into it. Its called “staying out of the box” and if
you have a thought about what you should do for somebody you do it, it keeps you out of the box and you feel good about having done it. You don’t do it and you feel guilty for not having done it and the next thing you know you’re in the box with the person. It’s all about service. I think it really is, it’s Mosiah 2:17, “when you are in the service of your fellow man” type thing. (2p. 6) [Doug was paraphrasing a scripture from *The Book of Mormon* which states “…when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God”]

Laura said very similar things stating:

**Laura:** It goes along so much with the Gospel plan and as I read the scriptures it’s like I can see, I don’t go back and say, “That’s what they taught in *The Choice,*” but I can see how there is such a mesh between what I understand in the Gospel, and of course my understanding is increasing all of the time and the principles that are in *The Choice,* because from my perspective *The Choice* is based on the principles of the Gospel. But they’re coming at it from a different way than most of us think about it. But I think *The Choice* puts it into a context of everyday living without saying, “This is the Gospel” but to me that’s what it is. It’s trying to teach us to love ourselves and to love other people the way that the Savior taught. (p. 8)

Jennifer talked about how the whole Anasazi experience for her was a deeply spiritual and life changing experience.

**Jennifer:** When I talk to someone about Anasazi I say, “It’s not just the kids, it’s not just a vacation and the kids don’t go off, it’s something that I went through spiritually. It’s something that touched my life and affected my life so whole heartedly.” It’s the second major thing that affected my life next to my brother’s death, that totally and completely uprooted my soul, heart, mind and spirit to where I really had to stop and take a look at who I was, what I was, what I was doing, where I was going, what I was thinking and what was going on with me and really change things. And really look at myself and my life differently. And so it was a really life changing thing for me. (p. 2)
Unconditional Love and Forgiveness

Two of the sets of parents talked specifically about how the Anasazi program was an important catalyst for them in forgiving their adolescent and in experiencing unconditional love toward them. For example, Laura talked about the unconditional love she feels for her daughters despite their continued struggles:

Laura: I think one thing that through this experience, and it’s not just through the Anasazi experience but the Anasazi experience supported it and helped me further it, and that is to be able to love them unconditionally. I’m not perfect but I can love them even when they are slapping me in the face or calling me all of these names. I can still love them. And I can tell them that no matter what they do to me it’s not going to change the fact that I love them but that makes them more angry so I have to be careful not to say that (laugh). But I do. I just, I really, really believe that. That there’s nothing that they can do that’s going to change that love I have for them. So I think it has deepened my love for them just as a person. . . . Probably for me that’s one of the biggest things, just to be able to love them and accept them as they are and that’s what all of us want anyway (p. 6). . . . I think in spite of all, that they know that we love them. I believe that, I truly believe that they know that we love them unconditionally. And so that’s extremely important to me, that they know that, and that’s probably been the greatest thrust that I have wanted to be able to portray to them is that I love them in spite of the choices that they’re making (p. 8). . . . and also recognizing that during their Anasazi experience they accepted from us our apologies for mistakes that we’ve made with them and they accepted from us our love in a whole different way than they had prior to and since and I think that’s the reason that we have the hope that we do with them. . . . since they’ve come back, they kind of throw it in our face, but I think deep down they do know that . . . And I truly believe in the Anasazi experience for the kids and for the parents. I totally believe in it, but it’s not magic. (p. 9)

Spiritual Experiences with Anasazi Staff

Some of the parents also talked about their relationships with Anasazi staff as being spiritual for them. For Mary and Doug, a lot of their shadowing revolved around articles their
Shadow would give them to read that were important teachings related to their religion. Some of the parents said that they were very impressed by the love extended to them by founder Ezekiel Sanchez, and that this was spiritual to them. Others spoke of meaningful spiritual experiences they had through interactions with Pauline Sanchez.

**Adopted a More Critical Approach to their Parenting**

All of the parents seemed to take a more critical approach to their parenting following Anasazi. A few of them had taken a more reflective or critical approach to their parenting long before Anasazi, but for others this was one of the most significant times of reflection and critical thinking about their parenting and their relationships that they had experienced in their lives. In their responses, this more reflective approach is often in regard to societal and cultural expectations and pressures—sometimes responding to grand tour question two, but sometimes in other parts of the first or second interviews. The sub-themes within this theme were 1) More anti-control, more compassionate, 2) Not as concerned about how they will be perceived by others, 3) Respect for Teenagers' Humanity, 4) Freeing and/or Liberating

**More Anti-Force, More Compassionate**

Seven of the eight sets of parents talked about how in their parenting practices and in their relationships with their adolescent they have become less strict, try not to use force or control, and in response are more understanding and compassionate. Overall, these parents expressed that they are more genuinely connected with their youth, and have better relationships with them. Like many of the parents, Doug explains that they let their son make more of his own decisions now.

**Doug:** We let Justin make a lot of his own decisions relative to whether he's going to church or not, for the most part he's made good decisions and I think because it's his decision I think he goes and gets more out of it. But I think that's been, that's something that we didn't allow him to do before. (p. 3)

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7 Grand tour question two: Please tell me about the ideas that most influenced your parenting before Anasazi. What is your opinion about what you see as the common ideas and techniques about parenting adolescents in our culture today? Has your Anasazi experience influenced these opinions? If so how?
Thomas and Laura talk about how this has been admittedly difficult since their daughters have continued to have significant struggles, but that being more hands off has been purposeful for them.

**Thomas:** . . . I've recognized their individualities a little more. Probably willing to accept what I would consider incorrect choices without as much aggravation and recognizing there are some things you can control and some things you can't. The things that you can't control, they have an element of responsibility. I guess I haven't owned their problem as much as I did before. (p. 1)

**Laura:** It's good for me . . . and I find myself now stopping, "now how am I feeling towards them?" And so I'm really working on not wanting to ignore them or what they're doing to protect myself and my own feelings. And that's what it would be because emotionally it's very, very difficult for me to watch the decisions that they're making. Very, very difficult because I mean, they keep going up and down as far as school and they are almost ready to drop out of school. They are doing things like staying up all night, they'll be out all night, we won't know where they are or when they're going to come back. And we've backed off, we let them do it because if we don't there's literal war. I mean they just react in a very, very defiant and, to some degree, violent way. Definitely in your face, definitely . . . There's a lot of things that they will not address, yet, in what's going on inside. And so they take it out on us. They have hit us and of course some of the times when they've been physical with us it's because, with me, it's because I have not, I've been trying to be controlling or I haven't been using the Anasazi, *The Choice* Way (laugh). . . . We're having to deal with those things and sometimes I'm good and sometimes I'm not. Sometimes I can say, "Okay, if that's what you want to do, if that's how you want to treat me," and sometimes I'll not turn the other cheek (laugh) . . . But I think generally I do okay with accepting what they're doing. (p. 2-3)

Sally talked about how she was not able to see the ways she was trying to control and force Nicole to do things until she stopped and looked at it carefully. Even in the interview she talked about having a realization about the way she had been trying to control or force
Nicole earlier that week, which was against what she desires to in her parenting. She summarized the importance of allowing Nicole to make her own choices:

**Sally:** It's saying, "You can be responsible for your life at your age," and it doesn't mean I don't advise her and I don't counsel her because I will but not in a nagging way (p. 12). . . . people are always really surprised at how loose I am with my kids. How much freedom I give them. How much choice I give them. (p. 14)

Jennifer talked about the dramatic switch it was for her in her parenting to not be as controlling.

**Jennifer:** It gave me more control in not being in control (laughs). I was in control [after experiencing Anasazi] but in a different way. I was in control in a different parenting way. . . . It is a whole different pattern of thinking. A whole different parent-child relationship. It is just better. (2p. 3)

*Not as Concerned About How They Will be Perceived by Others*

Some of the parents found that they were doing a lot of things in their parenting in order to look good to their friends, acquaintances, people at church, etc. The deep reflection of their Anasazi experienced helped them focus their parenting on their children, their children’s needs, and the uniqueness of that relationship. Doug talked at length about this:

**Doug:** I would do what I thought was the right thing as a parent to Justin and the other kids but would do it for the wrong reason, like church was a requirement because I was afraid, I think, that other people would say, "Well look at [their] kids, they don’t go to church." I was afraid of what other people might think about it. And I was more concerned about that than about the kids’ well being. So, now I’m still going to encourage them and in some cases insist that they do certain things but for different reasons. Not because I’m that concerned about what other people are going to think about me as a parent, I do it more from the standpoint of what’s in the kids’ best interests, what should the kids be doing? I was afraid that if Justin was misbehaving with substance abuse that people may think, “Well, they must not be very good parents because look at the problems their kids are having.” I still may take some of the similar actions about discouraging Justin or about in some cases in keeping him from doing those types of things but it’s for a different reason. . . . one of
the biggest eye openers at Anasazi and with the Arbinger training was the fact that it
doesn’t always have to be about you and that if you’re doing things for self-centered
reasons so that you look better as a parent or don’t look bad or whatever you’re
probably not going to get, it’s probably going to come across to the kids that “they’re
not doing this because they love me. They’re doing it because they’re afraid of what
[others think].” I mean that probably comes across to the kids. They can probably
detect what you’re doing, what you’re doing because you love them and what you’re
doing for other reasons . . . I think what I just shared was the most valuable [from the
Anasazi experience]. (p. 4-5)

Thomas had similar things to say from what he has noticed in society in general, and
how he views other parents differently now:

**Thomas:** . . . society has a tendency to measure parents by their children. And I think
as parents we have a tendency to do the same thing (p. 13) . . . I think I [now] would
extend a lot more loving hand and encouragement to individuals who have struggled
in their parenting. (p. 14)

Jennifer said this has been important for her because she is now much more centered
on how she wants to be in her relationship with her daughter:

**Jennifer:** And now . . . it doesn’t matter what the world thinks. It only matters what I
think and what my daughter thinks. . . . It’s what feels right and what I know to be
right. And this is right. It has given me the basics and the foundation, I keep going
back to that foundation, but it’s given me the foundation. (p. 2)

*Respect for Teenagers’ Humanity*

Being less strict, more compassionate, and not being as concerned about others’
opinions seems to have allowed these parents to have more respect for the humanity of their
adolescent, and teenagers in general. This relates to the sub-theme under theme one “seeing
their adolescent as a person changed their relationship,” but has to do more specifically with
how these parents are more honoring and respectful of the humanity and the unique contexts
of teenagers’ lives. For example Stephen explained:

**Stephen:** I see it a lot from a lot of older people, older than us, that there is a lot of
judgment of kids today. There is a lot of critical-ness towards children and a lot of,
“Well what’s wrong with them?,” and they’re this or they’re that. And I don’t agree with that. I think that that’s real sad to these kids.

He then talked about how it was refreshing to see these “Generation Y” youth as the ones fighting the Iraqi war (going on during the time of this interview), that they are of that caliber. He continued:

I think we take them for granted. I don’t think that we give them the respect that they deserve. I think that’s wrong. (p. 14)

A few of the parents talked about how part of respecting teenagers and children is allowing them to be kids, to do things kids do and to not be so judgmental of them:

Jennifer: Well a lot of it stems from the way we are raised. And the way our parents raised us. Thinking that children are to be seen and not heard. To where you have decent, respectful children and yet they are to be decent and respectful at all times, especially out in the open. They are not allowed to be kids at any time, even out in the open at any time. (p. 6)

Stacy shared the significance of having greater respect for her son:

Stacy: For me, I think one thing that I gained at Anasazi that hasn’t really left me is more of a respect towards my son as an individual. And allowing him agency and not feeling so threatened by that. (p. 1)

Stacy: I think one thing that is taught in our society that is negative is that there is a generation gap between adolescents and parents and they teach you that your kids are going to go wacko when they become teenagers and they teach you that teenagers don’t have a lot of depth. And I think both of those things are lies. I don’t think either of those things are true. I think teenagers have a lot of depth . . . I’m learning that if I respect them and not counter it and listen to them, they have some really interesting things. And they do have a lot of depth and I think in our society we counter a lot of what our kids say instead of listening to them . . . and I’m sure there are parents that aren’t that way but I know that so many times we counter things (laugh), that we feel we need to correct instead of just listening and seeing their perspective and I believe they really have a lot of depth. They are thinking about life and really questioning things. (p. 6)
After the first interviews all of the parents had talked openly about what they see as the cultural and societal influences on their parenting, particularly before their Anasazi experience. I reflected on this and wanted to know more about how they experience this difference now in their parenting. In some of my shadowing experiences with parents they described the Anasazi experience including the Arbinger ideas as “freeing” with regard to their parenting and their relationships with their children, as well as in their relationships with other parents. I wanted to know if these parents would describe their experiences with Anasazi as being freeing or liberating in terms of their parenting, so I specifically asked them this in the follow-up interviews. Some of the parents responded immediately that they definitely found the ideas freeing or liberating, for instance Sally said:

**Sally:** Extremely. Extremely liberating. Well it’s real refreshing. What we were learning and reading in books [behavior modification] was that there were certain behavior patterns that you want to instill in your children, have all these rules and regulations and reward systems. Level systems or reward systems. That put so much stress because you had to have so much control. . . . it was stressful to have to feel like you had to conform to somebody else’s idea. But when that’s gone, there’s no, “this child has to be doing this, this and this.” If they’re not doing that, it’s okay. You don’t have to follow, not every boy has to have their Eagle Scout and that sort of thing and it’s really freeing to let your children be themselves. It’s really freeing unless you talk to other people and then they start criticizing you, but if you stay away from that it’s really freeing and liberating. (2p. 10)

Each of the parents that responded positively to this question talked about Anasazi as being freeing in terms of not feeling constrained to have to control or force their child, but instead loving and teaching children and then allowing them to take responsibility for themselves.

Two of the sets of parents disagreed, Stephen and Terri and Sharla and Dan did not find the ideas freeing or liberating, though they experienced them as helpful, as one piece in their understanding and parenting of their child. For example Terri answered:
Terri: No, I would not describe that at all. I believe that it may have given us some extra tools to communicate with our children, some extra tools. But, there was no, incredibly great breakthroughs that just made parenting so much easier. Parenting is a day-to-day choice and . . . and challenge and you can have a great day one day and really struggle the next and one reason for us is we have so many children and not one of them came with a manual and not one of them has an identical personality to the others, so.

Disappointments and Where Anasazi Needs Improvement

I knew that Anasazi has historically had a number of criticisms from parent alumni from my experience working as a Shadow. I wanted to ensure that this research allowed room for the parents to talk freely and openly about the things they feel need to be improved or done different at Anasazi that would be a help or support to their parenting and/or their relationships with their adolescents. As would be expected, those who had somewhat negative experiences with Anasazi tended to have more critiques to offer, and this became a central focus of the interviews with Stephen and Terri and Dan and Sharla. But importantly, those who had a very positive experience with Anasazi still had things to say about where it needs to be improved. I grouped this into four different sub-themes. 1) Aftercare, 2) Parents need to utilize ideas and activities more and stay involved during and after program, 3) Anasazi should not generalize their treatment approach, and 4) Need more preparations for transition home.

Aftercare

Each of the parents talked overwhelmingly of the need for Anasazi to improve its aftercare services. They were not critical of the actual aftercare staff; in fact many parents talked quite highly of these individuals. Instead their criticisms were primarily that the aftercare services as currently structured are inadequate. They criticized the way the aftercare program works (monthly calls from the aftercare staff to the youth, and the option for parents to call for aftercare help as needed) as being insufficient. Many of the parents said that their son or daughter do not have personal connections with aftercare staff and are not usually interested in talking with them, that the calls are random and easily avoided by their youth, and that there is not the continued mentoring, help, and guidance their feel their youth need.
Stephen: I felt the aftercare program was grossly inadequate. Very, very minimal commitment on the part of the program, I think, to really deal with and work with the kids. (p. 3)

Terri: So I think the actual Anasazi program itself, we had a positive experience while he was going through it. But there wasn’t, the aftercare is not at all, I mean, to be honest, nobody even really contacted Trent . . . I mean their aftercare program really, I think that’s what the problem is. (p. 8)

Terri: You can’t drop the ball on aftercare because aftercare is more important than the program. (p. 22)

Mary stated:

Mary: If he’s home he gets a phone call if not, “I called,” that type of thing. So I know they don’t have the staff to just keep calling the same kid over and over but it seems like there should be something to hang on to those kids and I know it’s hard because all of the other kids are out of state or so far away, you know they can’t come in really but I don’t know. I just wish there was something . . . And it seems like it just slowly fades and, something comes up where a couple of times he didn’t go talk to the parents [at the Thursday night meetings for new parents where Ezekiel Sanchez introduces Anasazi and invites alumni Young Walkers to speak] or different things come up where he hadn’t been in to talk to [the aftercare director] for awhile and it just, like there was no contact at all and he started slipping. (p. 11)

And Stacy and Kevin said:

Stacy: They switched who was calling him, he had never been on the trail with and had never seen, he didn’t know the aftercare person. And he didn’t like it because he didn’t feel like he could talk with that person.

Kevin: So there’s a disconnection somewhere that was apparent I don’t know where. He didn’t feel [connection] that any longer. (p. 4)

Many parents gave general and specific suggestions for changes to the aftercare services. These included 1) a need for their youth to continue to feel a strong part of an influential group, 2) some type of mentor program for their youth, an aftercare program for parents like
a support group, 3) quarterly follow-up visits with their Shadow, and 4) video-taping the seminar and making an interactive CD/DVD for parents.

*Parents Need to Utilize Ideas and Activities More and Stay Involved During and After the Program*

Though all of the parents criticized the aftercare program, almost all of them acknowledged that they needed to do better in following up on their commitments, actively seeking out help and support for their adolescent, and continuing to utilize the Arbinger ideas and exercises including an ongoing focus on helping things go right (one of the main concepts of *The Parenting Pyramid*, Arbinger, 1998)

Some of the parents acknowledged that they needed to continue utilizing the Arbinger seminar ideas, doing the activities, and continuing with the readings. And as mentioned in other themes, some of the parents found they were very benefited by reading *Bonds That Make Us Fee* (Warner, 2001)

_Laura:_ I think the reality is that, I think it’s great because it’s kind of like . . . “Oh, I’m going to do all of these things” and then you go back to real life and having to deal with whatever real life gives you and it’s hard to pull those principles back unless you’re really dedicated and you’re going back to the books and you’re doing the exercises like they ask you to do and maybe there are some wonderful parents who do that. Are there? Marty? (laugh). (p. 16)

Some of the parents pointed out that the need for parents to change is paramount for the program to be effective. This is evident in some of the themes already discussed. For many of the parents this was not fully realized until after their adolescent came home.

Thomas and Laura’s comments exemplify this:

_Thomas:_ If I were to give an evaluation I don’t think that the training . . . I don’t think it gets home quite enough to the parents to the degree that they have to change. It’s taught but it’s hard to internalize and maybe you only do it after some period of time but,

_Marty:_ Are you saying that you’d guess that may be true for many parents? That they may not comprehend how much it involves them?
Thomas: I think so. It involves them. And that any changing that they have, literally 100% of the changing that involves them, is *them*.

Laura: Yeah, their lives aren’t going to be different because of what their kids do. Their lives are only going to be different because of what *they* do. I think we knew that, I think that’s what we were taught but we haven’t followed through on it like we should have.

Thomas: But it takes awhile for that to really hit home. Because you really come into it because you want somebody else to change . . . And so the transition to change to recognize that you can’t force a change but any change you make is internally, it’s a slow process (p. 9). . . . Ultimately if the system is going to work the parents have to do the changing. (p. 16)

Jim and Sally echo similar comments:

Jim: The child part is one part but the parents’ part is the other part of it, the other side of the coin that’s got to be there. Both together work, either one of them will work to some extent because it’s so much better than what is happening but if you have both of them working together then I think it’s a real formula for success. (p. 19)

Sally: So I tell people when they call me and they ask me about that and I tell them, “My kids have changed. We changed.” And I tell them that our change made a bigger difference. But I said, “It’s not a guarantee”. (p. 20)

Stacy spoke of how their continued family counseling, even though their son has refused to attend, has been very beneficial in their ongoing process of becoming better parents:

Stacy: I don’t feel like it [Anasazi] was a waste at all. Especially, the lessons that I personally learned, reinforce what we are learning now [in counseling], if I would have had that experience and come home without continued counseling, I don’t think that it would have sunk in as much. But because we have continued to get help in our parenting and continued to change *ourselves*, I think that it’s made all of the difference in the world. I don’t know that I would have made as many changes or that we would have, I know we wouldn’t have. We wouldn’t be able to handle it as much. (p. 3)
Some parents also acknowledged they have their own struggles and have not always “walked forward,” and that this requires them to always be seeking to come back to the ideas that most helped them make changes.

**Kevin:** He’s had the same experiences as the Young Walkers out there and he came in here and talked to us and he almost begged us to follow what was learned at Anasazi and his parents were having a struggle with it and yet he was doing very well, he was very patient and, I think finally he gave up on us, I guess is what happened, I remember we were sitting there in my office and he was doing all he could to be patient and to follow his heart and to communicate but he was being accused of things and so I think there is a limit that maybe sometimes they work hard at it but then they get home and things are not working . . . (p. 8)

Nick and Angela also spoke about this at different places in the interview:

**Nick:** Plus we’re not always walking forward. So it’s kind of hard to correct somebody when you’re walking backwards to get them to walk forwards and realizing that you’re not doing what you need to be doing as well so it goes back to that taking care of yourself first and getting those things straightened out. (p. 1)

**Angela:** I think another part that Anasazi plays is that they tell you right up front that they expect you to commit this time while your son or daughter is away to learning and education and if you put that much time and effort and focus into it, there has to be a change. And so it’s the requiring you to do that, saying spend the time, I think that makes a big difference. Because you read, you prayed, we focused a lot on it [during the program] and I noticed even the boys coming off the trail, that they were reading out there and thinking and they’re spending that time and they’re growing and then they get back into society and they stop reading and focusing and they fall away. The knowledge is still there and they can fall back on it, but I think that’s a big part of it is telling us what they expect of us. I think that made a big difference. (p. 8)

**Anasazi Should not Generalize Their Treatment Approach**

Two of the sets of parents felt strongly that Anasazi has a powerful treatment philosophy and program, but that it should not be generalized to each family because each family has a very unique context. For instance, Stephen and Terri felt strongly about the
Anasazi experience at first, but then their son had some significant struggles soon after Anasazi. So they decided to have him attend a military boot camp experience that ended up being very positive for him, and a more lasting effect than Anasazi. Dan and Sharla explained in their experience they felt they knew some of the things that their daughter really needed from the Anasazi experience, but their Shadow and the Anasazi program did not allow for their input to be equally valued.

Dan: I think again, it’s dangerous to generalize. You have to take each situation and spend a little bit of time finding out what’s really going on and have enough background to balance and say, “Where does this fit?” and know what you need to do with it. I’m sure some parents come in there with their arms up in the air not knowing what to do, that’s where you say “Don’t worry, we’ll work on some stuff and we’ll help you through this.” But you’ve got parents who come in and know exactly what we need to do, who have a lot of background, who have studied a lot and worked a lot and not to say that we should come in and take over your program, but that our comments and input should be validated and considered and we should be listened to instead of going at it blind and stumbling into a real trap which is what happened. That would be my suggestion. A little less generalization of the program. (p. 15)

Lastly, Stephen had a lot to say about the program needing to have one singular vision, and employees trained competently to carry out that vision and effectively manage the financial end. None of the other parents said what he said, but I found his comments insightful and surprisingly similar to internal discussions we had as a clinical team at Anasazi when I worked there. I think his comments are worthy of noting in this section.

Stephen: One thing I think kind of disappointed me was that for the amount of money that you paid for the program, which was the equivalent of $300 a day per child, that they really sent inexperienced people out there on the trail with the kids like the day to day Trail Walkers (p.1)... sometimes the sense that you have is that there is just a lot of kids over here and they’re good guys, you know they’re really all just exceptional young adults but they’re young adults, you know and they’re not people who have obtained an educational level or an experiential level that really
makes them anything more than just a very good friend to my child and maybe a good
role model or an example as a young adult for possibly my child to emulate. (p. 2)

**Stephen:** But I think one of the things too that kind of was unsettling to me . . . was
this undertone of financial instability. All of the time feeling like Anasazi has one
foot in the grave and one foot, and they didn’t do a very good job, I think, of really
isolating that from their clients, in a way, and I just think that that’s not a very
prudent way to run a practice or run a business. . . . It just really begins to kind of
erode a little bit of your confidence in some of the leadership skills of the people
involved in the organization. I really do feel that one of the things that will help a
parent or help someone who puts their child in a program like this is really feeling
just a huge sense of confidence that we’re dealing with competent people. (p. 2)

**Stephen:** I felt like there was always a tug of war occurring within the organization
from an administration stand point. I heard mixed messages from people like Jacob
who had his visions of the way the business should run and his visions of the program
and then it appeared that maybe some of them were diametrically opposed to
Ezekiel’s visions of the program and I never really gained a sense or an appreciation
that there really was anybody who had a sole and single vision of what it is they were
there to really accomplish and do. (p. 2)

**Stephen:** I just think that the program really has huge potential but it’s not living
within that potential right now. Or at least then, I don’t know what it’s doing today
but our experience of it was that it was not living within that potential. And I think it
was partially what I described to you earlier that the potential it had wasn’t really
being led by anyone within that organization because of all of the varying and
different perspectives of what that vision was. (p. 19-20)

*Need More Preparations for Transition Home*

Some of the parents also said that perhaps their son or daughter needed more help
while at Anasazi in learning how to apply her/his experience there to real-life situations.
Some of the parents spoke to this general trend of these youth having a very powerful
experience of change in the wilderness, but being ill-prepared to continue those changes at
home. Angela explained that for their son it was very difficult to come back to the same situations at school and with friends and that he needed more help in how to negotiate that.

**Angela:** That is really hard for them to understand, after Anasazi, after being with people that treat you as a person and love you and then to go back to that, where you are just another kid. He has a hard time with teachers that are very resistive [resistant], that treat him this way. (2p. 8)

Doug explained that both parents and youth need more preparations for the transition back to home, particularly specific directions.

**Doug:** . . . during the course of that experience there could be more involvement with helping parents understand specific things they can do to perpetuate that change the kids have made and the parents have made. I think they do it at the 50,000 foot level by teaching them things about treating them like a kid not an object, treat them like a person not a problem, all those types of things. That helps at kind of a high level but when you get down to the mechanics of what do you do, what specifically do you do when all of the sudden you know your kid has probably stepped backwards and how do you handle that as a parent?. (p. 12)

Stephen and Terri offered suggestions of how Anasazi could help these youth and their parents prepare better for that transition back to home:

**Stephen:** . . . And I really think that a lot of these kids, especially like with Trent, he went back to school, the same friends who knew him before and these are people who are compelling him to go back to doing what he was doing before. I don’t think that these kids in six weeks have the strength and character to say no. I think that it would be really, really helpful if through some type of program or process, Anasazi could help these kids identify what maybe some of their alternatives might be . . . “We’ve made these arrangements or we’ve identified these resources that after you’re done with this can help keep you moving in a positive direction in your life.” . . . There need to be goals after the six weeks is over and it needs to be challenges.

**Terri:** You can’t just drop them and say, “You’re done, yeah.”
Stephen: I think maybe part of what you guys could do that would be real helpful is during the six weeks that they’re there you help work with their parents in crafting some of those for when they come back. (p. 17-18)

*Interviews a Responsive Experience*

This final major theme related directly to the parents’ responses to the “evaluation question” at the end of both interviews. In terms of the Arbinger teachings I invited them to reflect on their way of being in the interviews, responsive or resistant. All of the parents talked positively of it being a responsive experience, some more so than others. This tended to be a time of reflection and a peaceful time that allowed these parents to step back from their lives, remember their Anasazi experience, and remember what has been most meaningful to them in their relationship with their adolescent and with all their relationships. Mary explained the way the interviews got her to think about her experience and her son in more hopeful ways:

Mary: It gives you a chance to, when you go through the experience it’s all fresh in your mind and it’s neat when you look back at it it’s when, to focus on it again, that’s really neat to just look back and think, “Yeah, this was good.” Especially after going through the backward walkings. I heard my oldest daughter, I said something about you coming over for an interview and she said, “What are you going to tell him, that it worked for three months?” I said, “No,” so you expect these things but just to be able to look back and see the good that it did do and to know that it instilled that in you and you know it instilled that in the kid. (p. 14)

Jim and Sally talked about the interviews as a responsive experience and a time of reflection that was meaningful to them both:

Jim: I feel like it’s been fairly responsive. I appreciate, I think when we think about these sorts of things, these questions and verbalize it’s like when you spend time sharing in the seminar, you can’t help but stimulate the thoughts and feelings so that you can actually gain. It’s always time well spent, not just for what you say or answer but the input you put into the project but also for me, I always feel like it’s going to stimulate thought and there will be personal gains just because I’ve spent time doing that. It’s like the exercises. If I haven’t done them for, if I took all of that stuff out and
spent a couple of hours doing it, I couldn’t help but gain from doing that. And so even discussing these things makes me think about it more than I otherwise would.

**Sally:** That’s how I feel. It’s been wonderful because you start thinking about everything that’s happened and it helps you pull it all together. You can focus on what has happened to our family and how we’ve grown from here to here and it makes you feel better that you’ve made some progress and that your family life has changed, so it’s been good to talk about it. It’s been really helpful I think. It made me think about each of the kids and how they were and how they have changed and we respond to them differently and then look at Nicole and how she fits into all of this and how she may feel about all of this and how it affects her now . . . and so I think that it’s been really good. I’m glad that we got a chance to do it. (2p. 12)

When I talked with Jennifer she was quite moved with the experience of the first interview:

**Marty:** Overall, what has it been like for you to talk about all of these things today?

**Jennifer:** It’s awesome. It’s an honor. It’s truly an honor and a privilege to have a second chance as a parent to be able to be the right parent [weeping]. A parent that can be an asset, be a benefit and help and hopefully a guide in a child’s life. That’s truly an honor [weeping].

**Marty:** Wonderful, thank you Jennifer. In terms of being in the box or out of the box, has this been an out of the box experience today, a heart at peace experience?

**Jennifer:** Most definitely. (p. 11)

A couple times a parent acknowledged feeling both resistant and responsive feelings during the interviews. For example Kevin and Stacy explained:

**Kevin:** I have probably felt a little bit of both. Like Stacy said, with Lance for example, there’s kind of that balance. We have a hard time trusting him and so there’s sometimes resistance and feelings of hurt and those kinds of things that go with that, so I guess that’s the resistant part and obviously we have to be aware anyway and not

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8 In the Anasazi program for the youth and in *The Choice in Intervention* seminar the responsive way and the resistant way are alternatively named having a “heart at peace” or having a “heart at war.” This relates to some of the Native American influences utilized in the Anasazi program that were subsequently taken up in the Arbinger materials.
be foolish . . . So there is that, involved with the bad experience we’ve had with Lance, and there’s the other side where we see his progress and see the good side and feel good about what he’s doing. There’s always that question in our minds, “Is he pulling our leg? Is he manipulating us by some of the things that he does?” We go the wrong direction there sometimes. Then I think I was a little resistant with Stacy because we have different opinions about things sometimes and on the other hand I think I am responsive to the way she feels and so there is a mixture of that, and I suppose I’m, I had a particularly bad day today so I’m a little resistant about the interview but at the same time happy to do it so I’m just being real honest. There’s my experience of resistance. (p. 10)

Stacy: I have a lot of fondness for Anasazi, what it gave me, and Kevin, and Lance. . . . I want other parents to have some of the change we have had. . . . We really love our children . . . we’re trying to love and change, to be better parents. . . . I’ve felt somewhat resistant, just because it all wasn’t totally successful (Anasazi). I don’t know if we’re the best example for you. (p. 10)

Discussion of the Research Questions

In this section I will discuss the main research questions outlined at the beginning of this dissertation. To accomplish this I will address the questions that oriented the interviews with the parents and bring together their answers. Following that, I will offer a discussion of answers to the questions I posed as researcher including an interpretive analysis. Lastly, I will present possible implications of this research that are part discussion, and part interpretive with regard to prevailing theories and ideas in the parenting of adolescents.

Questions Parents Answered

What is the nature of these parents’ relationship with and parenting of their adolescent after having experienced the Anasazi program?

In this overall question, the parents talked very openly about their relationships now with their adolescent. For each of these parents, they discussed the fact that their relationship has had significant improvements, but also continued struggles. Many of the parents talked movingly about the changes they feel in their relationships with their adolescents. For example, Jennifer’s words were touching to me and moving to her as she shared them:
Jennifer: It’s totally and completely different. There is a relationship where there wasn’t before. There’s a foundation on which we can base a relationship on. There’s so much more. We can see each other and see ourselves in and through our relationship. (p. 1)

Jennifer: . . . I mean Tori will come home from being at school and have the most horrible day and it would be as if she had not had one ounce of Anasazi on her and literally would come in like she was my daughter from the past but yet when she would walk in that door I would refuse to look at her in any other way except the way that I looked at her when she came down that hill from Anasazi with that glow and that radiance of looking so beautiful the way I saw her. Oh my gosh, she was so beautiful [weeping]. She found herself. She had found herself, my daughter had finally found her spirit and she found herself and I refuse to look at her in any other way than the way she looked when she saw me that first day. You just got to keep looking at them that way, you can’t stop looking at them like that. (p. 9)

Angela talked about her relationship now with her son, even though he continues to have some difficulties, she experiences their relationship as much better.

Angela: Mine [relationship with son] is different because we’re much more open. We talk a lot more, we address issues immediately. We don’t let them go on. We set expectations whereas before it was just assumed. It doesn’t always happen but the conversations go on. I think it’s the openness, the talking a lot that has made a big difference. (p.1)

All of these parents shared with me that the Anasazi experience was meaningful and helpful to their adolescent, though to varying degrees. At the time all the interviews were complete (July 2003) in terms of their adolescent’s behavior problems that lead to Anasazi, I do not believe any of the parents would say their adolescent completely changed her/his behaviors and is doing well in every way. All of them would say that their adolescent is doing better to varying degrees, and that the changes they and their adolescent have had have been meaningful and important. It was interesting to see that despite some of the continued problems of their youth, most of these parents clearly have an enduring hope that their sons or daughters will come back to the peace and goodness they experienced during the Anasazi
program. Thomas’s thoughts about his daughters exemplify this hope common to many of these parents:

**Thomas:** we know that they had a period of time on the trail when they were at peace with themselves. And I think that knowledge that they have experienced peace, we know they’re not at peace now, but knowing that they have had that experience gives us, if you will, hope that as they mature, that having experienced it once it will be something that they will desire to want to come back to. So I guess as much as anything, there is a lot of hope there and a lot of confidence that in fact will, at some point, happen. (p. 3)

For some of these parents, their adolescents’ continued struggles have been quite serious. For three of these families, their adolescents had some very significant struggles, some serious “backward walkings,” during the time these interviews took place. One youth started getting back into drug use, did not seem to want to quit, and was defiant toward his parents. One youth who had done poorly following Anasazi, but who had done quite well for an extended period of time after completing another program got involved in some type of illegal activities and was in jail over a weekend. And another youth, though she is now 18, ran away from home with a boyfriend and has gotten back into some of the problems that lead to her being at Anasazi. Two of the sets of parents seemed discouraged by this. They were not so worried about the struggles their youth have had, because they each said this was to be expected. But the seriousness of their struggles, with drugs and with illegal activities are worrisome for them. One parent explained:

We could probably tolerate the behavior thing and even the church thing, it’s no huge thing to me that a 17-year-old is not that anxious to sit in sacrament meeting [the main LDS Sunday church meeting] because I certainly wasn’t at 17. But the drug thing is scary. If he could have all the other problems and not the drug thing…but we’re coming up with more and more positive drug tests and we’re back in the mode where we’re having to give them all of the time. Now he’s sort of jogging backwards. The scary part is, even if it was just occasionally, “Hey, I saw some friends and they were talking and I did it myself and I want to work through it,” I think we could work through that but it’s the dilated eyes where he can’t think straight and then he says,
“I’m not even sure I want to beat this. I’m not sure I want to quit this.” That’s where you feel like, you just kind of need to do something else. Something stronger. (2p. 8) Another parent was saddened and very worried for her daughter, yet seemed more hopeful that this will be a time of learning hard lessons and then eventual growth for her.

Overall, two of the sets of parents talked about some minor changes in their relationships with their adolescent, and the other six sets of parents spoke of very significant changes in their relationships with their adolescents that they would attribute to Anasazi. An important thing that became clear is that behavior change is not a very good measure of success for these parents’ relationships with their adolescents. Though the behavior changes are definitely encouraged and welcomed, the relationship changes seemed more important to these parents.

These parents talked about some of the specific things that are different in their parenting of their adolescents following Anasazi. Interestingly, they did not talk about behavior changes; instead they discussed how their approach to parenting is different. One of the most significant things these parents discussed was that seeing their adolescent as a person has changed their parenting. In other words their relational ethics, their way of being, grounds their parenting behavior. The improvements they experienced in their relationships with their adolescents changed the focus of their parenting. Behaviorally, this focus lead to two types of changes in their parenting which most of the parents discussed. First these parents have a more self-determined approach to their parenting, they are more reflective, and employ a more critical approach to their overall parenting.

Doug: Before this experience I would get just real annoyed . . . I think after the experience I’ve tried to put it in perspective and tried to ask myself in the big picture does it really matter? . . . It’s relative to the long term relationship that I’m trying to build with my son. (p. 3)

Jennifer talked about how it is hard to explain the differences in her parenting, particularly in choosing to discipline her children or not, depending on the context.

Jennifer: There’s no certain recipe, it’s individualistic to each child and it’s just so perfect, you can’t put it, it’s not a recipe, it’s hard to explain it, when I’m trying to tell it to my mom too. I tell my mom that God looks at our hearts and He, there are times
when, yes, there are consequences and circumstances bring about certain consequences and we have to serve the consequence, good or bad. And then there are times when we don’t have to serve the consequences. And that’s the same as our children and it just happens that way and it’s just hard to explain. My kids have been better. They’ve just been a lot better. (p. 7)

And Angela explained:

**Angela:** I have always taken the major role of discipline before he went to Anasazi... but since Anasazi I feel like it’s gotten better. Part of that is due to growing up and part of it is due to the experiences that we’ve learned. How it’s helped me is just being able to understand his point of view. It has given me ways of looking at myself, what’s my reasons behind what I’m saying or asking him to do... the [parenting] pyramid has helped a lot. Going back to what’s the problem, what’s the real problem. That has helped us in general after Anasazi. (p. 1)

Second, these parents tend to be less strict, less controlling, and allow their adolescent to make more choices.

**Thomas:**... I’ve recognized their individualities a little more. Probably willing to accept what I would consider incorrect choices without as much aggravation and recognizing there are some things you can control and some things you can’t. The things that you can’t control, they [daughters] have an element of responsibility. I guess I haven’t owned their problems as much as I did before. (p. 1)

Sally explained some specific differences with regard to her daughter Nicole going to bed at night or not:

**Sally:**... They’re grown up and I realized that they need to make decisions for their own lives without me interfering. And I told Nicole that and it was hard for me and if it had been before Anasazi, I probably wouldn’t have done that. I don’t tell her she has to go to bed. I will say to her, it will be really late and I will say to her, “You’ve never done that [gotten up] before.” Before Anasazi I would say, “You have to go to bed, you have to go to school,” and I would literally drag her up to her room and not forcibly hurt her but I would say, “You’ve got to go, get in bed.” And then she wouldn’t get up and go to school. Well, now when I tell her that she’ll probably be
tired if it's late then that's okay. Now she gets up and goes and she sets her alarm, and she does. It's the letting go. It's saying, "You can be responsible for your life at your age," and it doesn't mean I don't advise her and I don't counsel her because I will but not in a nagging way. (p. 12)

Angela also explained some of the specific differences when it comes to correction or discipline for John:

**Angela:** Another thing is discipline and that goes back to the pyramid when they talked about that and how to discipline. Before John went, he was always grounded or we took things away from him. And it's not so much that way anymore. It's more looking at what the problem is, fixing the problem then not having to do as much grounding. He hasn't been grounded since Anasazi. It doesn't mean that there aren't problems but we address the problem differently. We try to work through the real problem, not just the surface. Less confrontation. (p. 2)

**What made the difference? What made this possible for them?**

I wanted to garner rich descriptions from the parents so that I could get a better sense of what made the difference for them, what made this possible for them to experience these changes. Overwhelmingly, they spoke of the Arbinger training as a major influence on them. Even the two sets of parents that reported a somewhat positive and somewhat negative experience with Anasazi talked highly of the Arbinger seminar and the additional readings. As discussed above in the changes in their relationships, these parents were deeply influenced by the power of seeing their adolescents as people. Also, as already discussed, the Arbinger ideas allowed them to take a more reflective approach to their relationship with and parenting of their adolescent. In addition, the parents talked about the fact that the Arbinger ideas were not easily understood and incorporated in their lives. These ideas took time to be understood and implemented, and many acknowledge the ongoing nature of this process.

Sally and Jim had some children go through Anasazi in the early 1990s. At that time Sally went to the seminars over and over. She explains:

**Sally:** I went so many times. I went more than Jim did. I was going and going and going. And it wasn't a matter of not getting it because you understand it but transferring it into your everyday lives. It's like going to church. You have to keep
going to understand it and live it. I got to a point where finally I thought, “This is getting redundant,” because it fell in place and I felt right about it. (p. 19)

Like many parents, at first Mary felt that Anasazi was intervention for her son, not really for her, and in the beginning of the Arbinger seminar she did not feel the ideas applied to her, but then later it was an awakening to her to see how much it applies in her life.

Mary: One of the biggest things that stands out to me is the justifications and just how much justification there is in every day situations and I’m sitting there in the seminar, . . . and then you’re supposed to write down different situations and I couldn’t come up with any. I mean it was Justin, that was my problem. I didn’t have any other problems. And so it was a real eye opener to me after I left there and was able to see just every situation, how there was a justification. . . . It wasn’t just one big problem, it was many little occurrences in every situation that you could either justify one way or the other and so I was able to come away and be able to see different situations and think, and react to different situations, . . . Now if I could go back to that class I would come up with tons of situations because I can relate to them and be able to see. . . . I couldn’t see my own life as having those situations until I walked away from it and it’s in my mind and, I think, “That’s what they were talking about in that class.” . . . Going through the class it was kind of like, this doesn’t relate to me. I’m sitting there through the whole seminar saying, “Justin needs to take this class, I don’t.” But after you hear it and you take it in and you read a little more about it you see that you’re the right person for the class. “Okay, I did need that.” (p. 5-6)

Another thing that made a difference for these parents was the quality of the relationships they had with their Shadow and other Anasazi personnel. This tended to have a major impact on their experience during the program, especially at the beginning, for example Nick emotionally shared:

Nick: I just think of the first night we put John in, it was really hard to entrust your child with, at that point in time, to pretty much strangers. We didn’t really know who they were with. We just knew they were going to take care of him. At the beginning it was pretty hard. After a couple of conversations with our Shadow, you knew that they loved our son [weeping]. They would not let anything happen to him. So that was
very comforting to know that we had put him in the hands of people who would take care of him. They would give him the opportunity to grow and change and not be judgmental, let him be himself. At the beginning it was very hard. After a couple of weeks after talking to our Shadow it was good, we got to know that he was enjoying himself and having a good time. (2p. 3)

Kevin explained that being treated as persons by everyone at Anasazi set a good tone for the whole program experience:

**Kevin:** I think it made us feel like we were a part of the group and kind of a part of a family there. And that I think opened us up to, or at least for me, it opened me up to being willing to look at myself and to learn, where otherwise I may have closed off. In some experiences where you go to things like that people don’t treat us right and they seem like they are interested in having our money and that sort of thing and I tend to close off but it caused me to be able to feel open and willing to look at myself and learn. (2p. 3)

And Stacy explained:

**Stacy:** What comes to mind is that they were teaching us that very thing and they set an example of it in practicing it and that helped to solidify it in my mind because they obviously had respect for people and they didn’t treat anyone like objects and they immediately seemed to gain the respect of the kids out there on the trail. (2p. 3)

Many of the parents were impressed by Ezekiel Sanchez; for example Stephen said:

**Stephen:** I thought Ezekiel did a really good job of his orientation, ... I think Ezekiel speaks to the spirit of the program. I really, really have a great appreciation for him and I think that when he interacted with the kids there was a real sense and a real bond that occurred in a very quick period of time. That happened really fast even out on the trail and a child may only have one experience with him while they were there, or two, and really remember that experience and that one encounter with Ezekiel. And I think Ezekiel is very good with the youth. I think that he’s just a really incredible guy. I can’t even, I think that he’s just an awesome, awesome individual. But I think the program has grown beyond Ezekiel and he’s a figurehead and not the spirit, you know what I mean? As much anymore. (p. 3)
It was interesting to see that seven of the sets of parents talked about their required involvement in the program, and their continued need for ongoing involvement afterwards, as crucial to the program’s success during and after. I was surprised how much the parents talked about this theme in the interviews. Mary explained that in the seminar and in their weekly shadowing they were invited to make this “a walking” of their own during the time their son was in the program. She noted that the time after the program was even more important for her in terms of her own walking:

Mary: When they finish and you get back together and you try to make it together, that seemed to me where the walking started rather than when he was gone. (p. 14)

Thomas said flatly:

Thomas: Ultimately if the system is going to work the parents have to do the changing. (p. 16)

Jim explained that their involvement in the seminar helped them see their involvement in their adolescents’ problems:

Jim: ... but the real shocker and eye opener for us was we discovered that it wasn’t a matter of just our kids being involved, that we apparently had a very major role to play in how we were looking at our kids and what we were doing with our kids and our parenting was a big chunk of the problem. It wasn’t just our kids or things going bad or circumstances or anything else, but that the approach in terms of getting to the solution was so radically opposed to all of the stuff we had gone through in terms of training and everything else that we just spent all of that time on that it was just a huge difference for us in realizing and looking at collusions and looking at self-betrayal and looking at all of the other things that the seminar teaches and how we were looking at our children. (p. 2)

And he continued later on in the interview stating:

Jim: The child part is one part but the parents’ part is the other part of it, the other side of the coin that’s got to be there. Both together work. Either one of them will work to some extent because it’s so much better than what is happening but if you have both of them working together then I think it’s a real formula for success. (p. 19)

Jennifer said:
Jennifer: I’ve read the books again too and that helps. Just reading over some of the stuff in there and reflecting really helps. It does. If I feel like I’m getting out of balance then I’ll go back to the books. And then I’ll get balanced again. (p. 10)

Finally, one of the main things that made the difference for six of the sets of parents was that Anasazi was a spiritual experience. Some of them felt that the Arbinger ideas, and the spirit of the Anasazi Way fit well with their own faith and spiritual beliefs. Mary felt the ideas were very similar to her own LDS faith, and noted that understanding and living the Arbinger ideas is a long process similar to understanding and living the Gospel of Jesus Christ:

Mary: I relate the whole seminar to the Gospel and to our beliefs anyway and it’s like, “This is stuff I’ve been taught.” But yet you go to church and you hear the same things over and over, there’s something about repetition and bringing it to your mind in different situations, people look at the scriptures written way back in the ancient times but yet they are written for us and so it’s just relating them to your every day life, it’s like Anasazi and relating it to your everyday life rather than just certain situations. It’s something we’ve learned all our lives but it doesn’t click until you put your mind to thinking and questioning every situation and then you can see how much of it really is around us. (p. 10)

Jennifer spoke of the change she feels in how she sees herself and her children now, and how this is a spiritual change:

Jennifer: . . . I mean I saw a lot of myself and in seeing myself helped me accept who I am and that’s a feeling, good or bad, right or wrong, I can accept it and that’s a good thing. And my children, good or bad, right or wrong, I can accept them because I know my Father in Heaven accepts us, good or bad, right or wrong. It just gave me a perspective that I could accept. And not a worldly perspective.

Marty: Okay. So maybe your parenting became more spiritual?

Jennifer: Most definitely. Very much so. Very, very much so, yes. (p. 6) . . . The parenting being a spiritual perspective, to where I’m trying to explain to her [her mother] that she doesn’t understand at times why I don’t punish my children for things. Sometimes I do and sometimes I don’t. I really have to look at the level.
really have to look at, because I’m looking at their hearts now, I’m really looking at them through different eyes. Through a completely and different perspective as I’ve never looked at them before. And there are a lot of people who don’t look at their children like that but it really is the way God looks at us. (p. 6)

Angela and Nick explained that through the Anasazi experience they came closer to their faith, more observant of their religion (LDS). Angela explains:

Angela: I think it’s the change of heart, understanding. And also, I don’t know if we can get into this, but we’ve come closer to the Gospel.

Marty: Oh yeah, no, please feel free to talk about that.

Angela: That to me has been a big part of it. We always have believed, we have always been members, we were born members, but now it’s more practicing what we know and I think that’s made it a bigger piece in the whole thing. So between learning those things and becoming closer to Christ it just creates a different atmosphere.

Marty: What’s been the tie in between the things you learned at Anasazi and the Gospel?

Angela: Anasazi is very peaceful. It’s very non-confrontational. So is the Gospel. It’s about peace and love and understanding. And forgiveness. Like Nick said we all make mistakes and that to me is a big thing. You have to forgive people for the little things and let the stuff go. (p. 5)

Some parents had profound experiences of feeling unconditional love for their adolescent, and being willing and able to forgive them.

Thomas: I think I can both love wayward kids more now than I did before and I can love their parents more now than I did before. So has it had an effect? Absolutely. (p. 14)

Sharla told a beautiful story of her experience in forgiving her daughter, an experience that was spiritual for her, and emotional as she related it:

Sharla: Kim had been classified as a child of criminal thinking, homicidal. She had made an attempt on the life on one of our children, or at least had the plans very well set, she had sexually molested my children, she had devastated our lives. She had
taken us in court, she had crushed my life. This child that I’ve tried to help. So I knew that she was ill but I had, I was struggling with forgiveness. And I think the thing that Anasazi did for me, and reading Terry Warner’s stuff about forgiveness and the Savior, that as we drove back we had left her there and as we were driving back across the Navajo Reservation, Dan is asleep and I’m driving. And I’m in prayer and thinking. I left my hate and all of my bad feelings and I left it on the Navajo Reservation, I apologized to the Navajos as we drove through, but I left it out there and it has never felt the same since. So I am very grateful to Anasazi for those concepts. And that makes it easier now because even while she is doing things, those are her choices and I can’t, I don’t feel the weight of her choices, I gave it to the Savior and He took it and it’s okay. So that frees me from the guilt and I can have a clearer relationship with her. . . . I just felt clear and clean and new. (p. 10)

Some of the parents also had experiences in their relationship with their Shadow or other Anasazi staff that were spiritual for them. For example, Jennifer was very touched by her interactions with Pauline Sanchez.

Jennifer: It was a breaking down of my spirit to get me to the place I needed to be to where I became teachable and what broke me down was when Ezekiel’s wife came in and she came in and, I’ll call it grace because that’s the word that comes to my mind, when she walked in all I saw was grace, just God’s grace walked into that room and she was so beautiful and she thanked all of us for allowing her and Anasazi to take care of my child. And at that point I was no where near thinking that my child was precious because I had so hardened my heart against her because I had allowed myself to take so much personally and be so hurt by so much. And then she talked about, and reminded me, that the way that the Indians think, children are a gift. And reminded me that Tori was a gift and I had forgotten that. And reminded me of that simple, basic rule and that’s what broke me (p. 2). . . . Ezekiel’s wife came in and reminded me of that one basic essential and that is her [Tori’s] life is precious. Her life is a gift. Her life is not mine to take for granted. That I was even taking it for granted. I had forgotten that she was precious. Being reminded of that everything just washed away and it was just like, it was wonderful because then I could start my
beginning again with a new heart and then not allow any of that old thinking and that old behavior to come back in and just work against that. (p. 11)

What was the role of predominant cultural and/or societal expectations and discourses in their parenting before Anasazi? What is their opinion of those now, and how were their opinions influenced by Anasazi?

Through my experience working as a Shadow at Anasazi I experienced the program as being a somewhat counter-cultural experience for the parents involved; counter-cultural in that many Anasazi parents become critical of cultural influences on their parenting and relationships and many abandon certain cultural ideas and practices that do not fit their moral preferences in their parenting. And counter cultural in that what Anasazi espouses often runs contrary to dominant discourses of parenting in Western culture. Yet this was all my own perception and I wanted to find out what these parents would say about this. I elected to ask them more in general about what they see as the common ideas and practices of parenting in our culture, and what ideas and practices were common for them before Anasazi. In doing so I encouraged them to reflect on their opinions of these, and how their opinions have been influenced by their Anasazi experience. In the follow-up interview I asked them more directly if the Anasazi program (including the Arbinger ideas) was experienced as freeing or liberating for them with regard to the dominant cultural ideas and expectations about parenting.

In response to grand tour question two, a number of the parents shared with me what they see as the most common ideas and practices of parenting in our culture today. They mostly spoke of dominant ones they believe to be negative or wrong. For many of the parents, these included the things they used to do before Anasazi that now they strongly disagree with on moral grounds. For others these were negative things they see in society which they are strongly opinionated about, in addition these parents seemed troubled that any parents would believe in or use these ideas. Below I discuss the five topics that were most commonly talked about, ranked from most prominent with a few illustrative quotations from the parents. 1) Control and force:

Sally: I think we saw our kids as kids. These are our objects and they have been given to us and we love them, yes, but we have to meet all of their needs and take care of
them. And teach them and train them and control their lives and they were objects that we had to take care of. After Anasazi it was more, “Oh, these are kids that are people and they have their own feelings and they have their emotions and they have their own dreams and their own goals and their own strengths and weaknesses and they should be able to live those and live their lives without us always telling them how to live. They have a right to be a person, not just ‘you’re my kid and we’re going to do it this way’. (p. 9)

Kevin: I was pretty controlling. I wanted my kids to perform a certain way and I wanted them to do certain things, that’s about it. (p. 4)

Stacy: I rescued a lot instead of letting the consequences take place and also I think that before Anasazi I was on the kids more negatively like, “Have you done this? Have you done that?” instead of saying, when they come home, letting them talk and come home and relax before jumping on them, “Go clean your room, do this, do this” and give them a big list and I have changed that... I can enjoy them more and there is more talking and I’m not on them trying to get them to do something... I think I was trying to get them to do things that I thought were more important done. And that’s something that I’ve noticed in myself that’s different. I feel a lot more relaxed and peaceful. (p. 4)

2) Lack of parent responsibility and involvement:

Laura: We have a whole slew of parents who are not teaching their kids to be responsible for their own behavior. It’s always somebody else’s fault... The parents don’t get involved other than “let’s buy this for you so you can be entertained,” as far as sitting down and reading a book with the child or taking them to a museum or things that are going to enrich their lives in positive ways. (p. 12)

Angela: ... I think in general parents have become more lenient maybe because both parents are working more. They come home from work and they’re both tired, and they’re more lenient. We see that with kids when we hire them for work. Their actions, their discipline, their motivation, how they talk to adults. So I think it’s leniency. We don’t expect as much of our kids as we used to. (p. 4)

3) Parents selfish or materialistic:
Terri: I think that we give our kids too much. Material things. . . . I think we make it too easy for them. I don’t think they’re learning really the hard work lessons that are going to be so important for the rest of their lives. (p. 14)

4) Parents judgmental toward adolescents:

Jennifer: One was seeing myself as being judgmental and self-righteous. Seeing a lot of myself that helped me a lot with my parenting (p. 5).

5) Parenting ideas are wide-ranging and have little consensus:

Sally: You can find a hundred different child parenting books. We don’t read those anymore by the way.

Jim: We were huge readers, looked at all the different stuff and like we said, went through these programs and so it hasn’t been from a lack of trying other things.

Sally: It’s frustrating because every expert or book, every talk show will give you a different idea, a different opinion and it’s frustrating because then you don’t know what works until you try, which I think most young parents do, you read the books and you try 101 different things. (p. 17)

These parents were quite animated and adamant that many of the common practices of parenting in our culture have negative consequences and lead to family disruption and problems for children. Sally and Jim both had negative experiences with receiving a lot of parent training in the late 1980s that was focused on behavior modification. After experiencing the Anasazi program they became proponents of it, and became soured on traditional parenting approaches, especially behavior modification. They now seem to be critics of traditional parenting. Jim talked about his opinion of traditional parenting ideas:

Jim: A lot of them are just trained. They’re probably recommended or referred but I think they are just diametrically opposed to the way things really need to be and that’s why we’re having so much trouble in society today with parents and with youth. (p. 13)

Doug shared thoughts on what informed his approach to parenting when he was a new parent:

Doug: . . . at the time I was establishing or determining how I was going to be as a parent, probably the way society defined a parent and things you should do as a dad
and things you should do as a mom probably impacted things that I would do as a parent. (p. 8)

These is likely a common scenario for many new parents—look around society, see what is being recommended and what are the expectations and try to fit into that. As mentioned in the discussion of major themes, these parents tended to adopt a more critical and reflective approach to their parenting from experiencing the Anasazi program and the Arbinger ideas. These parents talked about how they are now parenting more from their own convictions and beliefs, being more intentional in their parenting with a focus on developing a strong relationship with their adolescents. When I asked them, six of the sets of parents agreed that experiencing Anasazi has been a liberating and freeing experience in their parenting in terms of cultural expectations.

Stacy: I think the concepts are freeing. I have felt that and the more that I learn and the more I practice it and get it, it is very freeing. (2p. 5)

Some of the parents acknowledged that the ideas helped them see how their way of being was influencing, even provoking, the very attitudes and behaviors that they do not like in their children. For instance, Sharla explained:

Sharla: Well, I was going to say I think Anasazi got me started thinking more than ever before about how my reactions to my children might create their behaviors. Possibly spur them on to negative stuff. (2p. 8)

A few parents also discussed how the Arbinger ideas helped them take a step back from their relationships and notice what was motivating and influencing them. Doug talked at length about being more free from worrying about how others may judge him as a parent and concluded:

Doug: . . . Mary and I decided what we want to do as parents and that should be the driver behind it rather than what somebody is going to say. (2p. 5)

Most of the parents also talked about purposefully letting go of their need to control, being somewhat more lenient, and having more peace about such decisions.

Thomas: We were more willing to let them carry the burden of the responsibility of their choices rather than feeling like they were our problems. So, yeah is that freeing? Absolutely. Because you own your problems and let someone else own their own
problems. And recognize the responsibility given the principles, given the pyramid to create an environment where they know that we’re comfortable with ourselves, we love each other and we love them. And that’s the basis and if you go beyond that it’s a joint responsibility rather than just our responsibility. I hadn’t thought of the word free but it would be an apt word to describe it. (2p. 5)

Kevin talked about his own experience growing up and how he and Stacy have intentionally been focusing their parenting on their relationships with their children, rather than control or force.

Kevin: I came from a background that was very controlling and manipulating, very controlling, shaming and withholding affection if I wasn’t doing what they thought was going to make the family look good and that kind of thing. And so the whole concept of Anasazi and the Arbinger way of doing things was very freeing because there’s none of that controlling way of doing things that just causes tension and stress. Even if the child is going along with your controls, it doesn’t feel free even if they are doing it. And so that whole concept is very liberating and just the idea of being who you are and loving your children to be who they are, obviously you have guidelines and things like that in raising them but way different than controlling them. And I grew up with that. . . . It’s way more comfortable and totally different than what I grew up with. I think that’s not just my family but I think that’s pretty prevalent in our society. (2p. 5)

Jim and Sally also spoke about a similar freedom they feel in their parenting after the Anasazi experience:

Jim: And the whole concept of the idea of victimhood versus personal responsibility. That is such a freeing idea. . . . And the good news about the whole program, the seminar and everything else, is that I can actually decide to change, I can actually change and if I change then it doesn’t mean that the other person in that collusion is going to be any different or they’re going to change, but the collusion is going to be gone.

Sally: There are no knots in my stomach. There is no overlooking my shoulder every time I turn around to make sure the other person is doing what they’re supposed to be
doing. I am free. Your kids are free. Maybe for a while they will back slide or not do exactly what you want them to do but finally they figure out their way. As long as they get counsel and you talk to them and being open to where they are in their lives, they eventually turn around. They do. They find their own way in their own way. . . .

The world wants people to do it a particular way. Now I’m talking about the teachings of the world. “You’re going to do this my way and my time frame.” People are too different and I think that you get a lot of unhappy people when you try and figure out where they are.

Jim: The program that is forced obviously creates resistance. So, if you give up on that force then, that’s another way that it’s really liberating is you don’t, your resistance goes away because there’s nothing to resist and the problem is if you’re interacting in a way that provokes resistance, then neither one of you are free. . . .

There are just a lot of ways that makes a huge difference. (2p. 10-11)

Angela added similar things in regard to she and Nick’s relationship now with their son John:

Angela: One of the things I learned is that John is going to walk [i.e. “make his own walking’’], you know and I am not necessarily responsible. I can guide him, but he has to learn his own ways. Our Shadow always counseled me that when John comes back he will still be John. We will have to accept him and allow him to make his mistakes, but try to walk forward with him. So that was very helpful to know, especially for the other kids that are coming up. If you are talking about that as being freeing – there wasn’t as big a weight as it wasn’t my responsibility to make sure he is doing this, this and this. I can’t have that kind of control. (2p. 6)

Overall, these parents talked about the Arbinger ideas as most influencing their opinions and adoption of a more critical approach in their parenting. It seems these parents’ experience of the Anasazi program provided them with encouragements to critique the status quo of mainstream parenting in our culture for its failings in their own personal experiences, and to be more intentional in parenting from their own convictions focusing on their relationship with their adolescents.

Does the Anasazi Program and do the Arbinger Ideas Apply Equally Well to Mothers and Fathers, Boys and Girls?
Lastly, while developing the follow-up interviews I wanted to ask the parents more specifically about gender and their experiences as mothers and fathers with the Anasazi program and the Arbinger ideas. Since gender is such a significant part of culture, I wanted to find out if these parents felt the Anasazi program and the Arbinger ideas apply equally well to mothers and fathers, boys and girls. While working as a Shadow, I had a couple discussions with parents and also a couple discussions with other Shadows, about the presentation style of the Arbinger ideas. Some women have felt the ideas were clearly written from a masculine point of view, and tend to assume a masculine subject and address more so men’s ways of thinking. The Arbinger materials use masculine pronouns as neutral signifiers of persons, both adults and children, and the gender of the speaker or character in their written materials is almost always a man. In addition, there is a history of the Anasazi program itself assuming a masculine subject as the model young walker. In Ezekiel Sanchez’s presentations to parents he most often speaks of young walkers as boys and uses masculine pronouns as neutral signifiers of persons. Much of the Anasazi Foundation literature does the same. Interestingly though, it tends to be women, particularly mothers in the Anasazi program that “get” the ideas more quickly than men.

In the follow-up interviews I simply asked the parents the question of whether the ideas apply equally well to both genders. Overwhelmingly these parents’ responses were affirmative that the Arbinger ideas and the Anasazi program apply equally well to both. Many of the parents wondered about the question because it seemed obvious to them that they apply equally:

**Terri:** They learn the same concepts - right?

**Marty:** Yes, they do.

**Terri:** Then of course they would.

**Marty:** The reason I was asking about that is some parents I have shadowed before as well as some others have commented that some of the ideas may be a little more focused on men’s ways of thinking at times than on women’s ways of thinking. I just wanted to ask parents a little about that.

**Stephen:** I did not get that feeling.

**Terri:** Neither did I. (2p. 3)
Other parents simply stated unequivocally that it all applies equally well to both genders.

Thomas: Oh that’s simple, yes. . . I didn’t detect in the training that there was any distinction made by gender or by age or by ethnicity. It was universal application. I think it’s excellent.

Laura: They apply to anyone and everyone. They are such foundational principles in life. (2p. 3)

Jennifer: Yes, there is no prejudice, no discrimination.

Marty: You felt like the ideas fit well for women and for men, boys and girls?

Jennifer: I found no problems, no discrimination, nothing. (2p. 3)

Some parents acknowledge that the ideas and the program may be taken up differently by men and women, but that the ideas are universal and apply to both:

Doug: I think it’s pretty gender neutral, I think. It’s applicable in both cases. I think probably in our minds we apply it different ways because as I’m hearing this thing I’m sort of seeing it more in a work environment, she’s probably in her mind seeing it in the home environment or maybe even in the church environment. But they are principles that apply anywhere. (2p. 4)

Angela and Nick talked more at length about this, as our discussion seemed to prompt their thinking about the applicability of the ideas and their differing experiences.

Angela: I wondered about that question. Why wouldn’t anybody think it wouldn’t? I thought that was a peculiar question, I thought it was obvious because yes; what did you ask that for?

Marty: Well I’m curious of your thoughts and then I will complete that idea.

Angela: I think it does. . . . I think sometimes it is easier for women to “get it.”

Nick: Yep!, that’s it . . .

Angela: I don’t know why, I don’t want to classify it that way but knowing the men and women who have gone through it that I know, the women tend to get it. That is probably because they have a more dominant role in child rearing.

Nick: That is where I was looking at it, the mothers are generally the care giver to the child. The father is generally the strict, the disciplinarian. I think the mothers have a much easier time at the Arbinger and Anasazi, loving caring idea. It’s kind of funny. I
find when other family members are going through things, I look it as—"pull the book out." It starts to become very analytical. "Find something in our materials, there is something that will help you because everything can be applied to most situations." There may be two or three different stories and you pull a little bit from this one and a little bit from that one. You have a working scenario then, that is how I look at it.

Angela: Do you think it is applicable to men and women then [to Nick]?

Nick: I think it is applicable—I think women get it easier because they are in tune to the care-giving side of it. At least for me, . . . it's well, here is this story, here is this story [and] you can see as plain as day you are doing the exact same thing. I wonder if men look at it more that way . . . "there's got to be a process here somewhere." . . . At our last interview I talked about how I got to a certain spot and I could not get past there and it took me a long time to get past there and I wonder if other parents have that type of situation where they can't get past there? (2p. 5-6)

The parents in this research noted little differences between mothers or fathers. There was very little discussion of gender in their responses to this question, or in their responses to any of the questions. I could interpret their failure to speak to gender, but at this point I do not think this is warranted because I believe the questions of the research were not specific enough for the parents to address gendered differences in their experiences. I thought the parents would speak more to this in the initial interviews, and when they did not I hoped that they would in the follow-up interviews, but this was not the case. These parents may likely experience important gendered differences in their parenting and their relationship with their adolescent as the research on mothering and fathering would suggest. And the fact that they said very little about gender does seem to say something about their beliefs about gender and their Anasazi experience that I would like to scrutinize and interpret theoretically. But the nature of the research questions and the interviews were not adequate to provide the initial framework or the necessary data for such an interpretation. Follow-up research more specifically designed to address the gendered nature of mothers' and fathers' experiences with Anasazi and its effects on their parenting is needed, and a future project I would like to explore. The data does reveal a number of significant implications discussed below, following that I offer an interpretive analysis of certain important findings from the research.
Possible Implications of Findings

In this section, I will discuss possible implications of the parents' responses and the major emergent themes. In discussing implications, I want to be careful to note that I am not talking about generalizability in terms of being able to directly apply these findings to other similar contexts. It has not been my attempt to make statements from this research that empirically predict or that will be directly generalizable to others. Rather than seeking the objectivity and prediction of generalizability, I instead want to share possible implications of this research in terms that are partial, limited, and contextual. I want to offer implications that may be transferable as readers critically and morally reflect on the findings to decide if the implications resonate as meaningful and applicable in their own contexts.

Implications for the Anasazi Foundation

The Arbinger ideas are the core part of the parents' Anasazi experience. At the beginning of the program, the Shadows strongly encourage the parents to take active participation in Anasazi throughout the time their son or daughter is in the program and afterward. The main focus of the parents' experience and participation is the Arbinger seminar and the weekly shadowing which is structured around the Arbinger materials. These parents' responses show that the Arbinger seminar, including the materials and readings, formed the core foundation for personal change in their Anasazi experiences. The Arbinger seminar and ideas were discussed by these parents more than any other topic. Indeed the two sets of parents that indicated they had a "somewhat positive and somewhat negative" experience with Anasazi were quite positive about the Arbinger ideas. This fact that the Arbinger ideas were the core foundation for change actually confirms what many at Anasazi have thought for sometime. This is important considering the history of the Arbinger seminar as a part of the Anasazi program for parents.

A brief history of the utilization of the Arbinger philosophy at Anasazi is necessary to discuss this specific implication. When Anasazi began in 1988, there was not a structured program for parents to take part in as there was for the youth. There was an orientation provided for them, and weekly calls were set up with them where the Shadow would update them about the progress of their child. There was a somewhat informal approach to help the parents love and forgive their child which was loosely structured through the Shadow.
those early days of Anasazi, shadowing was done by Ezekiel Sanchez and Larry Olsen. Anasazi was not an accredited institution, and the shadowing was not considered formal psychotherapy. Sanchez and Olsen applied their own best efforts and practices that they felt would be the best for the youth, which centered their own religious and spiritual beliefs. They tended to be quite successful as Shadows, and particularly in building strong relationships with the youth and the parents. In 1990, Terry Warner had heard about the Anasazi Foundation, and visited the program. He was deeply impressed by the spirit of the program, and felt that it was quite similar to his philosophy. He was excited that there was a place such as Anasazi that was having success in employing principles and concepts so resonant to his own. From that visit there began a very close relationship between Anasazi and the Arbinger Institute. Arbinger began offering their relationship seminar (based on an early work of Warner's entitled *Bonds of Anguish, Bonds of Love*) for parents at Anasazi. The parents were encouraged to attend the seminar at the beginning of their adolescent’s enrollment, but participation was not absolutely required. The Shadow continued to primarily follow-up with the parents on their readings and give them an update on their adolescents’ progress. In the early 1990s, with regulations in outdoor behavioral healthcare, and with Anasazi’s growth, they acquired accreditation through the Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children (COA). This required that Shadows be M.S. level psychotherapists and that Anasazi have a number of other mental health care requirements. This restructured the clinical efforts of Anasazi; Shadows and a clinical director were hired, a full time nurse was hired, and a clinical department was created.

In the mid 1990s, the Arbinger Institute developed their relationship seminar into what they call *The Choice* seminar. This became the seminar for parents at Anasazi. And in the late 1990s, Arbinger developed *The Choice in Intervention* which was then also incorporated into the parent seminar at Anasazi. With the more refined developments of the Arbinger seminars, Anasazi began to strongly encourage parents to attend as a significant part of the Anasazi experience for them. But the seminars were not mandatory for parents until the early summer of 2001.

Unfortunately, there has been an historical tension between the Arbinger ideas and the core principles of the Anasazi Way with some Anasazi personnel. Ezekiel Sanchez has
been somewhat suspicious of the Arbinger philosophy and of any treatment or intervention philosophy due to some negative experiences he had during the program's original development at Brigham Young University. Up until the late fall of 2000, Anasazi utilized the seminar for the parents, but not internally in the business operations or the clinical department in a formalized way. Through the 1990s, many of the Shadows used the Arbinger ideas in their shadowing, but some did not. Anasazi left it up to each Shadow to determine their own clinical approach. In the fall of 2000, Anasazi underwent a major personnel restructuring. Chris Wallace, affiliated with Arbinger since the late 1970s and with Anasazi since the early 1990s, was hired as full-time clinical director. Jacob Pope, who had worked at the Arbinger Institute and previously as a Trail Walker at Anasazi, was hired as Chief Operations Officer. He was invited to restructure the Anasazi and its personnel, and it became his mission to implement the Arbinger ideas into the complete internal workings of the program, especially the clinical department. Most of the previous clinical staff were fired, and new Shadows and nurses were hired. I was hired at Anasazi during this time. This proved a major change for Anasazi, and a process that took time to implement. During this time the clinical work at Anasazi became founded in the Arbinger philosophy and Shadows were required to utilize these ideas as the core foundation of their intervention.

Jacob Pope left Anasazi in August of 2002 and from that time on the Arbinger ideas no longer were used as foundational to the internal structure and personnel training of Anasazi, though the clinical (including field) and nursing departments continued to be founded in the Arbinger ideas under Chris Wallace, until his departure in early 2003. When Chris Wallace left I was given the Interim Clinical Director position. Shortly thereafter that changed as I decided to quit Anasazi in April in order to use the Summer of 2003 to work on this dissertation full time. Since that time there has been additional restructuring of personnel, and a new Clinical Director has been hired. The clinical department will most likely remain founded in the Arbinger philosophy, but there remains a tension between the Arbinger philosophy and the Anasazi program to some degree to this day. Unexpectedly this internal tension was evident to one of the parents I interviewed, Stephen, though none of the other parents spoke of this. His words were thoughtful and instructive that Anasazi needs one singular vision and focus, and better organized leadership. In the end, the fact that these
parents overwhelmingly indicated that the Arbinger ideas were central to their experiences of change and growth through the program is quite significant.

Aftercare services need to be reworked, including structures to invite parents’ ongoing participation. These parents talked a great deal about the need for aftercare services to be significantly improved. Alumni have criticized Anasazi for some time for not providing adequate aftercare. Until the spring of 2001, aftercare services were even more minimal than now. A number of efforts have been directed at improving Anasazi’s aftercare that have been beneficial, but according to these parents much improvement is still needed. As noted in the discussion of major themes, most of these parents spoke criticisms of the aftercare services. Many of them spoke highly of the aftercare personnel so their criticisms were not who is doing aftercare, but rather how it is structured. In a study of adventure based education and the Outward Bound program, Hattie et al. (1997) found “recidivism may be, at least in part, a function of inadequacy of postprogram support” (p. 59). This highlights the need for Anasazi to explore ways of improving their aftercare services.

The parents provided a number of ideas for aftercare. These were generative two-way discussions between us for the most part, and I believe their suggestions may be some good things to implement. Some parents have suggested that their adolescent needs to continue to feel a strong part of an uplifting and influential group like they did at Anasazi. For example Doug stated:

Doug: when Justin got done with Anasazi he really felt like he was part . . . of a real unique group of kids that had had an experience, a really meaningful experience, but as he got further and further, and he would run into a Trail Walker and he just thought that was the neatest thing, . . . and in my mind if they had something like a bi-weekly get together with these kids where they could see the Trail Walkers again or they could interface with others and support each other, “How are you doing” and so forth. Something like that. It’s like the program ends and maybe a letter once every other month and that’s it. . . . what was happening was they feel a part of this group and then they are out of the group and there is less contact and then all of these things start hitting them. (2p. 9).
Doug and Mary and also Stephen and Terri each talked about the need to provide more of a mentor to the returning Young Walker, someone they could go to for help and support, and someone who would be personally interested in and motivated to keep in contact with them regularly and be there for them. Stephen and Terri feel this was an important ingredient in the success they had with Trent in a military boot camp he completed after Anasazi. The mentor part of that program’s aftercare was very personal and central to that program. Three of the sets of parents said that a follow-up aftercare program for the parents would be very helpful—meaning in addition to the offer to call the aftercare staff, which is the primary aftercare support offered for parents. Jim and Sally suggested that an aftercare program for the parents could involve a support group and other parent mentors those parents could work with to encourage them to continue doing the seminar exercises and readings. For example:

Sally: I wish there were aftercare for the parents . . . The only thing I think in that is that when they come home it would really be more helpful to have someone to talk to when they first come home. More communication. Like aftercare for parents. Because I’m thinking about it now and when my first kids came home I could call down here all the time because it was less structured, less formal. . . . Even if parents had someone to talk to about the struggles, it’s really hard when your kids first come home. That is the most difficult part because you don’t want to go back to the way it was, you don’t really have a concrete thing you can do as far as a level system or something if things don’t go right and it’s hard. And just sometimes having someone to talk about it from the seminar’s point of view gives you a whole different perspective of just letting go. And it probably would be helpful, I don’t know how you would do this either, for parents who have had kids come home and have been home a while to be able to talk with the others. Mentor them. (p. 19-20)

Jim: . . . we talked a little bit about support for parents afterwards [in the first interview] and even afterwards I thought about how I thought that was such a good idea, that there would be some way to follow up with the parents because parents don’t know what to do when their kids get home, especially if they encounter some of
the behaviors that are worrisome still. And even follow up and encourage the parents to keep doing their exercises. (2p. 1)

Jennifer suggested a somewhat similar support group:

**Jennifer:** A support group for parents. Not a complaining, whining group . . . But a support group to where you come and you uplift your child and say, “My child is doing great. My child is getting it together and pulling it together,” to where there is nothing but positive talk about each other’s children to where there are just words of encouragement and uplifting so those words are going out toward each other’s children. *That’s power.* That’s what we need to give our children and give each other’s children is that word, those words. (p. 8)

Nick and Angela suggested there be a quarterly walking on the trail, or some type of quarterly follow-up visits for the alumni young walkers with their Shadow. We discussed the possibilities of having a person from Anasazi follow-up with them and other alumni families in their hometown area on a twice-yearly basis. Many of the parents would like to have some option provided for their adolescent and/or themselves to come back to Anasazi for a refresher experience.

Stephen and Terri, Vigil and Laura, and Kevin and Stacy all mentioned the idea of video taping the seminar for parents and/or creating an interactive CD/DVD of the seminar to give to parents. They talked about how the seminar was very powerful, but that it is something that needs to be reviewed many times. This was echoed by Sally’s experience of attending the seminar many times and how it helped her.

Beyond these suggestions, it is likely necessary to allocate resources differently. Anasazi directors will need to consider how to effectively reallocate resources as Anasazi continues to suffer under financial difficulties. I have two other suggestions that could be employed, the genesis of which began in clinical department meetings while I was still at Anasazi. First, make aftercare services clinical by hiring a Master level psychotherapist to run the aftercare. Master level interns may be useful as aftercare staff along with continued use of current and former trail walkers. Second, development of an aftercare program that youth and parents agree to participate in during the time the youth is at Anasazi may also be helpful. This program could involve the Arbinger principles and specific readings and
activities that would help both the youth and the parents revisit the most significant experiences of their Anasazi "walkings," as well as encouragement to continue their walkings at home. This would also allow parents to be better prepared for the transition of their adolescent back to home after the program. This tends to be an especially difficult transition for many parents, and these parent interviews echoed the same sentiment. In addition, many of the parents interviewed spoke of the need for them to continue being involved in the Arbinger ideas and continuing their Anasazi walking after their son or daughter’s return home. As Jim noted:

**Jim**: It would probably be good if I went through those exercises every month. So you have to always, it’s so ingrained in our society that we have to step back again and start thinking about what we’re doing again, not slip back into those areas because you’re surrounded with society’s views which are, again, are different than this which really works. (p. 18)

Many of these parents’ only criticism of Anasazi was the aftercare. Improving it could significantly improve Anasazi’s effectiveness with families.

*Ensure congruity between Anasazi philosophy and intervention practice.* Since the Arbinger philosophy was indicated as foundational to these parents’ experiences of change, it is important that the treatment and intervention provided by Anasazi be congruent with this core philosophy. During my experience as a Shadow, the clinical department was very centered on this objective. One thing that remains cloudy is that the Arbinger ideas do not constitute a treatment modality, but rather an overarching philosophy. The development of a treatment modality that centers the Arbinger ideas may be beneficial. The development of such a model is beyond the scope of this research, but I do want to discuss certain philosophical and practical matters that may help the clinical team address their needs. These matters relate to the parents’ indication that the Arbinger ideas were foundational to their experiences of change and growth.

In my experience with Anasazi, the subtle philosophies of individualism continually confronted us in our clinical work and easily seduced us toward ideas and practices incongruent with Warner’s philosophy and the Arbinger ideas. Clinical intervention may need to increasingly center in both the moral and relational requirements of Warner’s
philosophy and the Arbinger ideas. I suggest that a focus on relationalism be utilized as a lens of critique for all clinical efforts utilized. Ideas for this relationalism ethos would center Warner's philosophy and could also utilize the theoretical ideas I discussed in the methodology above, including the sections "human relations as sacred space" and "the postmodern ethos as an approach to ethics." This stance would require an ongoing critique of how individualism, which is foundational to mainstream psychology, is influencing and affecting intervention.

In developing a clearer model of intervention, the clinical department may want to consider different practices and/or structures for inviting moral reflexivity as one focus of intervention. The parents interviewed all seemed to take a more reflective and critical approach toward their parenting. This happens mostly by default, as the Anasazi program is not oriented toward this specifically with parent participants. Anasazi clinical staff may need to be more proactive by seeking to ensure that ongoing clinical work with parents invites this kind of reflexivity and critical approach toward the influence of cultural and societal ideas and expectations on contemporary parenting. Social constructionism, deconstruction, and other similar ideas, theories, and practices relating to culture and cultural constraints could be utilized intentionally in the training of clinical staff.

Anasazi may also benefit by developing better ways of addressing the unique needs of families according to their unique contexts. Dan and Sharla had a number of comments regarding that they felt Anasazi was attempting to fit them and their daughter into an already set treatment plan, whereas what they felt was needed was for the Anasazi program to be uniquely tailored to their daughter's unique struggles. They explained their difficulties in depth in the interviews:

**Dan:** . . . A lot of our kids we have some state funds because we adopted them at older ages. With Kim we didn’t have anything. So we had to look to other people for help and so we were kind of, it was kind of, "Will you help us? Yes we will. This is what you’re going to do."

**Sharla:** They chose Anasazi for us.

**Dan:** And so a lot of these places were chosen. (p. 6). . . . Everybody was always looking at it like, "Well let’s do this and we’ll get her back home." We knew that
under the circumstances and because we couldn’t really get to where we needed to be with her, which was back to some original therapy we had started doing when she was about seven or eight, we knew that everything else was not going to help. And so it was just a matter of keeping her safe and our family safe. (p. 7)

**Sharia:** We argued gently, we hoped, with our Shadow and the LDS Social Services worker that Kim did not need to go from Anasazi to home. We really tried to convince them that she needed to go back to [a previous outdoor behavioral program she had attended] into the structure, into a level system where she could prove the sincerity of those revelations that she received at Anasazi. So she could cement them and practice them awhile with a lot of letters and phone calls and visits from mom and dad and all of that. But we couldn’t convince anybody. They were convinced that if you just love them enough it will go away. That’s not the case with those really severe kids and we knew it but our hands were tied. So, that’s one thing I regret (p. 8). . . . every time you generalize something that’s good you’re going to have trouble because life is too specific. There are too many specifics to generalize anything. (p. 9)

Their thoughts are well taken, as their suggestion is philosophically congruent with Warner’s philosophy and the Arbinger ideas. It is important that the Anasazi program cannot be used in a generalized way with all clients. It must be context sensitive specific to best serve each family. The development of structured practices to ensure the ideas are utilized in a way that is sensitive to each family, parent, and adolescent in the intervention process could help ensure the individualized treatment plan is sensitive to the needs of each unique family.

**Implications for Wilderness Therapy and Other Therapeutic Intervention with Parents of Adolescents**

The major themes of this research can be applied to begin answering questions regarding what are the most meaningful foci of intervention with the parents in wilderness therapy and other therapies targeting parent-adolescent relationships. Foremost, these parents’ responses indicate that the parents’ involvement in the treatment is crucial to the success of the treatment for their adolescent. Again, Thomas and Laura’s comments exemplify this:
Thomas: If I were to give an evaluation I don’t think that the training . . . I don’t think it gets home quite enough to the parents to the degree that they have to change. It’s taught but it’s hard to internalize and maybe you only do it after some period of time but . . .

Marty: Are you saying that you’d guess that may be true for many parents? That they may not comprehend how much it involves them?

Thomas: I think so. It involves them. And that any changing that they have, literally 100% of the changing that involves them, is them.

Laura: Yeah, their lives aren’t going to be different because of what their kids do. Their lives are only going to be different because of what they do. I think we knew that, I think that’s what we were taught but we haven’t followed through on it like we should have.

Thomas: But it takes awhile for that to really hit home. Because you really come into it because you want somebody else to change . . . And so the transition to change to recognize that you can’t force a change but any change you make is internally, it’s a slow process. (p. 9)

Thomas: Ultimately if the system is going to work the parents have to do the changing. (p. 16)

Jim and Sally confirmed this same need for parents to focus on their own change.

Jim: The child part is one part but the parents’ part is the other part of it, the other side of the coin that’s got to be there. Both together work, either one of them will work to some extent because it’s so much better than what is happening but if you have both of them working together then I think it’s a real formula for success. (p. 19)

Sally: So I tell people when they call me [because Sally and Jim are a on a referral list Anasazi gives to prospective parents] and they ask me about that and I tell them, “My kids have changed. We changed.” And I tell them that our change made a bigger difference. But I said, “it’s not a guarantee.” (p. 20)

This highlights the significance of the parent-adolescent relationship and the need to address the relational and contextual issues for adolescents in crisis.
These parents' responses indicate that other wilderness therapy programs and treatment targeting youth would be greatly benefited by the utilization of Warner's philosophy and the Arbinger training. If other treatment programs do not use these ideas, they would be wise to use some type of intervention program that is 1) founded on a rigorous relational philosophy, 2) is relationship centered, not individualistic, 3) addresses change in way of being as foundational to behavior change, 4) targets the parents' involvement in the problems of their adolescent, 5) is open to and addresses the parents' own spirituality, and 6) is broadly applicable to most all aspects of relationships and life for the parents.

These parents' responses may indicate other important foci for other treatment programs for adolescents. These parents' responses highlight the importance of treatment inviting parents to adopt a reflective and critical approach to their parenting and to the cultural influences on their parenting, and to be purposeful and intentional in their parenting according to their own moral commitments and the needs of their adolescents. These parents' responses indicate the possible need for other treatment programs for youth to nurture and encourage good relationships between all staff and the parents, and to invite relationships that are ethical, warm, loving, caring, and nurturing.

A significant aspect of Anasazi is that it is an openly spiritual program. The parents interviewed noted the importance of the spiritual focus of the program, and many were especially grateful for the spiritual change in their own lives through the program. Therefore other treatment programs for youth would likely be wise to have a spiritual component foundational to the treatment program for the parents as well as the youth.

Other programs would also be wise to learn from Anasazi's deficient aftercare services and develop a strong aftercare program that meets the needs of the parents and their adolescent, including a structured plan to invite parents to continue "working the program" and utilizing the ideas that were most meaningful to them in their changes during and especially after the program. And lastly, other treatment programs would be wise to not generalize their program to all families, to not try to force their treatment plan, but instead have a core treatment plan that could be easily and effectively modified to meet the unique and specific needs of any family.
Implications for the Parenting of Adolescents

These parents' responses may have some important things to say with regard to the parenting of adolescents in general. Many of these parents' comments address some of the main issues in the literature on parenting adolescents. I would like to offer both suggestions and theoretical analyses targeting two areas, 1) the ethical foundation of parenting determinants and parenting style, and 2) cultural discourses about parenting and way of being as important influences on adolescent storm and stress.

Parenting determinants and parenting styles require a foundation of relational ethics. Belsky's (1984) model of parenting determinants accounts for the parent's personality and psychological resources, the child characteristics, and contextual factors. Abidin's (1992) model expands on Belsky's and addresses the parents' own cognitions, particularly their beliefs and expectations, as significant determinants of parenting. Though these two models address behavioral, cognitive, and contextual influences on parenting, they both fail to acknowledge the moral domain of parenting, the moral quality of the parent-child relationship, or way of being. The parents in this research noted repeatedly that the main influence on their changed relationships with their adolescent was a change in their own way of being. The changes in these parents' own psychological resources, parenting behaviors, and cognitions can best be explained by a more foundational change in their way of being toward their adolescent. As further proof of this, many of these parents' contexts (as identified by Belsky and Abidin) have not changed, yet they describe their relationships with their adolescents as qualitatively different. Way of being mediates and is foundational to both Belsky and Abidin's models of parenting determinants.

Baumrind's parenting styles address parent's behaviors in managing conflict, and Darling and Steinberg (1993) explain the role of cognitions in parenting style stating "the values parents hold and the goals toward which they socialize their children are critical determinants of parenting behavior" (p. 492). Parenting practices (parenting behaviors according to parents' goals and values) are different than parenting style which is explained as "a constellation of attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child and that, taken together, create an emotional climate in which the parent's behaviors are expressed" (p. 488). Even Darling and Steinberg's further elucidation of parenting style does not
specifically address the moral domain of the parent-adolescent relationship, although parenting style as the “constellation of attitudes toward the child” and the “emotional climate” could be considered a simplistic understanding of way of being. The parents interviewed in this research note that being critical about their own way of being was foundational to their improved parenting of their adolescent. For example Doug explained:

**Doug:** One of the things that I focus on and make a conscious effort is . . . looking at Justin as a person rather than Justin as a problem, and clearly before this experience I looked at him, and dealt with him a lot of times, as a problem rather than a son with issues and feelings and so forth. So that’s probably the biggest change I’ve made is trying to look at him as a person ... I tell you what, since he’s been home he has been so much fun to have around and we have been able to have a good, not just father son relationship, but being good friends. (p. 1)

And Jennifer shared:

**Jennifer:** And I’m not perfect, I am so not. There are times that I will lose it and sometimes I will hang onto it for a little while and then I’ll be remembered, "Look at her heart, look at her heart," and then I’ll go back. I’m to where it doesn’t go the day now. (p. 3)

In these two examples neither Doug’s nor Jennifer’s changes can be explained by them changing their parenting behaviors or parenting style. Their changes are due to their intentional choice to be responsive, to acknowledge the equal humanity of their adolescent. Conceptualizing both the determinants of parenting and parenting style within a framework of way of being as foundational to all else may have the potential to revolutionize or at least revitalize our understanding of these concepts. This may not be a completely new idea. Other systematic approaches to the study of attitude and ethics in parenting may suggest similar things. But relative to Darling and Steinberg I suggest that way of being is a more sophisticated, philosophically rigorous explanation of what they define as parenting style. In fact, from this perspective way of being is foundational to and mediates the parenting style parents employ. An understanding of way of being seems to be a next logical, philosophical step to understanding that which both mediates parenting style and parenting practices, and may be the most significant determinant of parenting quality and influence.
Parent "way of being" and cultural discourses about parenting are both important influences on adolescent storm and stress. Arendell's (1997) description of a social constructionist approach to parenting highlights the contextual nature of all parenting, that "parenting is situated in place and time" and that the "activities and objectives of parenting, beyond those of basic survival, can vary in relation to the respective social context and historical moment" (p. 4). The discussions I had with the parents about cultural and societal expectations and ideas (i.e. discourses) that they see as having influenced their own parenting and parenting in general in our society speaks to the situated nature of their parenting. As discussed in the major themes these parents tended to adopt a more critical and reflective approach to their parenting from experiencing the Anasazi program and the Arbinger ideas. From this reflective position these parents seem more critical of negative cultural influences, and tended to be more intentional in their parenting (than they were before Anasazi) with a focus on nurturing and developing a strong relationship with their adolescents by actively seeking to be responsive to them.

The adolescent storm and stress literature in the literature review above highlighted that most factors which increase adolescent storm and stress relate back to poor and/or conflictual parent-adolescent relationships. For instance Steinberg and Silk (2002) stated "the available evidence indicates that the single most consistent predictor of adolescent mental health and well-being is the quality of the relationship the young people have with their parents." (p. 120). This study suggests that when parents parent according to dominant cultural discourses, without a reflective critical approach, this tends to breed conflict when those cultural discourses incite parents to see their adolescents as objects (i.e. as problems, irrelevancies, or vehicles) thus limiting their ability to be touched by their humanity. Upon reflection the parents noted that many common cultural discourses about parenting clashed with both the needs of their adolescents and their own personal values and beliefs about parenting. An example of this is in conversation with Jim:

Marty: I'm interested in some of the differences again between your parenting and your relationship before Anasazi and after, and some of the negative things that you talked about that you did before, that you don't do now. Are those things that you see as pretty common ideas about parenting in our culture today?
Jim: Oh, absolutely. A lot of them are just trained, they're probably recommended or referred but I think they are just diametrically opposed to the way things really need to be and that's why we're having so much trouble in society today with parents and with youth. The phrase we've heard is that one of the problems with our society is that we invented teenagers. A lot of other societies don't have those and expect something different from their children. I think it's just the way we're taught. (p. 13)

What all of this suggests is that taking a critical and reflective approach to the influence of cultural discourses on their parenting helped create space for these parents to see their adolescents as people (i.e. be responsive to their humanity). This was not linear but reciprocal as seeing their adolescents as people allowed them to take a more critical approach to the influence of cultural discourses on their parenting. In terms of adolescent storm and stress this means that if parents actively seek to be responsive to the humanity of their adolescents and seek to take a critical reflective approach to the influence of cultural discourses and constraints on their parenting they then provide important foundations for a positive, close, and compassionate relationship with their adolescent where it is much less likely for the adolescent to experience severe storm and stress. I believe this may have wider application than only to parents who have had an adolescent at Anasazi to parents of adolescents in general.

The Influence of the Parents' and My Own Way of Being on the Inquiry Process

Throughout the interviews I was seeking to be aware of and critical about my way of being with the parents according to Warner's philosophy and the Arbinger ideas. I believed that my way of being would have an important impact on the relationships with the parents and subsequently the trustworthiness of the interview data. And that the parents' way of being would have an important impact on the truthfulness of their answers. Through the after-interview journals I reflected on my way of being with the parents, according to Warner, whether I was responsive to them or not. Through the evaluation questions at the end of the each interview, I invited the parents to reflect on their way of being in the interview experience with me. These practices were the center focus of the criteria for quality for this research.
The parents spoke overwhelmingly about the interviews as a responsive experience. They all said that they felt comfortable and enjoyed the interviews, even the parents who were not particularly happy about doing the interviews before they started. The parents talked openly about their experiences in the interviews. Stephen talked about the interviews as good for him because it helped him let off some steam about some of the things he was not happy about with Anasazi. Terri said that it helped her “remember the good things” and she stated:

**Terri:** I haven’t felt threatened, I haven’t felt cut off, I haven’t felt that anything I’ve had to say has been accepted with any ill will. I felt very comfortable.

Stephen agreed and added his own thoughts about being grateful for the interview being comfortable:

**Stephen:** I have too. I’m pretty opinionated but fairly flexible and have given a decent argument. Most of us see life from our own perspective, . . . I just really think if you put people together in a room who all have good hearts and good intentions that the outcome from that usually is good. But it’s getting there which is difficult. (p. 21-2)

Many of the parents said that the interviews gave them the opportunity to step back from their lives, to remember their Anasazi experiences, and to feel closer to their adolescent and to one another. All of them spoke positively about it being a responsive experience. For example Doug shared:

**Doug:** For me it’s been interesting and it makes you, it’s kind of made me actually give some thought to things that, the whole experience to actually assess it a little more closely than I would have otherwise. We tend to go through life and take things as they occur. We don’t ever really stop and analyze them or assess them. So for me it’s been an opportunity to step back . . . some of the things that we’ve discussed are things that I’ve thought about or discussed with meetings that we’ve been in when Justin’s been with the parents [at the intake orientation for new parents at Anasazi where alumni young walkers are invited to speak] or, some of the things we’ve discussed before and some of the questions are things that we really haven’t, that I really hadn’t thought of. (p. 14)
And in the follow-up interview, he and Mary stated:

**Mary:** It reinforces good memories. It reinforces what you’ve learned.

**Doug:** For me it’s been responsive. I mean it triggers ideas and thoughts and so forth. It’s not the least bit resistant. (2p. 7)

A discussion about this with Thomas and Laura was quite similar:

**Marty:** Just in terms of responsiveness versus resistance, people as people or people as objects, what’s been your feel as we’ve talked here tonight?

**Laura:** That I want to go back and spend some time reviewing my notes, work harder at doing what I totally believe in.

**Marty:** So it’s been encouraging in that sense?

**Laura:** Oh absolutely. Absolutely.

**Marty:** So it’s been responsive in that sense?

**Laura:** Very much so. Very much so.

**Thomas:** I second that. (p. 17-8)

**Laura:** Yes, I felt like you have been very sensitive to us and understanding us and seeing us as we are (laugh). Maybe better than we are.

**Thomas:** I second that. (p. 18)

And in the follow-up interview Laura said:

**Laura:** I appreciated the interview because it was pulling me back to things that I needed to be pulled back to. (2p. 2)

Sally also talked about how the interviews were a responsive experience for her:

**Sally:** . . . It’s been wonderful because you start thinking about everything that’s happened and it helps you pull it all together. You can focus on what has happened to our family and how we’ve grown from here to here and it makes you feel better that you’ve made some progress and that your family life has changed, so it’s been good to talk about it. It’s been really helpful I think. It made me think about each of the kids and how they were and how they have changed and we respond to them differently and then look at Nicole and how she fits into all of this and how she may feel about all of this and how it affects her now because she’s part of that group that
went and so I think that it’s been really good. I’m glad that we got a chance to do it.

(2p. 12)

I was moved by Jennifer’s thoughts about this question as she was moved in sharing them:

Marty: Overall, what has it been like for you to talk about all of these things today?

Jennifer: It’s awesome. It’s an honor. It’s truly an honor and a privilege to have a second chance as a parent to be able to be the right parent (weeping). A parent that can be an asset, be a benefit and help and hopefully a guide in a child’s life. That’s truly an honor (weeping).

Marty: Wonderful, thank you Jennifer. In terms of being in the box or out of the box, has this been an out of the box experience today, a heart at peace experience?

Jennifer: Most definitely. (p. 11)

Dan shared the following in the first interview:

Dan: I haven’t felt resistant at all. From when you first came I felt the responsiveness of wanting to be able to share, to give some ideas hoping it would make a difference with kids or where it would be included in what everyone is learning and just to help make a difference from our experience. Same as what Sharla said, I really appreciated and thought it was a wonderful program. Everything about it that we went through was wonderful. A great experience for us and I know it was a great experience for Kim. Even though it wasn’t the answer to all of her problems it was a very necessary piece in her progress. And I know it will be something that she can look back to and it will make a difference in her life. The amount of confidence it gave her to take care of herself will really make a difference as she faces challenges in the future. I didn’t feel any fear so it’s been a good experience. (p. 15-16)

In the first interview Sharla questioned whether she was responsive to the interview. Then in the follow-up interview both she and Dan reported it as a responsive experience. Lastly, Angela said simply:

Angela: I was pretty responsive to the whole thing. I like talking about it. My life is the way it is now because of it. I think I’ll stay with it. (p. 11)

A couple of the parents shared that they had some resistant feelings at the beginning of the interviews. In the follow-up interview Kevin talked about some slight feelings of
resistance at the beginning of the interview, and this was similar to what he experienced in the first interview:

**Kevin:** I feel like I've been responsive. I feel comfortable inside and that tells me that I'm okay, that I'm not being resistant. I came into the interview feeling resistant because I was feeling busy and this was something else tonight and so I came into it feeling resistant but then sitting down and talking I felt like that went away because I let that go. I'm not resistant to you; it was just the time limits and our schedule. It allowed me to settle down and be responsive. (2p. 5)

In the first interview, Nick said:

**Nick:** at the beginning of this I didn't really want to talk about this stuff. And so to me at the very beginning it was very resistant and it very quickly switched . . . To me it's just becoming at ease with people . . . we just have to become at ease with people, to open up to them . . . (p. 11)

The parents' responses to these evaluation questions are instructive about the credibility, the validity of these interviews. These parents' responses are trustworthy because the real effects of the interviews were that they enjoyed it, it was meaningful, it brought them to a responsive place, it helped them remember their positive and often moving experiences through Anasazi with their adolescent, and it allowed them to feel reconnected to their adolescent. The interviews allowed for this to take place because they each were a responsive experience. Each relationship was one of characterized primarily by responsiveness; one where we saw each other as people, or at least came to that place within the interview. These were ethical relationships where the parents felt open to talk about their actual experiences, to speak truthfully from a responsive place. The facts that the interviews were a responsive experience for the parents in terms of their relationships with their adolescents and with me are the most significant indications of the validity of the findings. I was very grateful to be a part of these interviews, and to hear the parents share such meaningful, even sacred things. It was all quite meaningful to me. It was a responsive experience for me as well, which adds to the trustworthiness or validity of the research. My reflexivity about my own way of being in the research took place primarily through the after-interview journals and my analysis of them.
I enjoyed these interviews and being with and getting to know these parents. I feel my life has been bettered by what they have shared with me in the interviews. I found myself very interested and inquisitive about their experiences in each of the interviews. In my life I am not always so inquisitive, but for these interviews I was quite excited to hear the parents’ thoughts, and fascinated by their answers. I believe all of the practices of relational-accountability that I did throughout the research process helped me focus on inviting good relationships with these parents, inviting responsiveness in them in the interviews, and inviting responsiveness in general in my own life (from which I cannot separate these interviews).

I had a lot of feelings and thoughts from the interviews regarding my connections with the parents. The after-interview journals helped me get these down immediately following the interviews. From an analysis of these journal entries, there are some important themes that help better explain the moral quality of my relationships with the parents.

Especially in the first interviews, and also at times in other interviews up until even the final one I felt a bit uncomfortable and a little nervous. This was not extreme, but I felt that I was somewhat stilted in my interviewing and somewhat impersonal. After the first interview of this research, which was with Stephen and Terri, I noted:

I did feel somewhat depersonalized and holding back in a way that seemed to be incongruent with some of the feelings that I had. It may have been simply that I wanted to be in more of a therapist role but I think it was more that I wanted to be more personal, genuine, open, and loving with them. I was this way to some extent but not as much as I wanted to be and so it had a feel in the interview of being more formal and not more of a personal experience and I wonder about this and question this and will likely seek to have it be more of a personal, open, loving experience in subsequent interviews.

I do not know if this directly affected the interview with Stephen and Terri, though I do believe it had an impact, though minor, on my accountability to them at the beginning.

As the interviews progressed, I began to feel more comfortable with the interviewing and with the parents. Some of the parents I quickly connected to, and others it took more
time. As I continued with the interviews I also became more clear of my methodology and
the focus of the research, which helped me be more clear, open, and personal with the
parents. After my first interview with Thomas and Laura (third interview overall) I said:

I felt like my questions were much more clear tonight, more understandable and that
I'm becoming somewhat more at ease although I still want to become more at ease. I
still find myself biting my tongue some in ways that may be unnatural and I wonder
about just letting it be completely, and being guileless in these interviews. It might be
very powerful and I'd like to be able to do that more. I'm also just wanting to be
hopeful about that happening more and more, bit by bit as I do each of these
interviews rather than trying to force or cause something to come about which would
be the antithesis for what I hope for.

This idea of seeking to be guileless struck me as an important part of qualitative inquiry, a
significant stance to take in terms of my methodology centered in relational ethics. This idea
encouraged me in subsequent interviews and helped me not try to overly control or
manipulate the interviews and simply allow the parents to speak from their hearts. I was not
always able to do this though, there were some moments where I did acknowledge that I had
been resistant to the parents. There was not an interview where I felt resistant to the parents
throughout, only at certain moments. When I first set the appointment with Stephen and
Terri, Terri said to me (paraphrasing from my notes) “your program didn’t really help either
of my boys who went through it. We sent one of them to a program right after Anasazi, and
he’s doing really good now.” I explained to her the nature of the research and that I really
wanted to talk with parents who have had all different experiences with Anasazi. I wrote in a
note after the interview “I felt a little uneasy talking with Terri. She seemed sort of
disheartened or mildly annoyed by my call and/or letter.” This set a certain precedent for my
interview with her and Stephen, and one of the reasons I was somewhat stilted and nervous
meeting with them. Then when I called them for a follow-up interview, Terri told me that
they were having problems with Trent and that he was in jail over a weekend. They agreed to
a follow-up interview, but had to cancel three times. Our follow-up interview eventually
happened in July by phone after all the other interviews were complete. I was nervous about
this interview, and worried that I was bothering them. I noted in the after-interview journal:
They do have some disappointments with the Anasazi program and some things that they felt frustrated about it, but they don’t seem disappointed at all with these interviews. . . . My concerns and worries were inappropriate and I think that affected the interview to some degree because I was nervous talking with them. That was also true in the first interview with them as well. That was unfortunate and I think it had an effect on the interview. It left me more stilted and a little more technical as I talked with them rather than more warm and open. I am wondering a little bit about how this may have affected the interview. They may have felt some of my nervousness or they may not have. I think I was cordial and friendly with them, just nervous and worried. I can see that as being resistant to them in some ways. Worrying about my own self-justifying images in some ways. I guess what this might mean for this particular interview, for this particular data, I am unsure right now.

What was somewhat surprising to me though was that neither Stephen nor Terri expressed any discomfort with either of the interviews. In fact Terri said at the end of the follow-up interview:

**Terri:** I have always felt very comfortable in doing this interview with you. I have not felt inhibited in any way. I have not felt intimidated. I have not felt like you have led me to a certain answer or even that you have given me personal opinions how you have felt about some of the things that you are researching. For me I have been very open and honest. I do not have any resistant feelings toward the interview or the things that have been discussed.

So now in retrospect, I believe my concern about my way of being with Terri and Stephen was perhaps over concern, overly cautious to some degree, and I am grateful that in the end it was a responsive experience for the both of them. I believe my criticalness about this though helped to enhance the quality of our relationship and perhaps helped to insure a responsive experience.

There were also two interviews where I was not very prepared to do the interview, logistically and emotionally. These were some days that were difficult or stressful for me and I just did not feel right about things in my own life. Fortunately, these were fairly minor and my feeling “off” did not end up affecting the interviews a great deal. One of the interviews
was the first interview with Kevin and Stacy. Kevin also had felt frustrated after having a bad day and was not real interested in doing the interview at first. Through the interview, both he and I felt more at ease. I noted in the after-interview journal:

Kevin talked about how honestly he felt... resistant in some things about Lance, resistant some with some of the ways that he and Stacy still disagree but also resistant that it had been a very difficult day for him too and he wasn’t very excited about doing the interview although was glad to do it. I thanked him for this and I think it’s interesting that both of us were feeling frustrated and kind of upset a little bit and I think that affected the interview. Though, I don’t mind that there were problems and struggles with this interview and I even thought this right at the end of it that it will just be what it will be. I don’t want to try to control or force things to happen and actually I’m hopeful that the frustrations and difficulties and logistical struggles of this interview can be taken into account in the analysis. I think there’s something very human, something very real about how I was feeling, how Kevin was feeling and just the logistical struggles of it all.

This was an important thing I discovered in the interviews; the more interviews I completed the more I realized that there were limits to the possibilities of my building a strong connection with the parents. One limit to this was that I only met with them each the two times. This did not allow for as much of a close connection with the parents as I would have liked. I noted after the second interview with Nick and Angela:

The structure of my methods has only allowed so much and I guess ideally with the methodology I have and the focus on morality and ethics would have me spending a lot longer with each of the parents and getting to know them a little bit more and sharing in their lives a little bit more. If this were a huge research project I would go on for maybe a year or two with interviews. I think what I am doing is pointing toward that in a good way, so I feel hopeful about that.

I also reflected on what my experience of feeling hopeful might be about in the interviews. I realized that when parents said things that were confirming to my own beliefs about their experiences I took particular note. This question of whether I was seeking
confirmation of my own notions, or genuinely wanting to inquire and learn from these parents was on my mind quite a bit. After the first interview with Jim and Sally I noted:

... I also am keeping the question in my mind of do I like it simply because it’s confirming my view of the world and my own preconceived notions or do I really like it because it’s confirming in a sense that I am being taught and learning in a deeply moral way as I feel connected with them? And so I suppose there is a little bit of both. I could get very concerned about my actual behaviors, thoughts, and feelings as an interviewer in terms of the qualitative research but that would keep me from really seeing those that I’m interviewing – in other words that if I am really critical about my actual methods in session, in the interview, then I’m really reflecting much more so on myself and turning things back on myself in a selfish way rather than being other focused in a relational way. And that’s something also I think very critical to my methodology, and that’s beautiful even to think about right now.

This was somewhat of an epiphany for me in the interviews, and helped structure my relational stance and my way of being in subsequent interviews.

Again my overall experience with the interviews was that they were responsive experiences for me. I very much enjoyed the relationships I made with the parents and found myself for the most part really looking forward to each interview. As the parents spoke some rather beautiful things to me, I felt very encouraged for this research. A few entries from my after-interview journals speak to the moving nature of the interviews and how responsive and grateful I felt. Reflecting on both interviews with Laura and Thomas after our follow-up interview, I said:

I’m very impressed by the spirit that they have about their Anasazi experience and the spirit that they have about their relationship with their daughters and the love and compassion and understanding that they both seem to share so openly even though it has been very difficult for them. And I’m just touched by the goodness of these parents and their great example to me and so it makes me just very grateful to be able to interview them, to get their thoughts and their feelings and I felt responsive to both of them as people and I feel grateful that they are a part of these interviews and have so freely given of their time... I think they have some wonderful things to say to
me, to Anasazi, to parents in general. I feel a lot more hope for them than I do for some other parents whose children are struggling and in some ways I am kind of disappointed that I don’t carry the hope more so even for parents who are not doing as well as Thomas and Laura.

After my first interview with Sally and Jim, I reflected on how much I enjoyed talking with them. In that interview they spoke openly about their experiences with each of their four children who have done Anasazi and the background history of their family. It was a hopeful story that confirmed to me the possibility of change, even when things look the bleakest.

They were both quite animated and really enjoyed telling their stories . . . and I really enjoyed listening to it, their story is fascinating. It was captivating. I could have listened to the things they had to say for a long time this evening.

My first interview with Jennifer was particularly moving to me. After that interview I said:

The most powerful thing that Jennifer said though in her parenting is that if Tori’s not doing well, she refuses to look at her in any other way than the way she saw her when she came running down the hill in their lone camp family time. It was very moving as she spoke that and I wept some as she spoke about that. It was very nice for me to hear that. I think it perhaps was one of the most powerful things that any of the parents have said so far.

Now in retrospect, this was indeed one of the most powerful things spoken in any of the interviews. And after the second interview with Jennifer I said:

I am also impressed by Jennifer’s ability to maintain a good attitude and a positive outlook and a responsive focus, even though she is really worried about her daughter right now [her daughter, though now 18, had recently left home without notice with her boyfriend]. She is able to see it in a good perspective.

Some of the parents also shared things that were encouragement to me to want to make changes in my own life. After my first interview with Laura and Thomas I was thinking about my relationship with my then fiancée Patti. I said:
I'm hopeful about these interviews. I thought a lot, also, about my relationship with Patti tonight as these parents spoke, and thoughts and ideas that maybe could strengthen us in our relationship, ways I can be more loving toward her and also ways that I would hope these ideas may be a blessing to her life if I can share them in the proper spirit.

My first interview with Stacy and Kevin had me regretting being somewhat unprepared. After the interview I talked about my feelings regarding being unprepared and concluded I wanted to make some changes:

In the end I'm very grateful for this interview and I feel very thankful that Kevin and Stacy were willing to talk with me tonight and I feel very grateful that they shared some of their thoughts and feelings in a very open way with me even though I'm not sure I was very inviting of that. I'm just very grateful to have been able to enter into their lives a little bit and their stories and experiences of their son and Anasazi and everything that they’ve gone through in this past year. And it’s emotional for me to think about that tonight, reflecting on it. It makes me want to be a better person, makes me want to be more competent as a researcher, more prepared and so I hope that I'm learning from this and taking good from this.

I do not know that every thing that every parent shared in these interviews came from a responsive and truthful place. In fact there were times where I questioned, in my mind, a few minor things some of the parents said, but overall the interviews were characterized by a responsive connection between us that I was deeply grateful for. Because the validity of this research rested on my ethical relationship with the parents my experience of feeling responsive to these parents adds an important confirmation to the overall truthfulness of the interviews, and the validity of the findings.

Truth and Quality in Qualitative Research Requires an Ethical Relationship

Lincoln and Guba (2000) emphatically state that in qualitative research “the way in which we know is assuredly tied up with both what we know and our relationship with our research participants (p. 182, emphasis in original). I believe a focus on the ethical quality of the relationship we engender with participants is a central concern in qualitative research because we can only come to know about participants’ experiences if our hearts are resonant
with one another, if our relationships to participants are relationally ethical. Thus inquiry and what we learn in qualitative research is a fundamentally moral endeavor. Parker Palmer (1993) explains:

The shape of our knowledge becomes the shape of our living; the relation of the knower to the known becomes the relation of the living self to the larger world. And how could it be otherwise? We have no self apart from our knowledge of the self, no world apart from our knowledge of the world. The way we interact with the world in knowing it becomes the way we interact with the world as we live in it. To put it in somewhat different terms, our epistemology is quietly transformed into our ethic. (p. 21).

In these interviews I sought to have my “heart right with” these parents. I sought to, in Warner’s terms, be responsive to their humanity. The moral quality of our relationships with one another mediate what we can learn, what we can know. Therefore validity in this research has centered in an ethical relationship with the parents interviewed. I suggest that this form of validity lies at the foundation of gathering truthful knowledge, because as Lincoln (1995) states:

just as the naturalistic/constructivist paradigm effectively brought about the irrelevance of the distinction between ontology and epistemology, so too does this paradigm and interpretive social science in general bring about the collapse of the distinctions between standards, rigor, and quality criteria and the formerly separate consideration of research ethics. (p. 286)

I suggest that validity as an ethical relationship is then not simply one form of validity, but perhaps foundational to almost any form of validity, any criteria of quality, in qualitative research. Although I do not believe there was adequate data to offer an interpretive analysis of gender in these interviews, there are a number of aspects about the interviews and emergent themes that do lend themselves to interpretive analysis.

Interpretive Analysis

Interpretive analyses of these interviews could potentially go in many directions as these interviews highlighted many unique aspects of these parents’ experiences. To narrow the possibilities, I offer theoretical interpretations focused specifically on a theme of
relational ethics and the influence of culture in terms of the parents’ experience with the Arbinger ideas and how culture constructs the context within which relationships occur and the relational possibilities available. I began this interpretive work through asking theoretical questions about the major emergent themes and the questions answered by the parents. After writing the Journal Story (see below in Journal Story Analysis) and after my dissertation committee requested more interpretive analysis I began to see more clearly a common process or pattern of incorporation of the Arbinger ideas in the lives of these parents. Though not explicitly stated in the Journal Story Analysis section, one thing I notice that was continually informing me in the writing of the Journal Story was that each of the parents I interviewed followed a similar pattern with regard to how they incorporated the Arbinger ideas into their parenting and their personal lives and subsequently how effective this became for them in terms of their relative comfort and peace about their parenting of and relationships with their adolescents. This pattern for Anasazi parents basically involves a six-phase process that although not as linear as is stated below, does follow the following generalized description.

A Common Pattern of Parents Incorporating and Living the Arbinger Ideas

Phase 1: the parents’ introduction to and initial interest in the Arbinger ideas. During this phase the parents are introduced to the Arbinger ideas through The Choice seminar. They are most often personally and emotionally challenged by the ideas, but also moved by the possibilities for relationship with others, particularly their adolescent, that the ideas represent. (Some parents remain unmoved by the seminar and either not particularly interested in the Arbinger ideas or actively resistant to them; but this was not the case with any parents I interviewed, and was quite a rare occurrence in my experience as a Shadow at Anasazi).

Phase 2: their initial recognition, or “a-ha” experience with regard to the far-reaching moral implications of the ideas in their parenting of their adolescents and their relationships with others. During this phase (usually during and/or shortly after the seminar) the parents begin to recognize the fundamental implications of the Arbinger ideas which results most often in a paradigm shift in their thinking about their relationship with their adolescent, the problems their adolescent has been having, and their relationships with everyone in their lives. This paradigm shift may be on a continuum of a dramatic immediate change on one
end to a slow, subtle change on the other. At this point they have not quite begun to embrace and incorporate the Arbinger ideas into their lives but they are deeply encouraged and often inspired by them, which results in the paradigm shift.

Phase 3: their incorporation of the ideas during their adolescents’ in-patient involvement in Anasazi. Throughout their involvement with their Shadow in weekly therapy and through their written communication with their adolescent the parents begin to incorporate the Arbinger ideas into their lives and relationships in a meaningful way. Not all parents experience this to the same degree; some embody the ideas in their lives to a much deeper extent than other parents. For most parents, the incorporation of the Arbinger ideas in this phase is the central part of their Anasazi experience with regard to providing a context of openness, penitence, and healing in their relationship with their adolescent, and often in their relationships with their spouse and other family members. During this phase they start to actively utilize the Arbinger ideas in their relationships. During this phase the parents are often very grateful for the Arbinger ideas and for the Anasazi program.

Phase 4: some confusing experiences and some disappointments and/or challenges to their new paradigm. During this phase the parents usually have some negative experience with their adolescent that is unexpected and/or hurtful. The result of this may involve questioning the genuineness of their own change, but more often involves questioning the genuineness of their adolescent’s changes in a way that fits with Arbinger’s theory of self-betrayal and self-justifying images. This may happen during the family camp time at the end of the six week program, or anytime after their adolescent has returned home and resumed regular life. When this happens the seriousness of it is mediated by the depth of genuine change that has occurred relationally between them and their adolescent. For some parents this is deeply discouraging and they may react negatively and become actively resistant to their adolescent and others, as well as resisting the Arbinger ideas. Other parents are discouraged and may become disillusioned to various degrees, which may leave them questioning the Arbinger ideas. In reality most of the parents have dynamic experiences that would represent a complex mix of these two variable scenarios given.

Phase 5: most parents then go back to the Arbinger ideas (or to Anasazi alumni staff who then lead them back to the Arbinger ideas) and try to take up a more in-depth
incorporation of the ideas into their daily lives. Though they succeed to varying degrees (as clearly illustrated by the parents interviewed here), the parents tend to remain hopeful about the Arbinger ideas, grateful for them, and guardedly hopeful that the future will bring growing change for their relationship with their adolescent. Most experience up and down struggles with utilizing the Arbinger ideas effectively in their relationship with their adolescent and in their personal lives to varying degrees. At this phase parents deeply value the Arbinger ideas in a lasting and genuine way, but at this point have not fully incorporated and embodied the ideas into their day-to-day lives and relationships.

Phase 6: Some, though not a majority of parents make a deeply genuine and lasting incorporation of the Arbinger ideas in a life changing way. These parents find genuine growth and change in their parenting and relationships with their adolescents and for themselves personally—often over an extended period of time as highlighted in the first major emergent theme.

Again, I have detailed this process in a way that is more linear and static than it tends to actually play out for parents, including those I interviewed. Their experiences were somewhat more messy and dynamic than this, but this underlying pattern of incorporation of the Arbinger ideas is clearly evident from the interviews with each of them. I also saw this pattern often during my time working at Anasazi, which is another reason I structured the Journal Story to reflect this. Seeing this pattern was sometimes discouraging and perplexing in my work as a shadow because it was not always clear to me what was happening. I also saw this pattern with colleagues at Anasazi (in widely varying degrees) as well as in my own personal life experience. I now want to turn to a theoretical interpretation of this pattern. I want to detail theoretically how this pattern may be made sense of particularly with reference to two main theories, first from within the Warner and Arbinger ideas and second from a Social Constructionist approach to parenting.

9 To restate: the first major theme was “The influence of the Arbinger ideas on their relationships and their lives” with the first sub-theme being “Took time for the ideas to make sense, but are powerful.”
Theoretical Analysis of the Common Pattern

The first main emergent theme of the parent interviews is intriguing to consider. The first major theme highlights what the parents spoke to as being the most significant influence on their relationships and parenting of their adolescents—the Arbinger ideas. Yet there is a common pattern of each of the parents having difficulty incorporating the Arbinger ideas into their daily lives. That begs the central question of this interpretive section. The Arbinger ideas are experienced as inspirational and transformative but parents struggle to make them an active part of their parenting and effectively embody them personally. Why is this? I propose careful reasons for this central question that require an effective integration of two theories, the Arbinger ideas and a Social constructionist approach to parenting. First, I wish to discuss more in-depth what may block parents from effectively and genuinely incorporating the Arbinger ideas from within the ideas themselves.

Understanding this Pattern from within the Arbinger Ideas

Drawing from my experience as a Shadow, my experience with these parent interviews, and from my own experience of trying to incorporate the Arbinger ideas in my personal life, the Arbinger concept of Self-Justifying Images stands out as particularly salient and offers an effective answer to this central interpretive question. Self-justifying images make sense of why it is that in some situations we are immediately resistant to others, even though there is no incident of self-betrayal. Recall that we get into the resistant way of being by acting contrary to our in-the-moment sense to do something for another. This is self-betrayal because we actively betray that which we personally have a sense to do, we go against what we feel is right to do for another in that moment. When we cannot identify an act of self-betrayal, the concept of self-justifying images suggests we are already in the resistant way; we are already resistant because of images we have of ourselves that we carry with us, and that are threatened in these situations. Thus others are already objects to us because they do not validate these images we each have of ourselves as a certain types of persons, and feeling threatened we each use these images to justify our resistance of the humanity of others. These self-justifying images (SJIs) are acquired through a lifetime of betraying ourselves in certain idiosyncratic ways that then become characteristic of us each.
As I experienced learning about and teaching the Arbinger concepts in my work as a Shadow, I almost realized quickly that there were few I could only identify a few blatant examples of self-betrayal in my own daily life, and yet it was easy to identify a lot of SJIs at work in my life, and quite clear to me that SJIs had me often in the resistant way of being. I suggest that our resistance to others is primarily due to SJIs that have been developed in our lives through self-betrayal. It was also clear to me through my shadowing work that SJIs often remained relatively misunderstood by parents. It is somewhat of a difficult or intricate concept, and the significance of it was often lost on parents—particularly if they did not follow-up the seminar with continued seminar readings, workbook exercises, and discussing these things in-depth with their Shadow. In fact it was somewhat rare for parents we worked with at Anasazi to comprehend in a personal and willingly vulnerable way their own SJIs and the impact they were having on their relationships. This was the case as well in the interviews conducted here. Only a few parents either spoke of the concept by name or referred to it by either definition or their own understanding of it—even though they all spoke to the importance of the Arbinger ideas overall. I talked with one of my supervisors about SJIs early on during my time at Anasazi (during my own formal and personal introduction to the Arbinger ideas) and it stood out to me that he considered the concept of SJIs as central to the whole Arbinger philosophy because this is where resistance is by far most often played out in human relations. The Choice Arbinger seminar provides detailed examples and step-by-step workbook activities to help participants actively dismantle their own SJIs. But the effectiveness of these activities necessarily extends beyond the seminar day(s) and requires continued and deeply personal engagement.

SJIs mediate and influence most all resistant experiences because SJIs are tied directly to identity, and because identity is so fundamental and orienting to our experiences in relationships with others, SJIs are the most immediate as well as an ever present source of collusion with others and a ready justification for our resistance of the humanity of others. The expectation of the Arbinger ideas is not that one would be completely rid of her/his SJIs because these are continually in formation and will always require redress. Rather, the Arbinger ideas encourage a critical awareness of SJIs and an active lifelong personal commitment toward dismantling them. This seemed particularly difficult for the parents I
shadowed, the parents interviewed in this research, and also for me and my colleagues at Anasazi (though as I often pointed out to client parents most of us at Anasazi had the benefit and privilege of being “in” these ideas on an almost daily basis).

The Arbinger ideas are difficult to personally embody because SJIs represent a somewhat complex as well as very personal challenge that is hard to grapple with intellectually and particularly emotionally. Dismantling our SJIs requires a willing vulnerability that is difficult not to fear. Parents’ inability to comprehend SJIs intellectually and especially personally, is one reason for this noted pattern of difficulty embodying the Arbinger ideas into their daily lives and relationships, and often was one of the main precursors to the parents experiencing what I defined as Phase 4 of this pattern. As a side note, Terry Warner’s writings do not tend to use the phrase “self-justifying images” and instead he speaks about “self-justifying stories” (2001, p. 26) (a phrase I actually prefer to SJIs), but Warner does not go into an in-depth analysis and description of these as does The Choice, nor does he provide detailed guidelines for the dismantling of self-justifying stories as does The Choice. This may add to some of the difficulties parents have comprehending the concept since they usually read Bonds that Make Us Free (Warner, 2001) as well as attend the seminar.

*Understanding this Pattern from a Social Constructionist Approach to Parenting*

Through SJIs and the ideas in the Parenting Pyramid, Arbinger has presented a very interesting and useful approach for parents to focus on in their parenting. I want to also submit that even though the ideas are powerful and potentially transformative, the ideas may be lacking in terms of what they do not address, what they are silent about. And this lack may in effect be a hindrance to the ideas being genuinely incorporated in the lives of these parents. An analysis of the ideas from a social constructionist approach to parenting offers an important critique. Although Warner’s philosophy and the Arbinger ideas have recently been situated as postmodern (*The Choice in Personal Growth and Well Being*, Arbinger 2003), the fundamental ideas say nothing about the contexts, cultural and historical, of persons’ lives and relationships, nor the real effects of these contexts on person’s lives and relationships—a significant aspect of most approaches to postmodernism. Taking Warner’s philosophy and the Arbinger ideas, as they are a complete explanation and understanding of problems,
struggles, and dysfunction in, for instance, parent-adolescent relationships are due to self-betrayal and self-justifying images—living in self-deception. A social constructionist approach to parenting highlights significant cultural constraints that may likely be leading to some of the problems, struggles, dysfunctions, etc. that parents face in parenting adolescents. Without sensitivity to cultural context, Warner’s philosophy and the Arbinger ideas leave ultimate and absolute responsibility with an acontextual embodied individual in her or his relationships with others. By being silent about cultural constraints, the philosophy and ideas can easily become assumed to be stemming ultimately from individualism,\textsuperscript{10} rather than from a relational ethics, which the ideas espouse. I will explain how this ends up being a main barrier to the ideas being genuinely incorporated.

An understanding of social constructionism will assist in explaining the idea of “cultural constraints.” As Terry Arendell explains, from a social constructionist view

Parenting is situated in place and time; it does not occur in a social vacuum. . . . The activities and objectives of parenting, beyond those of basic survival, can vary in relation to the respective social context and historical moment. . . . In brief, parenting and parenthood are inseparable from the cultural understandings of and beliefs about childhood [and parenthood] as well as the structural realities within which they are situated. Parenting, then, is constantly changing and being reformed and reformulated. All social phenomena, in sum, are dynamic, mutable, and emergent. (1997 p. 4, 5)

Though all parents are active participants in making up what parenting is in our society, they do not do so in contexts of their own making. The current social context and historical moment delimit and define the structural realities as well as the social, language, and meaning based realities in which parenting takes place. Parents do not step out of their culture into an atemporal, acontextual “nothingness” as they go about parenting; all parents act within these cultural, historical, and structural contexts and constraints and that is what I mean by the phrase “cultural constraints” with regard to parenting.

\textsuperscript{10} “Belief in the primary importance of the individual and in the virtues of self-reliance and personal independence. A doctrine holding that the interests of the individual should take precedence over the interests of the state or social group.” (ww.dictionary.com, retrieved 4/08/04)
Now this is not to assume that cultural constraints are deterministic in terms of way of being. There is always the possibility of agency—meaning that it is always possible to fundamentally choose our way of being toward others. Cultural constraints can provoke and incite parents toward resistance, but they cannot force parents to be resistant. But, these cultural constraints do limit both in language, possible meaning, and structural reality, the options that are available to parents; and importantly these limits may have nothing to do with parents’ way of being. Responsiveness, for instance, cannot take away the very real social and economic results of 300+ years of institutionalized racism experienced by African American parents. Responsiveness cannot take away the very real social and economic effects of the institutionalized sexist culture in the West that systematically disadvantages mothers and girls. Responsiveness can change our hearts, but in and of itself it does not change the culture in which parenting takes place. Lasting cultural change is possible by responsiveness that then leads to action which specifically and directly challenges and dismantles the structural and social inequities pervasive in our culture. Responsiveness can put our “hearts in the right place” to be able to effectively and genuinely go about the process of creating and nurturing cultural change.

Each parent deals with different cultural constraints that are context specific to their unique “situatedness” within the cultural moment, and therefore these cultural constraints are not equal among families. Due to oppression, discrimination, inequity, prejudice, etc. some parents (i.e. nonwhite, economically disadvantaged, etc.) find themselves in much more constraining situations than others with regard to the structural (including economic) and social privileges, advantages, and possibilities available to them. It is important to highlight that these cultural constraints are not intractable; they can be dismantled over time. The social constraints for individual parents may be in some ways more amenable to change than the institutionalized structural constraints as the social constraints represent constraints in shared meaning (i.e. language, social norms, expectations, “common sense,” etc.). By addressing and dismantling the dominant cultural discourses upon which these social constraints are built, parents can effectively increase the options and possibilities that then can allow them to parent differently. Dominant cultural discourses are hegemonic cultural understandings, expectations, ideas, “truths,” etc. This general idea of dominant cultural
discourses is understood variously from the poststructuralism of French historian of thought Michel Foucault (1980), the deconstructionism of French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1978), social constructionism (Gergen, 1991, 1994), certain postmodern and poststructural feminisms, and narrative therapy and community work ideas.

An example of dominant cultural discourses that affect the parenting of adolescents comes from Nancy Lesko’s (2001) analysis of the cultural construction of contemporary adolescence. She suggests four primary ways that we collectively make sense of adolescents today, 1) they “come of age” into adulthood, 2) they are controlled by raging hormones, 3) they are peer-oriented, and 4) adolescence is signified by age. She shows how these four understandings construct our cultural approach to and understanding of adolescence. She critiques each of these four dominant understandings as being linked to wide cultural movements begun in the late 1800s which continue to today. She explains,

As part of the move toward a new modern society, citizens needed to become more self-determining, individualized, and reasoning. Adolescence became a social space in which to talk about the characteristics of people in modernity, to worry about the possibilities of these social changes, and to establish policies and programs that would help create the modern social order and citizenry. (p. 5-6)

This cultural movement, with adolescence as the central social space in which it was enacted, then prescribed, proscribed, and delimited certain social and institutional (governmental, educational, scientific, medical) programs, conceptualizations, procedures, curriculum, foci etc. that effectively defined adolescence in a novel and enduring way. She contends that these same programs and foci are replicated extensively within society today, and that this definition of adolescence directly informs the four primary ways adolescence is made sense of today. The point of sharing this example is to highlight the power of dominant cultural discourses to delimit and define how we collectively, and as individuals within the collective, make sense of our lives, and for this analysis how parents collectively and individually make sense of and enact the parenting of their adolescents. From this analysis I have suggested that incorporating the Warner and Arbinger ideas in a genuine and lasting way takes place at the site of dismantling SJJIs. And I have also suggested that a great deal of parenting takes place at the site of dismantling cultural constraints. Rather than being an “either/or” quandary, I
suggest that there is a “both-and” connection between these two seemingly disparate theoretical ideas.

Cultural Discourse as Directly Informing Self-Justifying Images

I suggest that both the SJIs and cultural constraints positions need each other to be workable. Focusing on the Arbinger ideas and carefully examining and seeking to dismantle one’s SJIs alone either openly disregards or is simply silent about the cultural and historical context and structural constraints within which parenting takes place. Likewise, focusing only on dismantling cultural constraints disregards or is silent about the central role of SJIs and relational ethics or “way of being” in human relations. SJIs are particular images we have of ourselves that have been constructed over a lifetime of self-betrayal. But these somewhat idiosyncratic SJIs were not created out of nowhere; they are deeply influenced and constructed by agentive persons acting within the particular cultural and historical contexts and moments of their lives. SJIs then must be directly informed by dominant cultural discourses about identity and relationships such as what it means to be human; what it means to be a real person; what it means to be a woman, a man; what it means to be good; what it means to be a parent; what it means to be an adolescent; what it means to parent an adolescent, and so on. SJIs are also directly informed by the real structural constraints within which parenting takes place. Cultural constraints then act as the context in which SJIs are constructed—making certain types of SJIs possible and probable. Cultural constraints construct the context in which any type of resistance takes place—and resistance primarily is enacted through SJIs informed directly by that context.

Phase 6: A Two-Pronged Arbinger and ‘Cultural Constraints’ Approach

As I mentioned above, lasting cultural change is possible by relational responsiveness that leads to action toward the dismantling of cultural constraints. But this is not linear, it is reciprocal. Sometimes our personal responsiveness to the humanity of others allows a moral-relational context in which we then are able to see the influence of cultural constraints (such as genuine responsiveness for another can allow us to realize the institutional and social effects of poverty, of hate crimes, etc. they may be experiencing). Sometimes a critical understanding and awareness of cultural constraints invites our responsiveness to the humanity of those negatively influenced by those cultural constraints. Each perspective
informs the other reciprocally. I suggest that being in phase 6 of the pattern discussed above requires parents to personally and actively work toward the dismantling of their own SJIs. These SJIs can only be effectively dismantled when parents seek to critically examine and actively dismantle the dominant cultural discourses that inform their SJIs both in their parenting and their broader lives. This process will in most cases take place over an extended period of time as the cultural constraints within which the parenting of adolescents takes place will likely take a lot of time and effort to effectively dismantle. This process is also ongoing; there is not necessarily an endpoint as SJIs and cultural constraints are always concurrently in construction and constructing us, just as parenting is an ever dynamic and emergent process.

I have partly come to this conclusion because it is evident to me that at least one of the parent couples I interviewed, Jim and Sally, exemplify phase 6. Each of the other parents could be categorized as being in either phase 4, or 5 and maybe 6 when I interviewed them, it was just harder for me to determine for the others. Both Sally and Jim seemed deeply informed by the Arbinger ideas, and this may be due to them having been “in” the ideas now for over 10 years. I also found them deeply reflective and critical about the cultural constraints of parenting and their own unique situatedness within these constraints. My understanding is also influenced by the fourth major emergent theme—the parents all became more critical and reflective about their parenting and each of the parents was able to talk about, to some extent, the role of cultural influences on their parenting now and before Anasazi. Phases 5 and 6 are more a matter of degree in this sense, and not in kind. But there is one important difference. Phase 5 doesn’t necessarily require an active dismantling of SJIs from the two-pronged Arbinger and cultural approach as I have described, and this is in actuality what separates phase 6. I want to also note that evidence of utilization of this two-pronged approach to lastingly incorporating the Arbinger ideas is still slightly obscure even with Jim and Sally. They were originally trained under the Arbinger ideas of the early ’90s that did not define SJIs nor give activities to dismantle them. But they have also been trained under the newer Arbinger seminars that did incorporate SJIs. Their responses do not necessarily address SJIs specifically. But it did seem to me that their responses were in harmony with an understanding of SJIs even if they do not tend to name them as such. For
instance, in the second interview they were discussing being “in the box” (i.e. resistant) and how that has changed for them over time, particularly in their parenting relationship with each other:

Sally: . . . We just seem more eye-to-eye on things. Once in awhile we’ll have a little bit of an argument over how somebody is taking care of something or a situation with the kids, but not really.

Jim: Now we talk it out. I used to be really certain that I was right. And of course you [to Sally] knew you were right too, probably not as certain as I was. I think that maybe part of it is just life experience after awhile. You realize that you’re not infallible and you’re not immortal and you’re not indestructible and all those things as you get older. So maybe part of that is the natural progression. But I’m sure the other part of it is the seminar and those principles. Realizing that when we’re in the box, when we’re colluding, that we really can’t see that we’re actually projecting and justifying with a set of our story about what’s going on. You start realizing that, you start asking yourself the question, “Is this really what’s going on or is this my story about what’s going on?” And you start asking yourself that question. It does all kinds of different things in terms of relationships and in terms of how you handle parenting and how you handle relationships with each other. All that stuff changes.

Jim’s understanding of resistance and that we “can’t see that we’re actually projecting and justifying with a set of our story about what’s going on” relates directly to the idea of SJIs. And it actually relates well to Warner’s use of the phrase “self-justifying stories” that was used in the earlier Arbinger seminars, but was not clearly delineated and expanded on in the way SJIs are now. The stories we project are the SJIs we use to justify our resistance, and this is what Jim is speaking to.

A few quotations from Sally and Jim will further illustrate their use of this two-pronged approach to lastingly incorporating the Arbinger ideas into their daily lives and relationships. In the following quotations they are not speaking directly to the dismantling of SJIs, but more generally to their own resistance and responsiveness to others; but remember SJIs are fundamentally the way resistance is played out. Jim and Sally had a lot to say about cultural influences on their parenting. They spoke to this more critically and specifically than
any other parents interviewed. In the following responses they are speaking from a place of understanding not only cultural constraints, but also the role of the Arbinger ideas in assisting in the liberation from them. In the first Jim and Sally spoke to the bad experiences they had with traditional psychiatric and psychotherapeutic treatment for some of their older children, and the significance of the lasting (over 10 years) transformation they have seen in each of those children despite the negative and pathologizing prognoses they had been given in the past. They were very critical of these treatment approaches, and they spoke of this in terms of their overall critique of culture. Jim summarizes by stating:

**Jim:** But we were pretty negative and we're still pretty negative on the traditional treatment approach [psychiatric and psychotherapeutic] because we think, we probably have a personal belief that it makes most people worse in most cases (p. 5). Later in this interview, they both spoke about some of the negative cultural messages about how one should parent, and how they are passionate about parenting from a different way, but also how this has been a challenge to them.

**Sally:** It's hard I think when society tells you what your kid should be. Or the culture that you grow up in tells you how your kids should be and what you should do and what an ideal family is or an ideal group of people are or this is the ideal childhood, to go through 12 grades without any hitches. That's the kind of mold we grew up with and so you want to carry that through but I don't think it's true.

**Jim:** And Anasazi kind of has that “individuality” type culture [not individualism, but rather the significance of contextual individual differences among each person]. I guess the buzz word now in our society is diversity, just realizing that there is diversity and you celebrate diversity rather than conflict because of it. That's the concept that has become recently popular but I think there is a lot of truth in that in terms of our own families, to let people develop their individuality rather than try to control their lives, there is a lot of difference there. As parents, we were just doing so many little things (laugh) very badly, that was the big shock, initially, to realize all the stuff that we had done, that we were a major part of the problem.

**Sally:** It was probably the only problem. I mean I really believe that. I think if we had had the seminar before we had kids and had really internalized it—I don't know if
you can because you kind of have to be in the parenting process to see how it goes or at least, unless you’ve done it in a relationship of your own in your family growing up somewhere in there, but to internalize all those processes—I think we would have parented our children differently, I think they wouldn’t be different than they are but they would have had different experiences and maybe less struggles. But the struggles make up who they are and their character. (p. 10-11)

They then spoke more about specific situations they’ve encountered with their children. Later I asked them more about the influence of culture on their parenting:

**Marty:** . . . I’m interested in some of the differences again between your parenting and your relationship before Anasazi and after and some of the negative things that you talked about that you did before, that you don’t do now. Are those things that you see as pretty common ideas about parenting in our culture today?

**Jim:** Oh, absolutely. A lot of them are just trained, they’re probably recommended or referred but I think they are just diametrically opposed to the way things really need to be and that’s why we’re having so much trouble in society today with parents and with youth. The phrase we’ve heard is that one of the problems with our society is that we invented teenagers. A lot of other societies don’t have those, they expect something different from their children. I think it’s just the way we’re taught, well, we not only had the regular things that culture teaches us but we had the additional experience of going and having formal classes, systems with instruction books and “you’re going to set up this system for your family and you’re going to . . .”

**Marty:** Primarily behavior modification?

**Jim:** Yeah. We have a token system. We have a rewards program. We’re really going to institutionalize all of these things you know and make it a big part of your family. Which was way beyond what’s normally done.

**Sally:** I don’t think that normal families do that, so much formality, only people who have kids that are troubled. But people are always really surprised at how loose I am with my kids. How much freedom I give them. How much choice I give them. That I don’t make them go to church, that I don’t make them go to school if they, that’s me learning something. But like Nicole goes to school only part time and she does other
stuff at home. They're always really surprised at that. It's not just church and school. It's the overall attitude and so I don’t know, and yet we've been doing it for so many years now it’s so a part of us to not force our kids to do stuff like we used to force them that we don’t even know we’re doing it until someone else will say, “Well don’t you make your kids do this?” and I’ll go, “I guess I don’t.”

(p. 13-14)

Sally gave some specific examples and then some tangential thoughts, we then discussed more about culture and I asked the following summarizing question:

**Marty:** And so it sounds like, from everything you’ve said, that your Anasazi experience from the beginning, and even now with Nicole too, influences your opinions about what you see as the common ideas and practices about parenting?

**Both:** Oh, absolutely.

**Sally:** Oh all, maybe to a fault. . . . they’ll [friends, younger parents they know, etc.] come to me and say, “I’ve got a problem with my kid and this is what’s going on and how can I do it,” and they want to do, and I’ll go into all the “lax” ideas, and “does it really matter?,” and “if it isn’t that important why don’t you let them choose and maybe you won’t be fighting so much?” and they don’t want to hear that. It’s to a fault maybe that we, because it makes me more critical of the other ways. But it’s hard, when you have people saying, “Your kid needs to do this or needs to do that,” and you don’t fit that parenting program, there is a lot of pressure or people looking down at you like “your family’s weird” (laugh). (p. 16)

**Jim:** Or you hit those teenage years and then the parents want to be controlling because they’ve always made all of the decisions and it’s hard to let go and it doesn’t work. You get a son or daughter who starts rebelling or starts getting out of the way and everything they do is going to be the wrong thing, it’s just going to make it worse. That’s really what happens. So that’s the difference in parenting. The very things you feel that you have to do to solve the problem are the very things that make it worse in traditional parenting. That’s exactly what happens. Because of your answers, your parenting style, you decided to try to do those things to fix the problem, you’re more controlling, you step up the heat on the collusion or whatever you do and
then the child rebels even more and it becomes that vicious spiral that’s going downward. And that’s the huge difference in the parenting approach is that in the traditional way of parenting you can’t fix the problem and the reason that Anasazi is successful is that it absolutely turns the traditional things on their ends and says, “No, that’s not, you have to let go, you have to see your children as people, you have to,” it just takes all those things and turns them completely around. For us that’s the difference between night and day. It’s a huge difference.

Marty: Wow. That’s fascinating. I’m really fascinated, because some of our ideas about parenting in our society today, there are a lot of competing ideas and there seems to be . . .

Sally: You can find a hundred different child parenting books. We don’t read those anymore by the way.

Evident in this extensive quotation are Sally and Jim’s flowing references to both cultural critique and the Arbinger ideas. They have meshed these ideas together in a mostly seamless way, and out of all the parents I interviewed they are the ones who seemed most confident and at peace with their parenting and their relationships with their children. These quotations illustrate the necessity of this two-pronged approach. Although these quotations do not specifically draw out the significance of dismantling SJIs, I believe the essence of what they are saying relates to SJIs and shows the necessity of this two-pronged approach in genuinely incorporating and living the Arbinger ideas in their daily lives and relationships. A major philosophical integration of the Arbinger ideas and a social constructionist “cultural constraints” approach is clearly beyond the scope of this research, but this research does clearly show the possibilities and potential benefits of an integration of them. I believe this theoretical interpretive analysis lies at the heart of all other interpretive analyses that could be conducted on this data because I believe the struggles these parents face both in incorporating the Arbinger ideas, and overall in the parenting of their adolescents could effectively be answered by an appeal to the interpretive power of Warner’s philosophy and the Arbinger ideas and the interpretive power of cultural constraints from a social constructionist perspective.
I have also included another interpretive analysis. In the section below I have written a narrative story as an additional way of analyzing, interpreting, and presenting the findings of this research. Though this analysis is not from a formal theoretical standpoint, it is an interpretive analysis because it effectively interprets, poetically through narrative story (see Richardson, 1997 and 2000), these parents’ collective experience in their relationships with and parenting of their adolescents.

**Journal Story Analysis**

This journal story is a secondary analysis and discussion. As such it is an alternative perspective on the research data. I want to be clear in noting that all of the preceding discussion under “Findings” was one particular way of creating a story about and then interpreting the findings of this research. As Laurel Richardson (1997) explains, “the tapes and notes [of qualitative research], however, do not constitute the ‘findings.’ Rather, as a part of our research agenda, we fashion these accounts into a prose piece; we transform biographical interview and field notes into a sociological text” (p. 26). What has preceded this section was one “sociological text;” the Journal Story below is another. It is an interpretation that is perhaps a more poetic way of constructing a story of the findings of this research. The two presentations of the findings are not in opposition to each other. It is my hope that the two together provide a more rich description of the findings of this research.

In this story I have utilized the parents’ actual responses in constructing a fictionalized story. The premise is that a mother and father and their daughter are going through the Anasazi program and then a year of time after the program, and the text is entries in the parents’ personal journal they are doing together. In utilizing the parents’ responses in this way, I may actually be more true to their responses as it cuts out some of the theoretical suppositions of my own. In considering this journal story, I have thought about the following ideas from Silverman (2000):

An alternative [to the realist] approach treats interview data as accessing various stories or narratives through which people describe their worlds (see Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, 1997). This narrative approach claims that, by abandoning the attempt to treat respondents’ accounts as potentially “true” pictures of “reality,” we open up for analysis the culturally rich methods through which interviewers and
interviewees, in concert, generate plausible accounts of the world. (Silverman, 2000, p. 823)

In this journal story it has been my attempt to use the culturally rich expressions of the parents and my own creative writing and personal experiences with them and working at Anasazi to bring together a plausible account that is “experience near” the collective voice of the parents I interviewed. Silverman is suggesting that there can be no account that captures the Truth, only plausible accounts. Just as a painting, even if done in hyper-realism, is not what it depicts, just as the map is not actually the territory, neither of my accounts are the absolute, definitive and complete Truth of what these parents felt and experienced. But I do believe that both of these analyses together richly describe these parents’ feelings, opinions, and experiences about their relationships with and parenting of their adolescents following the Anasazi foundation experience.

I like the idea of using a narrative to present these findings. I believe narratives, or stories, are powerful ways we as humans make sense of our lives, our relationships, and our world. The following quotation “the universe is not made up of atoms, it is made up of stories” says something profound to me. “Narrative is both a mode of reasoning and a mode of representation. People can ‘apprehend’ the world narratively and people can ‘tell’ about the world narratively” (Richardson, 1997, p. 28). I like this alternative way of both apprehending and telling my experience of the findings of this research. I wanted to write this journal story so that readers could somehow feel the parents’ experiences more fully, and hopefully be moved by their experiences to some sort of positive action. “I would submit that the good ethnography like ‘good’ literary works invites the reader to experience a culture or an event” (Richardson, 1997, p. 182). I hope that readers do experience these parents’ feelings and experiences. I hope that both analyses and presentations are truthful in the sense that they are judged as meaningful, helpful, understandable, and promote some type of positive moral action.

As noted in the research strategy section, the primary action results for this research are 1) the detailed report/presentation I will give to Anasazi following the conclusion of the dissertation defense, and 2) this Journal Story which may be something Anasazi will utilize with staff training and with current and future parent participants and alumni. Perhaps these
results will act as a catalyst for the ongoing work at Anasazi to extend the action elements of this research to other prospective, current, and alumni parents. I believe the parents I interviewed offered some powerful thoughts and insights by sharing their experiences. These parents gave me the opportunity to witness their lives, to walk with them a bit through their experiences as parents to their adolescents after the Anasazi experience. I have sought to treat this witnessing as special and even sacred. I am grateful that I was allowed to be a witness to their lives. It is my hope that this writing is morally accountable to them and to our shared experiences together.

_Journal Story_

To introduce the story, I will share a brief background history of the Brock family, namely Tim, Susan, and daughter Tara. This will provide a context for this family and a feeling for them as persons. Following this is the journal story.

Tim and Susan Brock have five children, Mark (20), Brandon (18), Tara (16), Kylie (13), and Kirsten (11). They have lived in Mesa, Arizona for 3 years; they moved from Glendale, Arizona where they lived for 18 years. Tim and Susan married when they were in their early 20s. They had been college sweethearts. Tim was raised in a conservative fundamentalist Christian home. Susan was raised Lutheran, but the family was not particularly involved in church. Tim’s parents tended to be strict and controlling, but were united as a family. Susan’s family was loving family, but her parents worked a great deal and they did not have a lot of family time together, though she spent a lot of time with her siblings. In their marriage Tim and Susan have been close friends and enjoy being with each other, but have had different beliefs and many arguments over child rearing and household daily-living matters. Their religious beliefs have become quite similar. Tim rejects some of the fundamentalism of his parents, but remains quite religious. Since her marriage Susan has enjoyed having religious observance a more central part of their family life. Tim’s business, in real estate, is doing quite well now, but had not done well for a number of years in Glendale due to a decrease in housing values there, which necessitated the move to Mesa. Tim tends to work longer than 40 hours. This has been a strain at times in their marriage.

Susan is 42 years old. She is a tenderhearted person. She is somewhat quiet and can tend to allow her husband to speak for her. But she is also passionate about her own opinions
and beliefs. She is an artistic person, she sings and paints. She is also a deeply spiritual person. She is very kind and giving to her children and husband, and quite serving to her friends and family. Susan is noted as a talented person, and usually highly respected by others. Sometimes she sees herself in a more negative light, and has at times struggled with depression. Mark and Brandon were born just 18 months apart and have always been close. Susan had some health problems during and after her pregnancy with Brandon. They waited to get pregnant again. Susan was worried about her pregnancy with Tara, she had some health problems, but not as serious. After Tara, it was over three years before they had Kylie. The health problems related to her pregnancies with Brandon and Tara were quite difficult for her, but she is pleased that her health is much better now. She is close with her family and enjoys spending time with them. She is especially close with her sister who is two years older than she. Most of her family lives in Arizona. She went to college for three years, but quit when Tara was born. She has wanted to finish since, and has begun taking classes toward a bachelor’s degree in art education. Susan and Tara’s relationship started to become quite conflictual three years ago when they were moving. Susan has felt quite hurt by her daughter’s struggles and problems and has felt a lot of anguish from everything she has seen her daughter go through. Before Anasazi, they had many arguments and fights, and Tara started to become physically violent with Susan. This was one of the main reasons Susan and Tim had her go to Anasazi.

Tim is 46 years old. He has a strong personality and is a good salesman. He has a lot of energy and tends to work very hard. He is a tenderhearted person, but tends to feel uncomfortable showing tender emotions openly. He can be quite spirited, and quick to anger. He is friendly and fairly gregarious, and likes to have fun. He is a passionate person and has strong convictions about life and religion. Tim attended college in Arizona on a baseball scholarship. He graduated from college with a business degree, and began immediately in real estate. He sells primarily commercial real estate. In Glendale, he was involved more in residential real estate. He was grateful for the move to Mesa and the boon it was for his job, and likes his new job better. The struggles he had at work in Glendale became extremely stressful and he was glad that the job opened up in Mesa. Tim is not real close to his family of origin. He grew up in Texas, and most of his family is there. It was a difficult time for Tim
when Susan experienced health problems in pregnancy. Susan wished he could have been there for her more and more compassionate, and Tim regrets that he was so stressed about work. Tim is very close to his two older sons. He loves to have fun with his family. He regrets not being at home more and wishes he didn’t have to work as much as he does. He was close with Tara and her sisters when they were little, but when Tara started going through puberty Tim became more distant, and at the same time was struggling under the stresses of his work. Now that life is not as stressful, Tim has tried to reconnect with Tara and the younger girls, but Tara has not been particularly open to this. Tim has been quite upset by the conflict between Tara and Susan and has tried to intervene many times. Tim and Tara also have tended to have heated arguments.

When Mark left for college in California three years ago, it was a significant disruption to the family, particularly to Tim and Brandon. The move to Glendale three years ago was a financial and social boon for the parents, but was more difficult socially for the children, especially Tara. Susan has also been close to the older boys, but she has had a close bond with the girls as well. Susan and Tara were very close when she was little. And all of the girls tended to do things together when they were young.

Tara is 16 years old. She is in many ways like her father, and in many ways like her mother. She is gregarious and has a lot of energy, but is also artistic and can tend to be more moody. When little she was “daddy’s little girl” and felt quite close to her father. Tara is a passionate person, and a unique personality. She had some conflicts with her brothers growing up, but she adores her younger sisters and has a lot of fun with them, especially when they were all younger. She is well liked by peers and tends to be loud and silly and loves to have fun. She often feels bad about herself and struggles with feeling depressed and even sometimes suicidal. She is a talented singer and dancer, and was a part of a number of school and church plays and productions growing up. She likes the dance club scene in Phoenix. The past 3-4 years have been very difficult for her. Their neighborhood in Glendale was deteriorating economically and becoming increasingly affected by crime and gangs. Tara was feeling quite disconnected from her parents and gravitated to peers that were involved in gang activity. Though Tara’s friends are more “wanna-be” gang members, she has become increasingly involved with illegal activities and drug and alcohol use. She hated moving to
Mesa, and had many fights with her parents over this. Her grades in school have plummeted over the past few years, and she has been threatened with expulsion from her high school. She and her parents have had numerous conflicts, with a lot of yelling and dramatic tension. She has also been sexually promiscuous. Before Anasazi she started dating Kyle, a 21-year-old guy she met at a party who at times treats her fairly well, but also tends to be manipulative and controlling of her. She recently was arrested for shoplifting, and has been arrested before for possession of marijuana and for underage drinking. Teachers and her parents have described her as “out of control.”

Tim and Susan’s Journal

July 19, 2002: Susan

Well, she did it again. Tim and I came home last night from a weekend in California with Mark and Brandon and found out that Tara had probably 15 different kids here in our home, smoking and drinking; I don’t even want to know what else. Kids scattered everywhere. We had returned earlier than expected and I guess we caught her. I was just shocked, stunned. Tim just blew up at Tara. I can’t believe she would do that! Even after we caught her the time before with Nikki and Lance! What the hell was she thinking?! Then Tara had the gall to ask me later if she could use the car to see Kurt, her 21-year-old boyfriend we’ve never met, who frankly scares me to death. That was it, I lost it and we ended up in a big fight. I yelled at her and then she got in my face yelling, and then started hitting and scratching. Luckily Tim came home and broke it up.

So now our house is trashed and I found pot cleaning up. I’m just so angry and disappointed with Tara, what is she doing? Why is she doing all this crazy stuff? I just don’t get it. It’s like in the past year when I was hoping things were starting to get a little better; they’ve ended up getting worse! I don’t know if I can take this much more. Tim’s frazzled and overwhelmed, the girls are wondering why Tara is in so much trouble. The other day Kylie came up to me and asked “What’s wrong with Tara? How come she doesn’t like me anymore?” It broke my heart. I didn’t know what to tell her. All I could say is “Tara is really hurting right now but she won’t ask for help. She just hurts others.”

I just don’t know what to do either. Seems like everything we try to do to make our parenting better just backfires. It’s frustrating because every expert or book, every talk show
will give you a different idea, a different opinion and it’s frustrating because then you don’t know what works until you try. And it seems like we’ve tried a bunch of stuff, and look where we’re at. I also don’t really trust a lot of psychologists and psychiatrists. They’re so quick to label the kids and they think there’s a quick cure for this or that.

We do have a family counselor we like. A couple months ago she told us to journal our feelings. But since then Tim and I just haven’t wanted to. We had an appointment with Christie [counselor] today and she recommitted us to keep doing it. I’m glad we’re doing it now, but being this is still a little new to me, I don’t know if it’s helping. I hope it will be helpful though. Christie told us today she wants us to write together, to write our feelings about what is going on with Tara, and then to pass it off to each other and kind of tell our experiences as a couple. She said this might be helpful to our relationship. Plus I thought it will require Tim to not put it off. We’ll see how it goes.

July 26, 2002: Tim

Well I’m finally getting to this journal assignment. Susan has been reminding me that it is my turn. I’m still sort of p.o.’d at Tara, maybe more than sort of. But we had a good experience today. Bill, a buddy at work told me about a wilderness treatment place here in Mesa for troubled teens called Anasazi. I had heard about it once before somewhere, maybe on the news or something. But I didn’t know anything about it. Come to find out that Bill had a son do the program a couple years ago, and he highly recommended it. I was really impressed with what Bill had to say about it. I had told him about Tara’s little “party” a couple weeks ago, and that’s when he told me about Anasazi. I was just so impressed with what he said. He was tearful and talked about what a powerful experience it was for his son and him and his wife. We asked Christie about it and she said she’s heard of it and has heard good things but didn’t know much. So we actually drove over to the building to find out about the program, they’re just here in Mesa. That was quite an experience. When we walked in the door we were greeted really friendly, and ended up meeting a guy named Mike, I think one of the directors of the whole thing. First of all, I was so impressed by how he was with us, he just came right up and introduced himself and you just felt that he was a person who saw you as an individual and cared about you. They gave us brochures and a video, and I tell you, this program looks like just the thing for Tara. We watched the video tonight and I think
I'm sold, I think we're going to do it. We need to talk with the Anasazi people though about the cost, it looks way too expensive so that has me worried. Susan said she thinks we should do it even if it we have to go into debt. But I don't know, we'll see. I sure liked being in the Anasazi office and talking with Mike and with their admission person; she was great too. It felt nice there, and it felt like this might be something that could really help Tara get her head on straight for once in her life.

August 1, 2002: Susan

Tim and I have been thinking about Anasazi all the time lately. What Tim didn't say in his entry was that he cried when we watched the Anasazi video. It really touched him. I haven't seen him touched like this for a while. We just can't get Anasazi out of our minds. We went in and talked with Mike at Anasazi about the cost, I was very touched by what he said. When Mike talked with us about Anasazi finance was never an issue. The issue first and foremost and always was our child. Tara was the issue; Tara was the one they were concerned about. We talked about the Anasazi program and finances were like brushed aside and were never mentioned. It was always me actually bringing it up, "Well, how much is it?" I asked. Mike said "Let's look at that later, let us see if this is something that can help you." Mike said the thing is there is most often a way around the finances and there is a way that it can be worked out. They are offering us a scholarship to reduce the cost, and we might be able to have our insurance pay a portion of the cost. So we think we can do it! Now we've just got a find a way to tell Tara. She is going to freak out. But they told us at Anasazi that we shouldn't spring it on her the "day of," that we need to prepare her to come so we're going to talk to her about it and let her know that this is what she is going to do. Tim's friend Bill even said he and his wife Nancy would be willing to talk with us and Tara about it and help get her there. We decided we'll tell her about it just a few days before she goes. She's probably going to miss school, but Tim and I both think this is the best thing and we can worry about the school later. We think things are getting worse for Tara, and that she's just getting better at hiding it from us. We've both been really suspicious. All the things we've been trying to do to control her just aren't working.
Since we've decided to do this Anasazi program we thought it might be best to make this kind of our journal through and after the whole experience. We talked about this with Christie; she thought that would be great.

August 7, 2002: Tim

Well tonight we told Tara, and as we expected she freaked out. Luckily we were able to be at Bill and Nancy’s home, and they even had their son who did Anasazi talk with Tara about it. I think maybe Tara was impressed by this Ryan. In fact I think she was a little starry-eyed with him ‘cuz she seemed to be flirting with him a little bit. I didn’t really like that, but I figured whatever gets her there is good. Plus the more she can forget about this loser guy Kurt the better. Anyway, after leaving Bill and Nancy’s, Tara was giving us the silent treatment. We could tell she was upset. Tonight she broke her silence and went off on us. There was a big argument, but Susan and I tried to keep things calm, we didn’t want to ruin this opportunity, we tried our best not to engage her anger. After Tara freaked out and cussed us out and begged us to not make her go, somehow she kinda calmed down. I wondered if maybe she realizes she needs something. She gave us a number of demands and made us promise many things. We tried to just be really firm with her and clear that this is something we feel very strongly about, and we think might be an answer to our prayers. I guess she is willing. I’m so thankful for Bill and Nancy and Ryan though, that helped a ton. I’m going to keep a night watch though ‘til she goes. I’m afraid she might get a wild hair and want to run away or plot something with Nikki or one of her other friends. Anyway, Susan and I have just been praying this will work out. We think God is looking out for us and helping us help Tara. We feel really good about this. It is scary and we just gotta survive until the day after tomorrow when we show up at the Anasazi office. Hopefully Tara won’t make a big scene. I just wonder what went wrong with this girl. How did we fail so much as parents with her in these last couple years? Makes me sad and angry at the same time. I guess this is a journal so I can say that I just feel horrible about how things have been with Tara. She used to be daddy’s little girl. Now we’re to this—putting her in a wilderness program for troubled teens. But I think it is the best thing, we feel really good about it. I just wish I could’ve helped her more somehow before, all that crap going on in Glendale and the stress from that job over there, I missed out on an important part of Tara’s life. But I don’t even know if she
wanted me to be a part of it. Although writing that makes me remember one argument where she was screaming at me about moving from Glendale and a bunch of other things and said something like “You were never there for me when I needed help!” That still cuts to think about that. I think this Anasazi thing is going to be the best thing for now, I do. And I guess it might be good for me and Susan also. I told Tara that we would have to be involved too, and I think that helped with her being more okay with it. In fact Bill told me and Susan that ultimately if the program is going to work we as parents have to do the changing too. That’s kinda scary because I don’t understand what more we can really do, but we’re committed to give it our best.

August 10, 2002: Susan

What a whirlwind experience this weekend was! On Thursday when we took Tara to Anasazi she started freaking out more about going, I thought maybe she was going to totally refuse. We almost had to force her into the car and take her there. Tim was stern with her and somehow we made it there. She threatened that if she didn’t want to be there after finding out about it all that she would run. I was so mad at her and so hurt by her. I just wanted to get to that building and leave her there. We made it to the building and the greeting we received by the Anasazi staff was just, well just a miracle actually. Makes me cry thinking about it. When we first got there I was so hard-hearted about Tara, but the Trail Walkers that met with Tara and brought her up to the room to pack her stuff were just a godsend. It’s like they were instantly her best friend, and so sincere too, not fake. So different than I expected, they were immediately her buds and soon had her laughing and joking and doing her whole Tara thing being crazy with them. I could hardly believe it; I knew she was going to be okay. What an answer to our prayers! I just hope she is still having fun with them like that now. Though I don’t know, being out in that heat in the wilderness with hardly anything, oh, it just makes me cry thinking about my little girl out there. But they reassured us over and over that she’ll be safe and that they will take good care of her.

That Thursday was one of the hardest and yet most hopeful days ever for me. I think it was for Tim too. Everyone at the Anasazi office was so kind and warm and open to us, and they all seemed to have this sincerity about them. It was so confirming to me about this hard, hard decision. That night we went to an orientation given by Ezekiel Sanchez one of the
founders. All I can say is wow, what a loving man. We met him and his wife Pauline, and I was impressed with them. They had never met us before but they just seemed like they had. They had this way and it wasn’t just with us, I could see it with everybody, that they just were very good at acknowledging people and like I said before, the sincerity was there and I felt respected. I felt like they truly cared about us and our family and our problems and our success. It was touching to meet them, even that little bit. It wasn’t very long, but when I met both of them I felt that from them. Ezekiel’s presentation was really touching. He shared some beautiful things about all his experience over something like 35 years with Anasazi and it was just tremendous. I could tell he was really committed to these kids and he really loves them.

But then his wife Pauline talked, and oh it was a breaking down of my spirit to get me to a place I needed to be to where I became teachable and what broke me down was when Pauline walked in the room! All I saw was grace, just God’s grace walked into that room and she was so beautiful and she thanked all of us for allowing her and Anasazi to take care of our child. At that point I was no where near thinking that Tara was precious because I had so hardened my heart against her because I had allowed myself to take so much personally and be so hurt by so much. And then Pauline talked about the way that the Indians think—children are a gift. She reminded me that Tara was a gift, I had forgotten that, and that’s what broke me. She reminded me of that one basic essential and that is Tara’s life is precious. Her life is not mine to take for granted. Being reminded of that everything just washed away and it was just wonderful because then I could start my own “new beginning” (as Ezekiel put it) with a new heart.

August 18, 2002: Tim

I’ve had a hard time getting to this journal, but I finally scraped some time together tonight. I was reading over Susan’s last entry about the day we took Tara to Anasazi, and it’s got me thinking a lot about what that day was like for me too. I guess we’re kinda making this our Anasazi journal for Tara and for us. I think we should keep writing after she comes home too. I keep thinking of that first night we put Tara in. It was really hard to entrust your child with, at that point in time, pretty much strangers. We didn’t really know who she was with. We just knew they were going to take care of her. At the beginning it was pretty hard.
After a couple of conversations with our Shadow though, you knew that they all loved our daughter. I’m emotional just thinking about it now. I knew they would not let anything happen to her. So that was very comforting to know that we had put her in the hands of people who would take care of her. They would give her the opportunity to grow and change and not be judgmental, let her be herself. At the beginning it was very hard.

But things are going good so far; we hear some good things from our Shadow about Tara. I guess she’s been a leader in the group which doesn’t really surprise us. Our Shadow thinks she’s doing okay. I don’t know though quite yet. I guess that first week was hard for her. Her first letter was, well I guess I’d rather just forget it. Our Shadow warned us she might be angry and cuss and stuff and she did all that. She pleaded and pleaded for us to come take her out of the program and made all kinds of crazy promises to be good; kinda broke my heart but I just didn’t feel like that was the best thing to do. I don’t think she’s in a good place yet mentally and the stuff we’ve been learning through the seminars and with our Shadow, I tell ya, makes me think maybe we’ve all got a lot of changing to do, me included that’s for sure.

I wanted to write a little bit about that presentation by Ezekiel; that was just awesome. Zeke’s a good guy, a really good guy that just loves ya, just loves everybody and that was so good to see that. Me and Susan felt spiritually confirmed that this is the place the Lord wants Tara to be, and us to be too right now. This is the answer to our prayers. It’s been a miraculous thing, but it’s requiring the best of us, I just hope we, well I, can change and be a better dad for Tara. I think Ezekiel speaks to the spirit of the whole program. I think that when he interacted with us there was a real sense and a real bond that occurred in a very quick period of time. I think that he’s just a really incredible guy—although his presentation sure was long, way too long. That was a long day all together.

Then the next days in the Arbinger seminars, that was just a good, good experience. But tough to, tough on me. I guess there were some tough realizations for me. One was particularly hard and that was realizing I would do what I thought was the right thing as a parent to Tori and the other kids but would do it for the wrong reason, like church was a requirement because I was afraid, I think, that other people would say, “Well look at their kids, they don’t go to church.” I was afraid of what other people might think about it. And I
was more concerned about that than about the kids’ well being. I’m still going to encourage them and in some cases insist that they do certain things, but now I hope for different reasons. Not because I’m that concerned about what other people are going to think about me as a parent, I want to do it more from the standpoint of what’s in my kids’ best interests, what should the kids be doing. I guess I was afraid that if Tara was misbehaving, getting in trouble, experimenting with drugs or what have you, that people may think, “Well, they must not be very good parents because look at the problems their kids are having.” I still may take some of the similar actions about discouraging Tara or in some cases keeping her from doing those types of things but I hope it’s for a different reason now. One of the biggest eye openers at the Arbinger training was the fact that it doesn’t always have to be about me and that if I’m doing things for self-centered reasons so that I look better as a parent or don’t look bad or whatever it’s probably going to come across to the kids that “dad’s not doing this because he loves me. He’s doing it because he’s afraid of what others will think.” I mean that probably comes across to them. They can probably detect what I’m doing. I think that was probably the most valuable thing for me from the seminars. The fact that I might be doing the right things for the wrong reasons. And when the light came on, and I think it was at the time another father at the seminar made the comment that “It’s all about looking good and being right”—that’s when the light went on. I was thinking I couldn’t believe how much I’ve done, in my interaction with the kids, which was all about looking good and being right! They were the right things to do but I probably needed to stand back and ask myself, “Why am I doing it?” So that’s what I’m committed to doing. And now I’ve written it so I guess I have to stay committed.

It was a great experience being at that seminar and being with all the other parents there. Made us not feel so alone, and helped us see that we aren’t the only parents having struggles with our teenagers. I think it made us feel like we were a part of the group and kind of a part of a family there. And that I think opened us up, or at least for me, it opened me up to being willing to look at myself and to learn where otherwise I may have closed off. In some experiences where we’ve gone to seminar things like that the people haven’t treated us right, they’ve seemed like they were interested in having our money and that sort of thing and I tend to close off to that pretty quick. But this seminar was different, it caused me to be
able to feel open and willing to look at myself and learn. Boy, I wrote a lot more than I thought I would here tonight.

August 24, 2002: Susan

I was just thinking tonight about the Arbinger seminars that we went to on that first Friday and Saturday. I didn’t write about those before which I think is kind of interesting now. I guess it has been taking a while to sink in. I have to say that those were some of the most powerful and actually the most different seminars that I’ve ever been to. It was hard though too, it was a challenge. Ezekiel had told us that the seminars might squeeze our hearts a little bit, that it might hurt. I think he was right. What hurt was realizing how much we’ve been involved in causing Tara’s problems, though I guess not causing, but definitely our hearts haven’t been in the right place with her a lot of times, I know mine hasn’t anyway. I don’t think I even could write about my experience with the seminar before, it was kind of confusing; but it is starting to come clearer. I think in the seminar maybe I had a bad attitude or something. All the staff were so loving and kind, but I think it bothered me that some of the people presenting and teaching and all were just kinda young and inexperienced. But then as I spent time with them I realized the principles they were teaching really were true. The fact that they did not have a lot of life experience did not mean I could not use those principles and really gain from them. It was a humbling experience for me.

Lately I’ve been noticing more where the ideas really apply to my life. Just last week I noticed how I justified myself in a situation with Kylie, and when I noticed it I remembered that was something we learned at the seminar. But at the seminar I don’t think I was quite getting it, even though the seminar was really good. I was sitting there in the seminar and of course my main focus was Tara and the problems we were having with her. And every situation that the presenter was talking about being “in the box” I just kept thinking “me and Tara. Tara is my box.” “Tara this and Tara that.” We were supposed to write down different situations of I think self-justification and I couldn’t come up with any. To me it was Tara, that was my problem. I didn’t have any other problems. It was a real eye opener to me last week when I realized how I justified myself with Kylie. And I’ve been able to see every situation with Tara, how there was a justification and how many little things that they were talking about in the seminar. I used to think that it was one big problem, that primarily Tara
had, but it wasn’t, it was many little occurrences in every situation that I could either justify myself or not. Now if I could go back to that class I would come up with tons of situations because I can relate to them more now and I think I’m able to see them better. I guess I couldn’t see my own life as having those situations until I walked away from it and it was in my mind and I thought, “That’s what they were talking about in that class.” And now I can see it in every day life, it’s so common, every tiny little situation. Going through the seminar I was kind of like, “This doesn’t relate to me.” I was sitting there through the whole seminar saying, “Tara needs to take this class, I don’t,” and I have to admit I was also saying “I hope Tim is hearing this, because he really needs this.” But now after I’ve taken it in and read a little more in the books about it and talked with our Shadow more, I see that I was the right person for the seminar. It’s like okay, I did need that. It’s really humbling. I’m just glad our Shadow has been patient with us.

I think the thing for me is just learning to look at myself and see what I can do to change. I’ve realized that if it is largely about me that’s kind of nice because I can control me and change and so I’m learning to look at myself and see better what I’m doing wrong and being willing to change. I think that’s definitely a beginning and then treating people with respect. I felt it so strongly through the seminar and it is being solidified more and more, “Oh, this is what they’re talking about.” I think that that was a big turning point in the way that I treated everyone, not just my children, but seeing everyone as people that have their own ideas and thoughts separate from my own. It was a turning point for me.

That first letter from Tara made me cry and cry. I was so worried for her. But her second letter was different. She still says she hates it and that she wants so bad to come home, but she also wrote some nice things about the other girls in her group and how they’re becoming friends and about how “cool” her Trail Walkers are. So Tim and I have been really comforted by that and really more at peace with how she is. I hope Tara can have some of the changes that I’m having; I don’t know though, I just don’t know. I am noticing some real changes in Tim ever since the seminar. He’s been more kind and caring to me and the girls. He doesn’t really like to admit it openly but I can really see these changes in him too. It is comforting. I hope we can all keep it up. We’ve had some times of changes before and then
we’ve fallen back into our old ways. I guess I just need to not fall back into my old ways.
That’s probably the only control I have.

September 8, 2002: Tim

Whew! This is a crazy time—trying to get the girls in school, saying goodbye to Brandon leaving for college in California to live with Mark. Having Tara out on the trail and missing her. This is a big huge time of change for the Brock family. Susan has been trying to get me to write in this journal the last couple days and now I finally am. I need to, so here goes. Well, Tara is doing quite well; I guess she’s started to be touched by this whole experience. After a couple weeks talking with our Shadow, we know now it was a good thing, we can tell she is enjoying herself and having a good time, even though it is probably the hardest thing she has ever done. I wondered if it would have a deep effect on her and I think it actually is. I can hardly believe she has been out there for a month already! She’ll be home in no time. Our Shadow has been talking with us about being prepared to have Tara back at home. I hope we can keep everything going in the way we have. This is such a big time of change, I feel hopeful but also a little scared. The last letter that we got from Tara just melted me though, just melted me. I feel like we’re seeing that old Tara again, like she was before all this stuff that happened. She is so kind and open in her letters, and seems so excited to see us at the family camp. I can hardly wait to see her. This journal doesn’t really do a good job of showing how much different we feel, and what a time of growth this has been for us. Such a big time of growth, maybe for me especially.

I emailed Bill and Nancy more about his experiences with Anasazi. Bill wrote saying “there are two things that make this program as successful as it is. One is the non-punitive wilderness time. That is just an experience that is life changing. And the other part of it, because that’s only one element. The other part of it is the time with the parents, if the parents will take the seminar, do the exercises and learn because their parenting does need to change, there’s no question about it. So those two things, the combination of those two things are what I think accounts for the great success of the program.” I have been thinking a lot about that since reading it.

I have also been thinking a lot about the seminars and our readings and exercises our Shadow has us doing. What has surprised me is this idea of self-betrayal. I think about it and
have watched since then that when you act on those impulses you have to do something for
someone it makes a huge difference in your relationship with those people. I am surprised at
what a powerful idea this is. Frankly, at first it seemed so basic and so shallow I didn’t think
just acting on those impulses could have that big of an impact on your relationships with
people, but it has a huge impact and I don’t know why. I don’t know what there is to that. It
creates either such a good relationship or such a barrier.

I had an example of that actually, shortly after we had gone to the seminar, when I
was driving back from Los Angeles and pulled over in Yuma where I took a stretch and a little
break from driving and sat down. A gentleman approached me, started talking to me and
basically told me his car was in the shop and he was stranded until he was able to get a hold
of family or friends and was trying to reach his brother who was in the service and that he
didn’t have $120 to repair his vehicle which needed a new tire. I listened to his story and he
wasn’t a very clean-cut person and looked like he was fairly rough around the edges but I just
listened and was friendly and considerate of the conversation and then I left. While I was
driving I was having this nagging feeling that I probably should have done something to help
him and as I was going through this I began to horribilize it and think about what a vagrant
looking person he was and probably didn’t drive, probably stole the car and all kinds of
things. I just kind of horribilized him in order to justify my betrayal, my deeper sense and
deeper feelings that I probably should have helped him and should have done something to
have shown some mercy and some compassion. So I’m wrestling over this for a good hour
and finally reach a place where I can use my cell phone and call Susan and she says “If you
feel that way then turn around and go back and go help him” but I’m outside of this area by
an hour now and I didn’t, I kept going and came home and got home and the house was a
mess, I thought, and I was destroying relationships left and right that night because I’m just
in a really bad mood but it’s not directly attributable in my mind back to that experience but
yet when I looked back on it a little bit later I realized that I betrayed my sense and knocked
down what I had a sense to do and justified and created that whole vicious cycle that evening
within myself. I was depressed when I got home. I felt really blue and I had had a really
productive day. I didn’t really attribute it directly back to that other than just feeling like the
family and house was a mess, people don’t appreciate things, just having the sense of general
depression that evening. I sat in the hot tub and didn’t really want to do anything. I realized later that evening and I told Susan what happened to me and I can clearly see that for what it is as opposed to not really knowing where it came from. I realized this was the consequence of self-betrayal. That was real valuable to me.

September 14, 2002: Susan

We got Tara’s third and fourth letters and they were both a joy to read. I treasure those letters; they are so dear to me. She seems to be improving each week. There are still some things I’m concerned about, but I think she is doing so well. Her heart seems to be open and I’m so glad, and so very proud of her. She is really an amazing young woman, I’m sad I haven’t been seeing that for some time, but so happy I’m seeing it now. We’ve sure been through a lot over these past 5 weeks. It is amazing that she is almost done with her Anasazi walking. What a life experience this has been for her! Surviving in the wilderness, hiking all day. She told me in one of her letters they got lost and ended up hiking way after dark to find where they were going. That scared me half to death. They’ve seen something like 4 rattlesnakes now, I sure hope Tim and I don’t see any when we’re out there. I can’t believe my little girl is such an amazing mountain woman now! Who would’ve ever thought that Tara, the girl who loves nice clothes and make up and being clean, would be able to survive without all that. I can hardly imagine what she must look like. She’ll be a sight to see for sure. She has come so far in her walking. I’m grateful for the wonderful people she’s been with, those Trail Walkers that have loved her. She says a lot about them in her letters and it touches my heart. I’ve felt my love for Tara overflow; I’m so so excited to see her! I want to see her up close and hold her and laugh and cry with her. I’ve been a nervous wreck; I thought this time for the family camp would never come. I want to be there right now with her if I could. She is so precious, I love her so much. It is time for her to come home, time for all of us to be a loving family together. I just can’t stop crying thinking about her.

This time of going to Anasazi and working each week with our Shadow has been one of the best and also one of the most difficult times for me. I’ve missed Tara much more than I thought I would. It has been so good to have that lifeline with our Shadow each week. I’m amazed at the way this program works. What comes to mind is that in the seminars and in shadowing they are teaching us to be compassionate, kind, and caring. They set an example
of it in practicing it and that helped to solidify it in my mind because they obviously have respect for people and they don’t treat anyone like objects and our Shadow and the Trail Walkers immediately seemed to gain the respect of Tara and all the kids out there on the trail. One thing that has had a big effect on me are our Shadowing sessions, our Shadow being able to help me see Tara for who Tara is, not what I want her to be or what she’s not doing or who she isn’t. And not just that, she also helped me see Tim and be able to look at things in our marriage and our family. The thing that I’ve gotten most out of Anasazi is from the Shadowing appointments and being able to help me see things differently. She has been very open, very direct too. It has been so good, I don’t want these Shadowing appointments to end. And we could tell from our conversations with our Shadow that Tara has felt like she was being treated as a person and cared about by our Shadow too. Tara does not usually open up to anyone. She’s fun and loud and a people person, but doesn’t really open her heart and soul to others like she has with our Shadow. From the things that our Shadow has told me about Tara, I knew that she was opening up and talking and she was seeing things in her that we had not seen. She really cares about her and I think that has been really important to Tara.

One of the things I’ve learned in our shadowing is that Tara is going to make her own walking in life, and I am not necessarily responsible. I can guide her, but she has to learn her own way. Our Shadow has counseled me that when Tara comes back she will still be Tara. We will have to accept her and love her and allow her to make her mistakes, but try to walk forward with her. That one thing has been so very helpful to know, especially for Kirsten and Kylie too. It feels like there isn’t as big a weight on me now, as it isn’t my responsibility to make sure she is doing this, this, and this. I realize I can’t have that kind of control.

Another thing I’ve loved about Anasazi is that it goes along so much with the Gospel and as I read the Bible it’s like I can see it and understand it more clearly. I don’t read the Bible and go back and say, “That’s what they taught in The Choice,” but I can see how there is such a mesh between what I understand in the Gospel and of course my understanding is increasing all of the time, but from my perspective The Choice is based on the principles of the Gospel. But they’re coming at it from a different way than most of us think about it. I think The Choice puts it into a context of everyday living. It’s trying to teach us to love other people and love ourselves the way that Jesus taught. As I go through my life, with my kids
and all the people I come into contact with, I do occasionally go back and say, “Okay now, am I seeing this person as a child of our Heavenly Father that is as important as I am and equal to me in every way?” That has helped me see others, really see others for who they are. That’s the way I want to always see Tara. I’m just so giddy and excited to be with her! I hope she teaches me how to live in the wilderness though, I’m scared about that. But I think it will be worth it just to be with her and see her. She is so very special to me, I’m so glad we get this amazing second chance.

September 15, 2002: Tim

Well we are so excited to go see Tara out on the trail! I second everything that Susan said in her last entry. It has been a special treat for me too to read Tara’s letters. She has been open and sharing her heart with us and even asking for forgiveness. She talks in her letters about how this has been a spiritual time for her. It sure has been for us. I would have never thought it could all go like this. It has been amazing, really amazing. I also didn’t realize how much I would miss Tara; it’s eating me up! I’m so excited about being out there in the wild with her. She’ll be able to show us so many things. It has been a while since I’ve been camping, and I don’t think I’ve ever roughed it this much before. We’ve been scrambling around trying to get everything together. The girls are getting excited to see their sister too. I think they might be just as excited as us. They have been praying for her and it has been so sweet. Tara has such an influence; we’ve all missed her smile and just how fun she can be. I have to admit, I didn’t really miss her at first. But now it feels different. I feel a lot more committed to being a better father and being there for her. I don’t want to go back to how things were. This is really a turning point and new beginning for our relationship, all of us together.

Boy, I don’t even quite know how to capture what this time has been like for us. I’ve really enjoyed our shadowing each week. That has meant a lot to me. It has been hard though sometimes. Sometimes I’ve even dreaded those appointments, but in the end I’ve usually left there feeling better, feeling more hopeful and shored up. Some of our shadowing has been articles that our Shadow has given us that have been things that put thoughts in your head. They were just ideas on being a better person, being a better parent, and then of course our Arbinger readings and exercises. Ways to fix things in our relationships. I think it relates a lot
with what Susan wrote about, recognizing the things that you control versus the things that
you influence and don’t get frustrated by not being able to change the things that you don’t
control. You’ll still try to influence them and you’ll still try to make changes in your own life
but don’t get frustrated because you can’t change the other person. You can’t make
something change in them. You can just love them and guide them.

One of the things that I focus on and make a conscious effort is, with what Susan and
I were learning as part of that experience with the seminars that they had and so forth, is
looking at Tara as a person rather than Tara as a problem and clearly before this experience I
looked at her, and dealt with her a lot of times, as a problem rather than a daughter with
issues and feelings and so forth. That’s probably one of the biggest changes I’ve been
making. It has made a difference—seeing her as a person. I want to see her that way when
we’re with her. It will be so fun to be in the wilderness with her and have her show us all that
she’s learned. We’re going to share with her the things we’ve learned too. We’ve also been
making some plans to make what our Shadow called a peace offering with Tara. I hope that
is a special thing. Both Susan and I have been preparing our own special peace offerings to
share with Tara. It is amazing to me just how much I love my daughter, how much I’ve
missed her. I better get the rest of our gear together tonight. We get to see Tara tomorrow!
September 19, 2002: Susan

I can hardly find words to describe what we’ve experienced these past few days. It
was so special to see Tara, one of the most cherished experiences of my entire life. I don’t
even know if I can do it justice writing about it. Luckily we wrote about it right there with
Tara while we were with her. She had us write in her journal and in the family camp book
and she was so organized and had a lot of plans for us and took such good care of us, feeding
us, helping us sleep “comfortable,” and being one of the best hostesses ever.

It was a spiritual and beautiful time being with her. It was really tender at the initial
greeting. I will never forget what she looked like when she came running down that hill. Oh
my gosh, she was so beautiful. There was this light in her eyes like I haven’t seen for so long.
She was the most beautiful creature I had ever seen. She found herself. She had found
herself; my daughter has finally found her spirit! I saw how excited she was to teach us what
she learned, those days with her I will treasure because it showed me what we can have, such
openness, and such peace. There wasn’t a rift between us; there weren’t all the pressures of
every day life. It was so wonderful. I saw that in the faces of the other parents and in their
children too as I observed. It wasn’t just happening with us, and there was a tremendous
feeling of love between the parents and their child, and the kids seemed so eager to please
their parents. I can see how they felt deep down. They really do want to please their parents
and really do want to have a relationship. We saw that so much in Tara, I loved being with
her. I saw Tara and the other girls in her group in this heavenly light. And I could see that
they all want to have friends and they want to fit in, just like all of us, and they’re trying to
do that but they need us too. There is a bond there with Tara and me that goes much deeper
than I think I realized, that much peace, that much openness.

It’s an honor. It’s truly an honor and a privilege to have a second chance as a parent
to be able to be the right parent. A parent that can be an asset be a benefit and help and
hopefully a guide in a child’s life. That’s truly an honor. As for our relationship, me and
Tara, it’s totally and completely different. There is a relationship where there wasn’t before.
There’s a foundation on which we can base a relationship. There’s so much more. We can
see each other and see ourselves in and through our relationship. I’m amazed. I have felt a lot
more humble and a lot more vulnerable from this whole Anasazi experience. I always looked
at being vulnerable as a negative. I realized being with Tara in the wilderness that vulnerable
is very important – just opening your heart and soul.

It was amazing seeing Tara in her element out there in the wilderness. I couldn’t
believe how at ease she was, and how peaceful she was. I sure wasn’t that peaceful with
living in the wild, sleeping on the ground, digging a hole to go to the bathroom. I’m just
amazed at her survival skills, wow! I could tell that being out in nature did something really
special for Tara and all the girls there. I guess it took them having to be away from the world
where they could sit and think and be in the wilderness and have those experiences for them
to be able to internalize it and have their hearts changed. Us changing alone as parents
wouldn’t have been enough, they needed that experience. My belief now is that all people
should have that experience, whether they’re troubled or not because it makes a difference. I
wish I could’ve done this program when I was Tara’s age. I’m sure it could’ve helped me.
I've been telling Tim ever since that maybe he and I need to do Anasazi! Gee, to bad there's not a 6-week program for parents 😊.

September 21, 2002: Tim

Hands down, the best experience I've had with Tara in her whole life. Just as special as seeing her be born. In fact, Susan and I got to see her reborn. She was amazing out there. I loved being with her and learning from her and sharing in her experience. It was pretty darn tough living out there in the wilderness for three days. I'm still just stunned Tara did it for 42! Susan and I talked about how it was harder and more survival for Tara than we realized. She is a tremendous young woman to have been able to finish this walking. I'm just so impressed by her, so impressed with this experience she’s had, and so impressed with the glow we saw around her. When she came running down that hill to meet us, oh I’ll never forget that. And she was so kind to us through that whole three days. Usually she gets kinda frustrated with us easily, but I didn’t see any of that. She was so patient, and just so calm. And for Tara that is huge. One of the things I noticed in Tara’s relationship with her mom is while we were there on trail with her to me it was interesting and neat to see how attentive Tara was to making sure that Susan was comfortable and had what she needed.

I feel like we have a new beginning. This is one of the greatest blessings that has ever come to the Brock family. Susan and I have been praying with such gratitude and thanks to God for this blessing. We’ve been trying to share with Mark and Brandon, and with Kirsten and Kylie what this experience has been like. The girls were so happy to see their big sister. They love her so much, they almost cried when they saw her. I think they were a little scared by how dirty she was though too. We had such a fun evening all together. I thought Tara was going to float up to heaven after taking a shower and eating “real” food. She was so peaceful and happy and I could tell relieved.

We didn’t see any snakes out there, but we did see a javelina on our drive in, that was pretty neat. I survived living in the wilderness, but it wasn’t easy. It was good to see the other parents there too with their sons and daughters. I don’t know if all of them had the amazing time that we had, but it was good to see them. We hadn’t seen some of them since the seminars at the beginning. One of the things that was kind of interesting to me and a little bit frustrating was that we have learned these concepts and I know the boys and girls on the trail
learned so much patience and so much of what we were learning and I noticed often that a
couple of the parents would I guess not realizing what they were doing, they would still just
rail on their kids or embarrass them or put them down in front of other people. I noticed the
Young Walkers were, at least for that period of time, were pretty good at exercising what
they had learned and putting up with that. I wonder how long that lasted though. That was the
difficulty that I saw, the frustration that if the parents could just see what they were saying. I
remember there was this one mother and her Young Walker that came off the trail, I was so
impressed by them, and yet this one mother was just unknowingly putting down her son right
and left and little critical things, little put downs that I think were probably natural to her and
that’s what he got at home and I was thinking, “Gee, you just learned this stuff,” but it hadn’t
quite sunk in. The boy, he was doing well with it. That’s the difficulty, getting those deeply
ingrained traditions turned around in such a short period of time. I can see that things are
being learned but boy, some things are just so ingrained and passed down from one
generation to the next. Even though some parents there were learning and saying, “Yeah, this
is what I want to do,” and they probably even think that they are doing it, the negative all
comes out because they are so used to it. I really noticed that. It’s a hard thing to overcome. I
think we can change those habits and hopefully all those boys and girls continue to do well,
because I noticed that they were so good at doing what they had learned. Maybe because they
were younger they were able to implement it faster and turn those things around. I was
hoping that they can carry that with them and even though their parents continue to go off
and continue the old tradition that maybe the Young Walkers are able to make a break there.
Make the change in the traditions that are passed along. At least right there I saw that they
were able to at least for a short period of time.

September 27, 2002: Susan

Things have started to get back to more of a normal even flow for us now. Tara’s
starting to adjust to being back at home. It was hard for her at first. The city was kind of loud
and imposing to her. But she’s loved showers and make up, and clean clothes. I can tell
though that she’s still adjusting. It might take her a while yet. She says she misses the trail
and wants to be back there sometimes. We talk about her experience a lot. It would be nice to
talk about it more, but we’ve all been so busy. I’ve gone twice now and talked to the different
parents as they’re sending kids out on the Thursday night orientations at Anasazi. Many of them say, “How do you trust them when they get home?” I tell them there’s just something about going out there and meeting them and hearing them talk, you know it’s coming from their hearts, it’s not just the right answers you want to hear. They mean everything they’re saying and so it’s really easy to kind of let them go and do their thing when they get home because she means everything she’s saying. That was really an eye opener to me because I had those same questions. Sure, she knows everything she’s supposed to say to us, she knows what we want to hear and she can say those things whether she means them or not, I’ve seen this before. But to go out there and be with her, there’s just something about it out there that you know it’s coming from the heart and you know the heart is changed and you can feel a difference.

I told one of the parents that Tara and I didn’t really have much of a relationship before. I think I saw a lot more stuff, I detected a lot more stuff than Tim since I was with Tara a lot more, and she knew that I knew things and so she didn’t have anything to do with me basically. She avoided any contact with me, eye contact, verbal. I would say something to her and she would just act like she didn’t care or didn’t hear me or anything like that. But after Anasazi she has been just as fun as any of the other kids. She laughs with me, she laughs with the other kids, it is that same Tara that we’ve all missed so much, that same fun endlessly entertaining Tara. It was just like there was never anything bad going on before. She’s just like one of the other kids. No tension, no anything. It’s just great.

My feelings now after the Anasazi experience is that it could be a profound influence on a young couple’s parenting skills to go through The Choice if they could have those things instilled in them and realize that they are based on truth and based on the way that we need to treat each other. I believe I would have treated my kids and seen my kids differently. I think I came from the school of “Well I’m the parent and you’re the child” rather than seeing them as equals and in reality they are. We have the responsibility to teach them right and wrong and to guide them but I think I saw myself as better than my kids. “I’m the parent, I’m older than you are, and so I’m better than you at this point in life.” And I think knowing what I know now, of course that comes from the experience of having some unfortunate experiences with Tara before, I think there’s a whole different perspective that it can bring into a person’s
life. I think if we had had the seminar before we had kids and had really internalized it, although I don’t know if you can because you kind of have to be in the parenting process to see how it goes maybe, but to internalize all those processes, I think we would have parented our children differently. I think they wouldn’t be different than they are but they would have had different experiences and maybe less struggles. But then again the struggles make up who they are and their character. But I do wish we would have had this experience as younger parents.

October 4, 2002: Tim

Since Tara’s been home she has been so much fun to have around and we have been able to have a good, not just father-daughter relationship, but being good friends. Since she’s gotten home she’s done really well. She’s been just an absolute treat to have around, for the most part. I’ve been happy to be with her and doing some fun things together. I know it hasn’t been easy for her. She is still adjusting to being back at home and I know some things are a shock being back in the “real” world. But she’s doing well. Sometimes she gets a little down, but I think that is probably all part of trying to transfer her whole experience of Anasazi back to her regular life. I think I’m doing a lot better at understanding. At least I hope so. Before this experience I would get just real annoyed with Tara a lot of times. I think after the experience I’ve tried to put it in perspective and tried to ask myself in the big picture does it really matter? It’s all relative to the long term relationship that I’m trying to build with my daughter. That is my most important thing now. It has been fun learning even more about Tara’s experience. She’s had fun sharing some with the girls. Mark and Brandon have been interested in her whole experience. I can tell though that they’re still a little leery about Tara. I don’t think they want to believe that she’s made such amazing changes in her life, which is really unfortunate. I wish they could have gone to the seminar with us. That has been hard for Tara, I think she can feel that they are happy for her, but also that they maybe don’t totally believe that her heart has been changed, and that is hard for her. I think she may have been expecting that they would be a lot happier for her. Work has started to pick up for me lately and I’ve been working some longer hours. I don’t like that but it won’t be for long. In fact I’ve got to run now.

October 10, 2002: Susan
Tara started back in school last week. She was glad to be back with her friends, I’m a little worried though. It is hard to see her go back to some of the same environments. We’ve talked about it and she feels really confident that she can do well. We’ve been setting some ground rules and trying to work that all out together. That has been good so far. I think it has been hard though for her being back in the school environment. The sad thing is you can see all the teachers treat these kids as objects. I think that is really hard for Tara to understand, after Anasazi, after being with people that treat her as a person and love her and then to go back to that, where she’s just another kid. She has a hard time with teachers that are very resistant, that are in the box and treat her that way.

Sometimes I’ve gotten worried for Tara. I’m afraid sometimes that I’m going to have all that upheaval again. Life is really hard sometimes. The other day she and I had a minor disagreement over a friend issue. Tara said to me “Mom, you don’t trust me” and I said, “I haven’t said a word. I haven’t attacked you or said anything,” but then she said, “I can feel your lack of trust.” That has stayed with me. I remember when the presenter said in the seminar, “You have to understand, you have given them nothing to trust and it’s going to take time for that relationship to change.” I guess changing our hearts is a gradual process. Because you don’t go to the seminar and after you come home think you’re going to do everything right because it’s really hard to change 20 years of parenting, you don’t change that over night. I guess it is the same with your child. They don’t go to Anasazi at 15 or 16 after three or four years of rough behavior and come home over night changed. Something inside of them has clicked and changed but it’s a slow process to pull it out and to have it manifest itself. So that’s what I’m working on. Sometimes its hard, I just hope I can be a support to Tara, and I just hope that she doesn’t get pulled down by friends and hard situations.

November 1, 2002: Tim

Well, I’ve been putting off this journal I guess probably at the worst time. Things have been tough lately. Tara is not doing well, she’s screwing up again. Last night she was gone the whole night with friends at some Halloween party. We got no call, no nothin’. She show’s up here today looking like something the cat drug in and I just said, “Great, here we go again.” She made up some lame story about not having a ride or something. Susan got
angry with her and so did I. It turned into a big argument. Not a pretty sight. I feel so sad now because we hadn’t really had this for a long time. I thought we were done with all this kind of crap with her. She reeked of marijuana and we can smell it in her car. Why she would throw away all her progress I just frankly don’t get it. I can tell she’s upset but I just don’t get what is going on in her head. She’s giving us the silent treatment and being real defiant. But I can tell she’s hurting too. I can tell things at school and with some of her friends and stuff just haven’t gone well. I think she had visions of being able to change her friends by sharing with them all her Anasazi experiences and everything, but I don’t think it has quite worked out like she hoped, and I think that has been real depressing to her.

One thing that has been hard is I feel like the Anasazi aftercare program has been inadequate. It seems very minimal commitment on the part of the program I think to really deal with and work with the kids when they get home. There’s something that should be going on during this time frame to reinforce or anchor what Tara and the other kids have experienced out there. To anchor and reinforce what the kids and the parents have learned through this whole experience. I’m not sure exactly what I’m suggesting as for aftercare but something to perpetuate the changes that she’s made. And probably we’re supposed to be doing that as parents. When Tara got done with Anasazi she felt like she was part of a real unique group of kids that had had an experience, a really meaningful experience, and she would run into a Trail Walker like at the mall or somewhere and she thought that was the neatest thing. She would tell us, “Hey, I ran into Kelly today,” but as she got further and further away from that experience it has been harder for her. In my mind had they had something like a bi-weekly get together with these kids where they could see the Trail Walkers again or they could interface with others and support each other, something like that could really help. It’s like the program ends and maybe a call or letter and that’s it. Tara went back on that first Thursday night to talk to the incoming parents at Anasazi and I think that was a real positive thing for her. I think that reinforces to an extent, but what was happening was she felt a part of this group and then she’s out of the group and there is less contact and then all of these things with school and friends and everything have been hitting her. She’s kind of been reluctant to go to church too. This is sad to see, because her Anasazi experience was such a spiritual high for her. We could probably tolerate the behavior thing and even the
church thing; it's no huge thing to me that a 16-year-old is not that anxious to sit in a church meeting because I certainly wasn't at 16. But the drug thing is scary. If she could have all the other problems and not the drugs, I think we're going to have to start giving her drug tests again. The scary part is, even if it was just occasionally, "I saw some friends and they were smoking and I did it myself and I want to work through it," I think we could work through that but it's the lying about it, and then she even said to me "I'm not even sure I want to quit this." Of course she was angry when she said that, but that's where you feel like you just kind of need to do something else. So I don't know what we're going to do. Sometimes I think, well she's only two years away from 18 and then she'll be gone. That's a relief and also more scary at the same time.

November 3, 2002: Susan

Since Tim wrote, Tara did come and finally talk with us about her Halloween night. She admitted that she smoked pot with her friends, but that she wasn't planning to, it just happened as the night went on. I don't know how sorrowful she really is though, because she was also kind of blaming us for not helping her more and making her life too hard for her. She went into some old stuff that I thought she was passed. Even though she was sort of blaming us, she did seem real hurt, so I don't know for sure what is going on for her. She's been real up and down lately. Sometimes we see that old Tara that we all just love and adore, and other times we see this other Tara that none of us quite know how to deal with. Tim and I have been talking a lot. We also went back to see Christie, and she is helping us. We've been telling her about the Arbinger seminar and she seems interested. She's reading the Leadership and Self Deception book, and she's hoping to go to the seminar, so that might be a great thing for all of us. Tim and I have been talking and reading over the seminar materials a little. We got out of the habit of that which is sad. It has been good to get back into those ideas, they are really hopeful. The parenting pyramid has helped a lot. Going back to what's the problem, what's the real problem. That has helped us in general lately. Another thing is discipline and that goes back to the pyramid when they talked about that and how to discipline. Before Tara went, she was always grounded or we took things away from her. And it's not so much that way anymore. It's more looking at what the problem is, fixing the problem then not having to do as much grounding. She hasn't been grounded since Anasazi
really. We’re trying to address the problem differently. We try to work through the real problem, not just the surface of it and there has been less confrontation, especially with her drug use.

Sometimes I think that maybe they rushed Tara through the program at Anasazi. I can’t quite get this out of my mind. Maybe there’s some ways to do it a little different. Even if it was just six weeks, even if a child isn’t “finished” if you don’t try to rush them or force them, trying to get them to a certain point to go home. Maybe let them just finish where they are at and be real open about all that. It’s better than trying to force something that they’re not ready to accept yet.

Forget about bringing up Anasazi with Tara though. We’ve tried to do that and for some reason she seems to resent us bringing it up, says we don’t understand. We so much want her memory of Anasazi to be on her terms, positive ones. And she loves the people at Anasazi. She has loved the contact, even though it is not as much as she has probably needed. The actual experience itself is not negative to her but us bringing it up right now is. So we are being careful, we don’t want to do anything ever for her to come back and hate Anasazi or hate the people because of that. So I guess right now we just won’t even talk about it, other than encourage her if she wants to go be with people from Anasazi. I know she feels like Anasazi was a positive thing for her, I know that, but because she is making choices that she knows she shouldn’t be making, that we wouldn’t approve of, she doesn’t want to talk about those positives.

For me and Tim, I think the thoughts have been there and the need to accept our daughter as an individual, and yes she is making the choices she is making, but we still love her. I think that there are some circumstances where I don’t want to deal with what she’s doing and I guess I get so she is just irrelevant. It’s good for me to realize that, and I find myself now stopping and saying to myself “Now how am I feeling toward Tara?” So I’m really working on not wanting to ignore her or what she’s doing to protect myself and my own feelings. And that’s what it would be because emotionally it’s very, very difficult for me to watch the decisions that she’s making. Very, very difficult because she keeps going up and down as far as friends and school and she is not doing well in school. She has been doing things like staying up all night with friends, she’ll be out all night, and we won’t know where
she’s at or when she’s going to come back. But we’ve backed off, I guess we let her do it because if we didn’t we’re afraid it would be just more of the same fighting. Tara can sometimes react in a very, very defiant and, to some degree, violent way.

When I’ve tried to control her I can see I haven’t been using the Anasazi, The Choice way. Sometimes I can say, “Okay, if that’s what you want to do, if that’s how you want to treat me,” and sometimes I’ll not turn the other cheek, I don’t physically do anything but I’ll verbally say things. I have a long way that I need to go with my parenting skills but I have a strong personality too. I think generally I do okay with accepting what she’s doing. I do wish there was more follow-up with her from Anasazi though. You can’t drop the ball on aftercare because it seems aftercare is just as, maybe even more important than the program.

November 10, 2002: Tim

I have had some good talks with Tara, but it has been hard too. It’s hurt to find out how she’s felt about some things. I guess she needed more understanding and compassion from me than she’s had, especially in this last month. A month ago we talked with her in the den, and now that I think about it she was almost begging us to follow what we learned at Anasazi and we were having a struggle with it and yet now I think she was doing very well, she was very patient and that conversation ended sort of unresolved and I think finally she gave up on us, I guess is what happened. I remember we were sitting there in my office and she was doing all she could to be patient and to follow her heart and to communicate but she was being accused of things by us and so I think there was a limit, that maybe sometimes she worked hard at it but then she saw things are not working between her and us and just gave up. She was following it very well though. I wish I could have seen that more clearly then.

November 18, 2002: Susan

I’ve been trying to read some of our materials from the Arbinger seminar. It has been more helpful than I thought it would be. I had a very positive experience with the training, and it is sad that since then I had lost sight of that a little bit. It wasn’t a matter of not getting it because I understood it, but rather transferring it into my everyday life. It’s like going to church. You have to keep going to understand it and live it. I’ve got thinking more about this whole idea of control. I still think we as parents have a dramatic impact on our children and that comes from personal experience but I’m also seeing that even the best parenting isn’t
going to bring about perfect children. It’s hard I think when society tells you what your kid should be. Or the culture that you grow up in tells you how your kids should be and what you should do and what an ideal family is or an ideal group of people are or this is the ideal childhood, to go through 12 grades without any hitches. That’s the kind of mold we grew up with and so you want to carry that through but I don’t think it’s true. I can see now that when our kids made mistakes, especially Tara for some reason, it was never, “Oh well, you made a mistake.” It was criticize and cut them down for everything they did wrong. With Tara, I watched myself after we went to the seminar and I thought, “Oh my gosh, what have I done?” I think before I just thought that all of our kids, they all had needs that had to be met, they had to be taken care of and I didn’t resent them but they were still objects because they have all these things that I had to do for them. And it wasn’t really seeing them as people like “What do you want, what do you need?” I can see that is how we viewed them, and I think we got back into that with Tara in some ways. I think we saw our kids as kids. These are our objects and they have been given to us and we love them, yes, but we have to meet all of their needs and take care of them. And teach them and train them and control their lives. I guess I’m realizing even more that these are kids that are people and they have their own feelings and they have their emotions and they have their own dreams and their own goals and their own strengths and weaknesses and they should be able to live their lives without us always telling them how to live. They have a right to be a person, not just “You’re my kid and we’re going to do it this way.” I can see now that with Tara I rescued a lot instead of letting the consequences take place and also I think that before Anasazi I was on the kids more negatively like, “Have you done this? Have you done that?” instead of when they come home letting them talk and come home and relax before jumping on them, “Go clean your room, do this, do this.” I’ve been changing that, and I can enjoy them more and there is more talking and I’m not on them trying to get them to do something so much. I think I was trying to get them to do things that I thought were more important. And that’s something that I’ve noticed in myself that’s changing. I feel a lot more relaxed and peaceful when I do that.

I think often of being in the box and being able to recognize that more and realizing that I can only change myself and that I can’t make my daughter how I think she ought to be. It is soul searching to the way you react. Get yourself clear before you interact with your
kids. I guess as a parent you assume you’re always right and that was my first mistake. I’m not always right. There are times that I go into the box and there are times that Tara goes into the box, and we’ve been able to tell each other that more. I told her the other day she has a heart at war and she said, “I know I do. I want to stay here for awhile.” So then I gave her her time and space and I respected her. And then she made a statement like, “You know, aren’t we hanging onto our emotions?” I didn’t say anything and then later on I went back to her and said, “You know, I did.” I think for me it’s to where you can’t be too big to say you’re sorry. If I could tell any parent anything, it would be that you can’t be too much of an adult or a parent in what the society out there tells you that you should be. You can’t and be a good parent and be there for your kid. You can’t and have that relationship that they need and you need.

I realized this in somewhat of a simple way just today with Tara. I have been making hats for humanitarian services and I told her, “You can make these hats too and it can be one of your church service projects.” So she started making them and we just got something going and I had in my mind what yarn I was going to use and how to do it, and I came downstairs and she’s making the hat different, and I went, “Ahhh!” That’s the old way of parenting. I was saying to her “Tara why don’t you do it this way?!” So I caught myself, really it is actually more clear right now as I’m writing about it. I didn’t force her to do it my way but she knew there was some negativity about the way to do it. Before I probably would have forced her to do it my way. I would have been more upset with her and taken it away from her and insisted she do it my way.

I’ve also had talks with her now about the fact that she’s 16 and she’s grown up and I realize that she needs to make decisions for her own life without me interfering. I told her that and it was hard for me and if it had been before Anasazi, I probably wouldn’t have done that. Now I think it’s the letting go. It’s saying, “You can be responsible for your life at your age.” It doesn’t mean I don’t advise her and I don’t counsel her because I will but hopefully not in a nagging way. I think it has been a little better, it feels a little bit better.

November 28, 2002: Tim

I was just reading Susan’s entry. She and I both have been trying to read more from the materials from Anasazi. We figured we need some help right now with Tara; it has been
tough to see her getting back into some of the same things. I haven’t been doing as well as Susan though on reading. Life seems to get away from me with so much going on. Susan and I have talked a lot more though about the seminars and that time that Tara was on the trail. One of the things that stuck out for me that we learned there is seeing Tara as a person rather than controlling her as much as we did before. Like Susan was saying about control. I try to remember that. Even though at times she’s making bad choices, I try to see her as a person and try to understand her feelings a little bit better. That helps. It’s not easy though. I came from a background that was very controlling and manipulating, very controlling, shaming and withholding affection if I wasn’t doing what they thought was going to make the family look good and that kind of thing. And so the whole concept of Anasazi and the Arbinger way of doing things was very freeing because there’s none of that controlling way of doing things which causes tension and stress. Even if a child is going along with your controls, it doesn’t feel free. And so the whole concept is very liberating. The idea of being who you are and loving your children to be who they are, obviously you have guidelines and things like that in raising them but way different than controlling them. And I grew up with that. A lot of them have their own personalities and their own wants and thoughts and desires and things. But now, it’s way more comfortable and totally different than what I grew up with. I think that controlling way of parenting is not just my family I grew up in either, I think that’s pretty prevalent in our society.

I think the biggest change in terms of changing that for me has been a recognition that I control my life, but I can’t control any of my children’s, maybe especially not Tara’s because she resents that so much. I still try to influence her but I have to influence her maybe more by the way that I act, where my heart is with her, not only what I say.

December 06, 2002: Susan

Tara is doing a little better. I think we’re all doing a little better. It is still kind of hard for Tara to talk as openly with me. She is still sometimes reluctant to want to talk openly about her Anasazi experience but I know that she draws to it at times. I found a bunch of photographs from Anasazi when I was cleaning, I gave them to her and she told me later that she cried. She said, “I couldn’t handle it, I just wanted to go back,” and she even said, “I have to put all of the pictures away,” because she misses it so much. So I know that she made a
turning point there in her life, that that began the process and I think she will return to it for
the rest of her life. The lessons that she learned, endurance and the feeling there, being a part
of that group with the people she loved, I don’t feel like it was a waste at all. Especially, the
lessons that I personally learned reinforce what we are learning now in our counseling with
Christie. If I would have had that experience and come home without continued counseling, I
don’t think that it would have sunk in as much. But because we have continued to get help in
our parenting and continued to change ourselves, I think that it’s made all of the difference in
the world. I don’t know that I would have made as many changes or that Tim and I would
have.

With Tara now I’m taking more time to listen. I make myself take the time to listen. That’s been one of the biggest things for me to do. I make myself take the time to think
rationally and not move on emotions or irrational behavior. And if I do, then I apologize to
her. If one of the other girls starts to act up and get into more trouble, if one starts acting up
more than the other one, I’ll start spending more time with that child, more one-on-one time
with her. I take them for more walks, or take them to the grocery store with me more. It’s
hard, with three kids at home and Tim gone a lot, but I’ll take that extra time whenever I can
and try to squeeze that in and just spend that extra time. When I do everything’s okay. It ends
up coming out in the end talking. I try as best as I can to balance time and spend time with
every one of them each week, even calling Mark and Brandon. With the girls, I make sure to
have at least an hour per week of one-on-one time. But there are times when they need more,
especially Tara. She’s going through a tough time right now so I’m finding that I have to
spend more time with her.

For me it also has a lot to do with how I feel about myself. I accept myself more now
for who I am, and I accept my children for who they are because of this foundation. I saw a
lot of myself more clearly through everything, Anasazi, and everything since then. In seeing
myself it has helped me accept who I am and that’s a feeling, good or bad, right or wrong, I
can accept it and that’s a good thing. And my children, good or bad, right or wrong, I can
accept them because I know my Father in Heaven accepts us, good or bad, right or wrong. It
just gave me a perspective that I could accept. And not a worldly perspective, my parenting
has definitely become more spiritual. I was trying to explain this to my mother recently. I had
my two younger girls over at her home, and I was sort of talking with her about parenting being a spiritual perspective, trying to explain to her why she doesn’t understand at times why I don’t punish my girls for things. Sometimes I do and sometimes I don’t. I really have to look at the level and the context, because I’m looking at their hearts now, I’m really looking at them through different eyes—through a completely different perspective that I’ve never looked at them with before. There are a lot of people who don’t look at their children like that but it really is the way God looks at us. Tim and I have been talking about this.

We’ve come closer to our faith through this whole experience. That to me has been a big part of the whole Anasazi experience. We always have believed, we have always gone to church, we were born Christians, but now it’s more practicing what we know and I think that’s made it a bigger piece in the whole thing. Between learning those things and becoming closer to Christ it creates a different atmosphere. As Tim and I were saying to each other just recently, Anasazi is very peaceful, it’s very non-confrontational. So is the Gospel. It’s about peace and love and understanding and forgiveness. We do all make mistakes and that to me is a big thing. You have to forgive people for the little things and let the stuff go.

As I look back, it was our Shadowing appointments that got me to start reading the Bible a lot more. I attribute getting closer to God to our experience at Anasazi. We’ve always had our faith, but now a better understanding of the effect of it. When I talk to someone about Anasazi I tell them, “It’s not just the kids, it’s not just a vacation and the kids don’t go off, it’s something that I went through spiritually. It’s something that touched my life and affected my life so whole heartedly.” It was a life changing thing for me spiritually.

Forgiveness especially was big. Before Anasazi Tara had been drinking, doing drugs, out all night, going to party’s, dating a 21-year-old, doing terrible in school, into gangs, getting arrested. She had really hurt us. I felt she had crushed my life—this child that I’ve tried to love and help. I was struggling with forgiveness. I think Anasazi and reading Terry Warner’s stuff about forgiveness really helped. As we drove to California once while Tara was on the trail we were driving near Death Valley, Tim was asleep and I was driving and I, in prayer and thinking, I left my hurt and all of my bad feelings, I left it in the desert, I left it out there and it has never felt the same since. I am very grateful to Anasazi for those concepts. And that makes it easier now because even while Tara is doing things that aren’t
the best for her, I realize those are her choices and I don’t feel the weight of her choices, I
gave it to my Savior and He took it and it’s okay. So that frees me from the guilt and I can
have a clearer relationship with her. I just felt clear and clean and new. I’ve been telling Tim
we should really go to the seminar at Anasazi again. We really should go back to that again.

December 18, 2002: Tim

I had a good talk the other day with Tara in the car. We haven’t had time enough just
to sit and talk, and we were finally able to. We even talked some about Anasazi. I think she
learned a lot of good things there she was able to anchor onto. I think she was able to
remember the good experience that she had. In the long run, I think that’s what we’d like.
Life is still kind of hard for her; she may have a ways to go yet, she kind of goes back and
forth still I think. I don’t know, but she’s making good progress. I’m hopeful for her, I don’t
know that she’s out the woods yet. I think it takes a lot longer for these young people to be
out of the symbolic woods of the world after they leave the literal “woods” of Anasazi. But
she’s on her way I think. I guess we as parents take a while too. I’ve been noticing that
especially.

I’ve been noticing some of the differences for me at work. Reading some of the
Arbinger stuff I went back to work and we had this contract secretary for three months and I
didn’t know anything about her and I thought, “That’s rude” because I saw her as an object
and so I went back and made it a point to ask her name and find out all about her and so
forth. One of the things that came into my mind is the fact that I tend to think of myself as a
people person and I take a keen interest in people but for some reason there were just certain
people that in reading the Arbinger booklet and doing one of the activities I noticed I didn’t
see as people, like this secretary. I said to myself, “Wow, there’s a person” and I saw her as
an object rather than a person. So I made up my mind that I was going to go back and find
out who that lady was and get to know her a little bit and it’s a good thing I did because now
she’s a regular employee there, she’s no longer on contract.

December 26, 2002: Susan

This was a great Christmas for us all. Brandon and Mark were here. Tara was with us
and seemed to be happy. It was a truly joyous time for the Brock family. We had a lot of fun
all being together. The weather was beautiful and we did a lot outside. Tara showed Mark
and Brandon a lot of her Anasazi stuff that they hadn't seen. She showed them how to “bust a
coal” and they were pretty impressed. They seem to be a little more accepting of her, but they
could be even more so I think. I tried to talk with them about that. We all had a happy time
together and it was so nice. So much better than the last few Christmas’s we've had.

The gifts of Christmas had me thinking back on Pauline Sanchez’s words when we
were there that first day, that our children are precious and a gift. It is true, you do forget that
they are a gift. Because you see them in such a different way and you need to see them
differently, you need to look at them differently and to me that is the only way. I look at
Tara’s success and realize that maybe a part of that was me having to change my mind and
change my heart and see her differently. If I did not have that mind and heart and soul
altering experience and was not able to truly see her differently and give her that back when
she came back, then I don’t think she would have been able to be as successful and that’s
something that I had to continually work at and work with myself so that I didn’t fall back
into that old nature and those old ways because they become habit. When she came back into
our home it was wonderful. It was a honeymoon stage for the first couple of weeks or so but
then I found myself going back into that old nature and I had to go back to those Arbinger
books and materials to remembering that Anasazi time and what is most important. I had to
tell those negative thoughts “No, she’s changed and I’ve changed and not only is she not the
same, I’m not the same.” We have both changed. Those negative thoughts are lies and that, to
me, is the key. With time it becomes easier and easier and now it’s becoming second nature.
Those thoughts will still try to pop back up because Tara’s not perfect, she’s had a major
pitfall, and when that happened those thoughts came up and said, “Oh, she’s fallen back into
that old nature, and she’s falling and failing,” and I just say to those thoughts, “No she’s not.
No she’s not. I know her heart,” and then I remember the Word, “God looks at our hearts.”
Who am I to look at anything else but her heart? I have to look at her heart. I fail, why should
I look at her any different? He doesn’t look at me any different. He looks at my heart, why
should I not look at her heart? Her heart is good. It’s just a long process. That is true for me
too. I’m not perfect, I am so not. There are times that I will lose it and sometimes I will hang
onto it for a little while and then I’ll be remembered, “Look at her heart, look at her heart,”
and then I’ll go back and try to apologize. I think I’m to where it doesn’t go the day now.
Sometimes Tara will get really down on herself and she’ll say to me, “I don’t know how I’m doing,” and I’ll say, “Know what? I think you’re doing fantastic because look at what you were doing last year before Anasazi. You were doing drugs, you were dating a 21-year-old, you got arrested, you were with that really bad crowd, and you got shot at, and look at what you did within this year. You only made the one major mistake.” I didn’t go into the details I just said, “That’s great. You’ve done incredible. You are doing so good.” And I told her “I am so proud of you. You’re doing so great. It’s okay.” I just hugged her and we go on. She’s done great, she’s done so good that I don’t want to focus on the negative, that’s what pulls us down. I have to be that tower of strength because my children look to me to be that tower of strength because they’re the ones who go to the outside world and are faced with all of that garbage and all of those old friends and all those trials and tribulations and are struggling to just hang on and to not fall back into the ways that they were because I think for them, they are more susceptible. As adults, I think we have an easier time of being strong but they’re still like baby chicks. Tara can come home from being at school and have the most horrible day and it would be as if doesn’t have one ounce of Anasazi on her and literally can come in like she was my daughter from the past, but yet when she walks in that door I refuse to look at her in any other way except the way that I looked at her when she came down that hill from Anasazi with that glow and that radiance of looking so beautiful the way I saw her. I refuse to look at her in any other way than the way she looked when I saw her that day. I’ve got to keep looking at her that way. And she knows, my other kids know, they look in your eyes and they know if you look at them differently too, they see it. I will still look at Tara sometimes as if she is of the world, but then I remember when she came off that trail because she’s beautiful, she’s beautiful. And I remember she has found herself and she has found her spirit and she is not of this world. She is that beautiful creature of what she found there in the wild, she found herself and became herself out there. And that’s who she is and that’s who I want her to be always, always. That’s who I want her to grow into and to become.

January 10, 2003: Tim

Susan gave me the book by Terry Warner Bonds That Make Us Free for Christmas. I’ve been reading it and it has been really good. I think probably the most powerful thing that we were given during the Anasazi experience was this resource with the Arbinger Institute. I
think that probably provided us with the greatest, in terms of our parenting, relationship with all of our kids. We’ve both been reading it and we’ve really liked it. We’ve been noticing that we more regularly use the terms like collusion, horribilizing, self-justification, that whole process. That to me is really a great book. A great source of information and I can actually very regularly see it happen not only in my own life but in other peoples’ lives too, including our children. I feel like I understand some things better that they were trying to teach us at Anasazi, I’m just starting to really get some things. I guess hindsight is really 20/20. I look back now on the seminars and I just loved it but I can see now that I didn’t fully grasp it at the time. I guess I could get to a certain point, and I could understand and apply all of that, I just couldn’t get over whatever was the next step. After reading Bonds That Make Us Free I think I can see the big picture better. That’s kind of odd to me now. Until we went through everything with Tara in the past couple months and I guess until I read Bonds I did not fully get it. I think that was most frustrating to me. I had all the tools; I just couldn’t use them all for some reason.

January 17, 2003: Susan

I’ve just loved reading this Bonds book with Tim. This has been a good thing for us. Probably something we should have done earlier. I’m glad I gave it to him for Christmas. It was like giving me a present too! Anyway, I think we comprehended the book probably a lot more than we might have had we not had the Anasazi experience.

Things have been going pretty good lately. I am a little worried about this road trip though that Tara wants to take with some of her friends. I just don’t think she’s quite ready yet to do something like this. I don’t know her friends that well, and we don’t know if they’re all going to be safe or not. It is such a hard decision. We’re trying to really have a heart at peace and make the right decision. Tara has been so demanding of this though for some reason, I don’t know if she’s really thinking rational. But we’re trying to talk through it. I just got a call that Kirsten is sick and needs to be picked up from school so I’m going to cut this entry short.

January 27, 2003; Tim

Well Tara kept bugging us about this road trip thing and started to be more forceful about it. We didn’t get what was going on with her being so adamant about going on this trip,
and so I quizzed her about it. I and Susan were just sure there was something not legit about this whole trip she wanted to go on. And she didn’t really give me straight answers. We had to finally tell her she was not allowed to go. She blew up saying I don’t trust her and we got into a big argument. There just seemed to be no way around it. It was an ugly night and I still get my temper going just thinking about it. She’s not being as trustworthy as we need her to be. And I don’t know what’s going on with her other friends; I don’t know why their parents are allowing them to go on this road trip.

Seems with a lot of families, there is a lot of permissiveness, a lot of kids being exposed to detrimental influences without the parents really caring. I think these kids are tremendously influenced by our media. I think the music that they listen to is horrible. And they seem so demanding of wanting to do what they want to do. We just couldn’t find anyway to talk Tara out of it. So the next night Tara comes home drunk after being with some friends, today she’s moody and won’t talk. I don’t know if this was her way to try to get us back for not allowing her to go, or if she’s just depressed and confused. She does seem to be hurting. She seems more sad than angry. She seems to be too needy for her friends and having to fit in with them in every way. And there seems to be a lot of pulls on her to get back into all her old problems, I don’t even know how to put it.

What she could really use I think is more contact from people at Anasazi. Although right now I don’t know if she would even accept that. The aftercare has just been poor. The people are great, but the way the whole aftercare program is set up just doesn’t work. I don’t think it is enough. I remember the phone calls that were made but I don’t know that they often made contact with Tara other than at the beginning. Either she wasn’t here, or maybe she didn’t want to talk, I don’t think the contact happened a lot. Sometimes it did and sometimes it didn’t.

When Tara was out on the trail, maybe she needed more help in preparing to be home, preparing for all this stuff that has been so hard for her with friends and school and so forth. Maybe Anasazi could have prepared her more for that some how. I imagine it is the same for many families. It’s more than likely their families haven’t sold their homes, more than likely they’re not going into a new school and into an environment where they are starting over. I really think that a lot of these kids, especially like with Tara, she went back to
school, the same friends who knew her before and these are people who are compelling her to go back to doing what she was doing before. I don't think that these kids in six weeks have developed the strength and character to say no. I think that it would be really, really helpful if through some type of program or process, Anasazi could help these kids identify what maybe some of their alternatives might be. "We've made these arrangements or we've identified these resources that after you're done with this can help keep you moving in a positive direction in your life." There needs to be goals after the six weeks is over and it needs to be specific. I think maybe part of what Anasazi could do that would be real helpful is during the six weeks that they're there they help work with parents in crafting some of those for when they come back. There could be more involvement with helping parents understand specific things they can do to perpetuate that change the child have made and the parents have made. I think they do it at the 50,000 foot level by teaching them things about treating them like a kid not an object, treat them like a person not a problem, all those types of things. That helps at kind of a high level but when parents get down to the mechanics of what specifically do you do when all of the sudden you know your child has probably stepped backwards, how do you handle that as a parent.

I have to admit, as a parent I'm not always walking forward. So it's kind of hard to correct somebody when you're walking backward to get them to walk forward, so it goes back to that taking care of yourself first and getting those things straightened out. Susan says we should go back to the seminar since we haven't been to it since Tara got back. I haven't wanted to take the two days to do that, but maybe we should.

February 02, 2003: Susan:

Tim and I did finally attend the Anasazi Arbinger seminar again, and it was such a good refresher for us. Different people taught and so it was a little different. I learned more than I thought I would. I could see things that I hadn't quite seen before. I'm so glad we went. It was such a different seminar just because we as parents were in such a different place than we were the first time. We weren't so worried about Tara being in the wilderness and everything, and it was so interesting to be able to step back a bit from it all and be with the other parents that were placing their son or daughter there. It was so fascinating talking with them and a great boost for me. We talked with our Shadow briefly, and she was so nice,
quite busy and didn’t have a lot of time to talk, but kind and friendly and gave us hugs and seemed glad to see us. It was so nice being around some of the Anasazi people.

I’ve always felt anytime that I’ve been around the Anasazi people that they are genuine and caring about me as an individual, about our daughter, and that for me has been very gratifying because a lot of people that we know, they care about Tara but they don’t know how to show it at this point with her struggles. It’s so gratifying to recognize that they can love her for who she really is inside and see her more as Jesus sees her. I appreciated that they are so caring. Any time I have seen any of the Anasazi people, they have been just so genuine. The Trail Walkers aren’t going to stay there forever so it’s kind of disappointed me to see people come and go but it’s realistic and that’s just the way life is. The people we worked with were just wonderful. They were so caring, so interested in how we felt, how Tara felt, how she’s doing, all of them.

I thought what a great thing it would be for Tara and any of the other young walker alumni to have a refresher like this for them, maybe in the wilderness. I wonder if they could have a program where the youth come back once a quarter so they can feel that again. Because they get into the world and things are different. You get the letters when they are on the trail and they miss their family and they talk about their family and then they get home with their friends. We knew right up front that the friends issue is the hardest to get over. They get back into that and they quit doing the things that were most meaningful for them on the trail, reading and journaling, and talking about their lives and such. I think they just need a better connection and I don’t know how to do that because cost effective wise it is difficult I’m sure. It’s sad, I believe in Anasazi and I believe the teachings and I know that it’s helped Tara, but I know other families who have had a child go to Anasazi and it seems almost all of them have regressed and had a lot of problems after Anasazi, like they had to regress and go back. I guess they have not had to regress, they have chosen to go back to their drugs or whatever. But still it is very frustrating.

I guess I’m kind of getting into the negative here. But going to the seminar again was so good for me, so good. It helped remind me of so many things. One thing I realized from going this second time is that they tell you right up front that they expect parents to commit this time while their son or daughter is away to making their own walking. If parents put that
much time and effort and focus into it, there has to be a change. Requiring parents to do that, saying spend the time; I think that makes a big difference. They said that when we went the first time, but I just didn’t get that at first. I know I even wrote about it in this journal, but being there at the seminar again helped me really see it, especially the requirement of parents 

after Anasazi. When Tara was on the trail I read the materials, I even prayed more, we focused a lot on it. And I noticed even Tara coming off the trail that she was reading out there, learning, thinking, it was a spiritual time for her. She was spending that time and growing, and then she gets back into society and she stopped focusing and slowly fell away. The same is true of us as parents. The knowledge is still there and we can each fall back on it, but I think that’s a big part of it is telling parents what they expect of them up front. It’s a shame because we stopped reading and doing all those good things too. The seminar has helped me see more clearly that it’s a daily thing; it’s not a thing just for when there is a crisis with Tara or anyone in our family.

February 16, 2003: Tim

Going back to the seminar was a very good thing for me. We had been reading the Bonds That Make Us Free book, but I don’t know that I was investing the kind of energy and heart into really being there for Tara that I needed to. Life gets away from me so easily. This seminar experience was so interesting even the second time. I knew all the concepts, but the feel of it was so good. It helped me see more clearly how I can be a better dad to Tara. Plus I got to thinking of it more for my work too, and some changes I’d like to make with some of my clients and co-workers. I also thought about it more with all of our kids and my relationships with each of them. I think before I just had the foregone conclusion that as parents if you do it right; your kids are going to be right. If your kids aren’t right then you’ve done something wrong. Talking with all the parents at the seminar and getting to know them a little and from all of our experiences over this past year I have much more empathy now for parents who are struggling with their kids who are having problems. Now I recognize that people have the right to make a choice and are not necessarily influenced by what they’ve been taught or by the way the parents are acting. We know that Tara had a period of time on the trail and after when she was totally at peace with herself. And every now and then we see glimmers of that. I think that knowledge that she has experienced that peace, even if she’s not
at peace right now, knowing that she has had that experience gives us hope that as she matures it will be something that she will desire to always want to come back to. I think we’ve seen a bit of that in some ways. So I guess as much as anything, there is a lot of hope there and a lot of confidence that in fact will, at some point, happen. It’s much easier for me to accept her current poor choices and love her in spite of those because I have a very firm hope that the seeds have been planted and the harvest at some point will be reaped. Tara did change. She experienced a change. She knows it and you can see it by the hope that she still has at times. If she had the power within herself I think she would choose friends like she had at Anasazi. But she doesn’t have the power within herself to pick those types of friends at this point in time. I have a confidence that at some point in time the experience she had will be remembered fully because it is part of her.

Susan and I talked a little bit with the parents about support for parents after Anasazi. I thought about how that could be such a good thing to have some way to follow up with the parents because I think these parents are like us; they won’t necessarily know what to do when their kids get home, especially if they encounter some of the behaviors that are worrisome. We talked about what it would be like if at least we all had a resource, someone to call that’s been a parent and had experiences. We talked about a support group for parents, and everyone was excited about this. We exchanged email addresses, and we’re going to find a way to keep in touch. We also talked with Anasazi to see if there might be a way to video tape the seminar for parents and/or creating an interactive CD or DVD of the seminar. We’ll see.

February 18, 2003: Susan

Tim and I and the parents at the seminar had a good talk about ideas for aftercare for the parents. When they come home it would really be more helpful to have someone to talk to, more communication. Even if parents had someone to talk to about the struggles, it’s really hard when your kid first comes home. That is the most difficult part because you don’t want to go back to the way it was. Sometimes having someone to talk about it from the seminar’s point of view gives you a whole different perspective of just letting go. It would be best for parents who have had kids come home and have been home a while to be able to talk
with the others and mentor them. So we committed to do this with some of the parents there. That should be a help to them and to us.

Things have been pretty good for me and Tara. We’re much more open. We talk a lot more, we address issues immediately. We don’t let them go on. We set expectations whereas before it was just assumed. It doesn’t always happen but the conversations go on. I think it’s the openness, the talking a lot that has made a big difference. She doesn’t seem as concerned about her friends and everything as she did, and I think she’s handling the pressures better. I think I am too, I notice that I can see her as an individual more and that she has her agency. I’m not always successful but then The Choice teaches us it’s an ongoing, everyday process.

More than anything I believe I’m learning to love Tara unconditionally. I’m not perfect but I can love her even when she’s angry, even if she’s yelling at me. I can tell her that no matter what she does to me it’s not going to change the fact that I love her. I really believe that. There’s nothing that she can do that’s going to change that love I have for her. I think I have deepened my love for her just as a person. That’s something I would like to capture in my own life for other people. It would be nice to be able to feel that way about her friends. I haven’t gotten that far yet. Probably for me that’s one of the biggest things, just to be able to love and accept her as she is, that’s what all of us want anyway. And I think in spite of everything, she knows that Tim and I love her. That’s extremely important to me, that’s probably been the greatest thrust that I have wanted to be able to portray to her is that I love her in spite of the poor choices that has made. Also, I recognize that during her Anasazi experience she accepted from us our apologies for mistakes that we’ve made with her, and she accepted from us our love in a whole different way than she had for a long time prior to Anasazi. And sometimes she accepts that love from us now, even though she doesn’t all the time. I think that’s the reason that we have the hope that we do for her. I truly believe in the Anasazi experience for the kids and for the parents. I totally believe in it, but it’s not magic. I love her more now than I ever dreamed I could love her because of the experiences that we’ve had.

February 25, 2003: Tim

I just had an experience the other day and of course I’m reading still trying to finish Bonds That Make Us Free, and from the things I learned at Anasazi and at the seminar,
anyway, there was something that happened at work. There’s a guy who lives across the street from our business who is, for some reason, kind of hostile towards our business being there. He kind of drinks a little bit and carries on. Now and then he’ll come and rant and rave at me. The other day he got angry at us with some light construction we were having done and he came over and he was calling me names and telling me what a terrible person I was and on and on. I felt it was best just to leave because he was not in a good place but from what I had been reading, I chose to look at him as a person rather than an enemy and rather than react I decided to write him a note and bought him a basket of bread and that sort of thing and took it over and left it and it felt like the right thing to do and so I did it. It still feels right and I don’t feel any hostility towards him and that’s all from this concept that we’re learning about reading Bonds and from the seminar. So that’s one example of how it is influencing my life in a good way.

March 10, 2003: Susan

Things have continued to go pretty good for me and Tara. We have our ups and downs, but overall things have been going good. Seems more stable and at ease than it did for a long time. I’m not worrying about some bomb that’s going to drop nearly as much anymore. I’ve been noticing that I’m a lot more careful too about, I guess my parenting. How I am with Tara and the other kids. I’m looking at things more closely, just what is influencing me and like I wrote before being more careful about my motivations, and getting myself clear before I react. Tim wrote before about how it has been good for him to not do things because of what others will think of his parenting, but because it is the best thing for our kids. And I really believe that. I’m noticing how I’m more critical of a lot of the ways parents are, because I think we’re all too influenced by how we will appear to others. That is the whole idea of self-justifying images. Now for me it doesn’t matter what the world thinks. It only matters what I think and what my daughter thinks. It’s what feels right and what I know to be right. This is the basics and the foundation; I keep going back to that foundation in all I do with Tara.

I think one thing that is taught in our society that is negative is that there is a generation gap between adolescents and parents and they teach you that your kids are going to go wacko when they become teenagers and they teach you that teenagers don’t have a lot
of depth. I think both of those things are lies. I don’t think either of those things are true. I think teenagers have a lot of depth. That’s when they begin to pull away from the parents because they are trying to find out what they believe on their own and they just want to be separate sometimes. They want to try to have their own ideas and sometimes they take on things that they realize they don’t really believe but they just wanted to believe it because it was different. Almost like they are experimenting with new ideas and things because I believe at that time in their lives they are trying to come to terms with who they are and what they believe. All of the sudden they’re not going to take everything that we tell them as adults as truth. They are experiencing things more and testing things more but it doesn’t mean that they don’t need us and don’t want us to say things as parents. And parents should still guide, but I’m learning that if I respect Tara and not counter it and listen to her, she has some really interesting things to say. All teenagers do, they do have a lot of depth and I think in our society we counter a lot of what our kids say instead of listening to them. I’m sure there are parents that aren’t that way but I know that so many times we counter things that we feel we need to correct instead of just listening and seeing their perspective and I believe they really have a lot of depth. They are thinking about life and really questioning things. I think this really helps me see Tara more as a person, a person with thoughts and feelings and hopes and struggles just like me, just like everyone.

March 23, 2003: Tim

Our anniversary is coming soon; in fact today is the day 22 years ago that I proposed to Susan. I’ve been thinking about our relationship a lot more lately. This has been a more stable and calm time for all the Brocks and it has been so nice. I’ve been just recognizing that one phrase from The Choice in Intervention that “I am not the healer.” Probably that one phrase more than anything else has been on my mind and it makes such profound sense. I’m feeling that more. Maybe partly that is due to the fact that Tara and all of us are doing better right now, but I think it has dawned on me more too. A profound thing to remember in almost every aspect of life, that “I am not the healer.” The healing has to be an internal thing for each individual. It’s not something we can force or control.

Things have been better between Susan and me. We were talking about this recently with Christie. We haven’t written about that much in this journal, because I think it has been
real gradual and maybe we haven’t noticed it as much. But I really notice it today as I’m thinking back on our married life together. There is more understanding. More patience. More recognition of the need to treat each other as people rather than as objects. More awareness of my own personal lacking of being able to do all those things correctly. More recognition that it’s a life-long process to apply the principles. I would say that the parenting pyramid, the ordering of the pyramid and where it places the personal responsibility first and foremost on the individual, has been very important to me and has been a very positive factor in my life since learning it. I don’t think I grasped it at first. I think I thought, well yeah that’s a good idea. I should treat my relationships that way. I should also be nicer, I should also get more exercise. I should also give more community service. The wisdom of it didn’t hit me until I actively started using it in my life, especially with Tara, but also with Susan. There’s very little I can control in my life but I can control myself. I can choose to see others as people, and that really is the foundation, if you don’t do that then others cannot follow. That helps me so much as a parent. And as a husband to Susan it reminds me how critical our relationship is. It is the second most important tier of the pyramid. That makes a difference for me in our relationship. Now Susan and I talk it out. I used to be really certain that I was right. I think that maybe part of it is just life experience, after awhile you realize that you’re not infallible and you’re not immortal and you’re not indestructible and all those things as you get older. I’m very grateful for Susan, grateful for her patience with me through everything.

April 7, 2003: Susan

Tim did a really nice thing for me on our Anniversary yesterday. We celebrated it with a whole plan of activities he had for us. It was a very special Anniversary. We talked through dinner about the changes we’ve both seen in our relationship. I was touched by the words he wrote in his last entry about us. I agree with him. I think the Anasazi experience, which was for our “troubled teen” daughter ended up being a real bright thing in our marriage. I think our communication has really improved. I think Tim was able to see things in him that he didn’t see before and I think our relationship is better—which of course when you improve the mother and father relationship then everybody wins. So I think that communication between the two of us really improved, from that Arbinger starting point, I
think that we have just taken step upon step and we’ve actually done other things since then that have just added to our Arbinger experience, like in our counseling with Christie. I might add that she really liked the book *Leadership and Self-Deception*, and she also attended the seminar as a part of a thing Anasazi held for mental health professionals. All of this has really helped to open communication between me and Tim. It seems so stupid when he loves me and wants the best for me and I love him and want the best for him and yet we keep these feelings inside and we get angry at each other because then he’s not meeting my needs and I’m not meeting his needs and all we have to do is ask. It’s just as simple as that with Tim. All I have to do is ask, and he will say, “I am so sorry. I never at all knew you felt that way,” and I have felt this way for 20 years. And all I had to do was say, “I feel this way because of this, and I don’t appreciate when you behave like this because I just react like this...” I think that as the principles are applied, as we worked individually to apply those principles, I think that they have made a difference. I personally think that it’s again something that you have to go back and review because it’s easy to slip back into the way that our relationship had been for years which needed improvement. But of course with these principles, you’ve got to use it. You’ve got to apply them. You just can’t say, “Oh I’ve learned it” and that’s it. I think as we individually go back and reflect on that we realize it’s not just for our relationship with Tara or the other kids, but it helps our relationship, it’s for our relationship with each other, and for our relationships with anybody that we come in contact with.

This I think has helped make a difference for Tara. When she realized that we were both trying to see the best in each other all of the sudden she could see, “Maybe there’s some unity here between these two people” and I think she recognized that we were trying to be on the same page and work together and respect each other, which was probably sort of new for Tara to see. I think it was a positive thing for her and it still is when she sees it. I think it’s brought us a lot closer in our relationship because we have been seeing what we added to the picture of the problems and that has changed our own behavior. We’ve worked on our marriage a lot and it’s paying off.

April 24, 2003: Tim

It has taken me a long time to get to this journal, so I read over Susan’s last entry. Her thoughts have me thinking a lot about how I see my parenting different now too. I think both
of us have a more critical eye about our parenting. I especially see a lot of things in our society about parenting that just aren’t right. For one thing, I see a lot from older people, older than us, that there is a lot of judgment of kids today. There is a lot of criticalness towards children and a lot of, “Well what’s wrong with them?” and “They’re this or they’re that.” I don’t agree with that. I think that that’s real sad to these kids. What’s been really refreshing is the kids who were and still are overseas fighting this Iraqi war. These kids are in their early 20’s, they’re the “generation Y” and the integrity that these soldiers exhibited while they’re out there fighting the war, and they’re saying that these soldiers are probably the equivalent of the soldiers who fought in World War II. They’re of that caliber. I think we take them for granted. I don’t think that we give them the respect that they deserve. I think that’s wrong.

Another thing is the schools. Tara had such a hard time going back to school after Anasazi, and a big part of all that were teachers that treated her as an object, as a problem. I think that culturally when you look at organizations they seem to be tolerant, but then you look at the schools and you look at all that they’re unwilling to accept in terms of behavior in children, kids can’t be kids today. I think if I were a youth today doing some of the crazy things I did as a kid, I’d probably be in jail, or expelled or something. They don’t seem to allow kids to be kids today.

One thing I think is hard, especially for new parents, is there are so many competing ideas about parenting and family life today. At the time I was establishing or determining how I was going to be as a parent, probably the way society defined a parent and things you should do as a dad and things you should do as a mom probably impacted things that I would do as a parent. I don’t know how helpful that was to think that way. A lot of those most common ideas in our society are just trained into people, they’re probably recommended or referred but I think they are so often just diametrically opposed to the way things really need to be and that’s why we’re having so much trouble in society today with parents and youth.

Of course it is not just society. I think a lot of parents kind of get off on the wrong things, the wrong emphasis sometimes. I can see where I’ve done that, especially with work. You work hard and you go out and try to do the things that you do with the rationalization that you’re doing it for your family and in some respects you’re really not. But you’re really
doing it for yourself and for the gratification that it brings you individually as opposed to how it's really helping your family. You say you're able to give to your children things that you never had but you always wanted. That's my rationalization today anyway, because that allows me to live with it. But I think my kids probably would have benefited from me being home two hours a day more than having quads in the garage and a boat in the backyard. I think that if I had the maturity and my priorities I probably would have made different choices. It seems to be the general practice and standards today are that there's not much parenting happening. Sometimes parents have to say no. Those are the tough things that you've got to do as a parent. I think that parents are way too concerned about themselves and a lot less concerned about their kids. I think that they are more worried about their self-gratification than they are about their children and I think that that's real sad. I have kind of drawn the conclusion that adults seek self-gratification and put themselves and their needs before that of their family. And it may be because of economic reasons, it may be for social reasons, it may be for status reasons. That pursuit has pulled me away from the family too many times to count which I'm sure was a negative impact on our family. I guess I want to be a lot more careful about the motivations and ideas that influence my parenting.

June 11, 2003: Susan

I guess this journal has Tim and I in a more reflective mood about our parenting. I got thinking about more things after reading what Tim wrote. One thing that I think is important is to recognize that children can come out of the same situation in a different way and agency comes into play in all of the situations. I think about that Arbinger principle in *The Choice in Intervention* "I honor agency." Sometimes some friends have come to me who know about Tara and Anasazi and they'll come to me and say, "I've got a problem with my kid and this is what's going on and how can I do it," and I go into these ideas about letting go and not trying to control or force and asking them "Does it really matter?" and "If it isn't that important why don't you let them choose and maybe you won't be fighting so much." But they don't want to hear that. Maybe my thinking about parenting is too a fault because it makes me more critical of the other ways. But it's hard, when you have people saying, "Your kid needs to do this or needs to do that," and you don't fit that parenting program, that way of thinking. Tim
and I have noticed that there is a lot of pressure or people looking down at you like “Your family’s weird.”

Other parents say to me things like “Well all the parenting books say do this and do this,” and I just say to them, “I think you should trust your own feelings for what your child needs and when they need it rather than read all the books.” I know that there’s no certain recipe, it’s individualistic to each child and it’s not a recipe. It’s hard to explain it, when I’m trying to tell it to my mom too, I still don’t think she understands where I’m coming from. She sees parenting as formulaic, do B when A happens type parenting. I tell my mom that God looks at our hearts and there are times when, yes, there are consequences and circumstances bring about certain consequences and we have to serve the consequence, good or bad. And then there are times when we don’t have to serve the consequences. And that’s the same as our children and it just happens that way. It’s so hard to explain, but what I do know is my kids have been better. Tara has been better. They’ve just been a lot better.

I had a good experience with the girls the other day. We sat down at the table for sort of an object lesson for Kirsten and Kylie. I asked Tara to tell us about the heart at peace or heart at war jars she learned about at Anasazi. We were drawing them and making them guess which was the heart at war and which the heart at peace. And it was like a family thing and they guessed it and I left it on the dry erase board for them so they would know. There are times when I’ve sensed that there are things going on and instead of saying something I will draw those jars and just simply put them up on the board and they’ll know and they won’t say anything and things will change.

July 5, 2003: Tim

Some parents called us yesterday about our Anasazi experience. They have a son who is having a lot of problems and they are considering Anasazi, and they wanted to know what is different for us in our relationship with Tara, and what made the difference. This was a big question. Susan and I actually talked with them for a long time. We even told them about this journal and even read some things from it to them. I told them how we let Tara make a lot of her own decisions and how for the most part, especially since March, she’s made good decisions and I think because it’s her decision, and she feels more trust from us. That’s something that we didn’t allow her to do before. And even after Anasazi for a while we were
trying to let her make her own decisions, to honor her agency, but we were holding back inside, not trusting her and she could feel that. I also told them that I've recognized Tara's individuality a little more. I'm probably willing to accept what I would consider incorrect choices without as much aggravation and recognizing there are some things you can control and some things you can't. The things that you can't control, she has an element of responsibility. I guess I haven't owned Tara's problems as much as I did before. I explained to them that when your kids hit those teenage years it seems parents want to be controlling because they've always made all of the decisions and it's hard to let go, but that controlling doesn't work. You get a son or daughter who starts rebelling or starts getting out of the way and everything parents do is going to be the wrong thing, it's just going to make it worse. That's really what happens. So that's the difference in parenting. The very things you feel that you have to do to solve the problem are the very things that make it worse in most traditional parenting ideas. That's exactly what happens. Because of your answers or your parenting style, you decide to try to do those things to fix the problem, you're more controlling, you step up the heat on the collusion or whatever you do and then the child rebels even more and it becomes that vicious spiral that's going downward. That's the huge difference in parenting approach – in the traditional way of parenting you can't fix the problem and the reason that Anasazi is successful is that it absolutely turns the traditional things on their ends and says, "You have to let go, you have to see your children as people, you have to." It takes all those things and turns them completely around. For us that's the difference between night and day. It's a huge difference. I wish so much that we could have known, and really understood all of this more as younger parents.

I told these parents that called that if I were to give an evaluation I don't think that the training gets home quite enough to the parents to the degree that they have to change. It's taught but it's hard to internalize and maybe you only do it after some period of time. It involves them as parents. Any changing that they have, literally 100% of the changing that involves them, is up to them. Their lives aren't going to be different because of what their kids do. Their lives are only going to be different because of what they do. I think we knew that, I think that's what we were taught but we haven't followed through on it like we should have. It takes awhile for that to really hit home. Because you really come into Anasazi
because you want somebody else to change. So the transition to recognize that you can’t force a change but any change you make is internally, it’s a slow process. I told them also that it would probably be good if I went through those exercises from the seminars every month. Things are so ingrained in our society that we have to step back again and start thinking about what we’re doing again, not slip back into those areas because you’re surrounded with society’s views which are different than this which really works. I told them what Bill and Nancy told me last August, which is that the parents have to be committed to the program just as much if not more than the kid. The child part is one part but the parents’ part is the other part of it, the other side of the coin that’s got to be there. Both together work. Either one of them will work to some extent because it’s so much better than what is happening but if you have both of them working together then I think it’s a real formula for success.

July 20, 2003: Susan

That call that we got from that couple was really good for me and Tim. It helped us bring together what has been most important to us with the Anasazi experience. I’m glad we’re writing about it. The mother asked me a lot about the cost. I told her our experiences with how Anasazi was very understanding and didn’t push the cost and helped us find a way to do it. I also told her, ultimately what does the cost truly matter when you end up getting your child back and your child ends up getting themselves back and they get themselves on track. When they end up finding themselves for the first time, like when I talked about before when they get that new birth and finding who they truly are. Not the way the world sees them, not even the way parents have viewed them and scarred them and jaded them to be because of all the things they have done and have been built up. We have labeled them and they have a chance to discover who they really are and they have that freedom and that chance to have a new birth and find out who they really are. There are no restrictions and what they have – that is priceless. To me that is beyond any price tag, it is beyond any amount of money. To me you cannot put a price tag on that. I don’t care if I were to pay for that for the rest of my life. It does not matter, it still has the effect it has on me, on my daughter and my household. That is priceless, you cannot put a price tag on it, you just can’t.
I could tell this mother is quite scared. Sounds like they’ve been through a lot with their son. So I told her that now there are no knots in my stomach. There is no looking over my shoulder every time I turn around to make sure Tara is doing what she’s supposed to be doing. I am free. I explained to her though that this took a while for me to reach this point. And for Tara too. It is a process. But parents can be free, kids can be free. Maybe for a while they will back slide or not do exactly what you want them to do but finally they figure out their way. As long as they get counsel and you talk to them and be open to where they are in their lives, they eventually turn around. They find their own way in their own way.

I also told her that I think there’s been a definite difference in our marriage. I explained to her that I think it’s been hard for us to see it because it’s gradual. If we changed overnight we would know. As you learn more and more and put the principles into practice the change is gradual. Because I know that our kids, both the boys and girls have said that me and Tim fought a lot. Not fought in an ugly way but we argued a lot. And most of our arguments were over child rearing techniques. That’s where our biggest collusions were, how to discipline our children or not discipline them or whatever. We don’t do that nearly as much anymore. We just see more eye to eye on things. Once in awhile we’ll have a little argument over how somebody is taking care of something or a situation with the kids. I think the more you learn to be out of the box in every relationship then all relationships in the family improve. But I really think it’s a gradual thing. It’s not something you can say, “Wow, look at the difference in our family” over night. I was just telling Tim after our talk with this couple and reading over a lot of this journal that I have been able to see that we really have changed. It’s been wonderful because I started thinking about everything that’s happened and it helps me pull it all together. I can see how we’ve grown and it makes me feel better that we’ve made some progress and that our family life has changed.

I also told the couple the same things as Tim, that for Anasazi to be helpful parents have to be intimately involved. I told them “my daughter has changed and we changed.” And I told them that our change made a bigger difference. But I said, “It’s not a guarantee.” It’s been a journey, two steps forward, one step back, and really trying to focus more on the steps forward has been most important for us.

July 26, 2003: Tim
In church last Sunday I realized some things about Susan that really touched me, and that I think really relate to this whole journal and our Anasazi experience. I've noted that there has been a marked change in Susan's sensitivity toward others. She has been working in a volunteer position at our church where she sends birthday cards to all the women in the congregation, and gets to know each of them. I've never seen anybody be more sensitive to people in need and fulfilling those needs in order to see that those needs are met. I think a lot of that is a direct result of *The Choice* and a better understanding of the value of an individual. I know that care that she gives to others is seen by Tara and the other kids and will have an influence on their lives. So I think there is a change that has taken place with others that she has the opportunity to have contact with that you could easily put as irrelevant, and that are now people. Unfortunately I don't think I have done as well as my wife.

August 8, 2003: Susan

We are celebrating one year since Tara started Anasazi!! I can't believe a year has passed already! This has been a big year for us. I'm so glad Tim and I have been writing our ongoing thoughts and feelings about it all in this journal. We were talking about this year celebration with Christie our counselor. She was so proud that we have kept this journal going. We've let her read a lot of parts and we've actually talked a lot about the same things in our journal in our counseling sessions. Christie gave us a little assignment for this journal. She wants us to reflect on what it has meant to us to write in it through this year. What it has meant for our relationship with Tara and with our Anasazi experience. She read the things I wrote in my last entry about how this journal and talking with those parents have helped me see the changes more clearly in the last year. So Tim and I are going to write some of our comments about this.

First I wanted to say something about an experience I had this morning which I think fits with all this. I wasn't even thinking about Anasazi or the Arbinger seminar, and I had one of the activities come to my mind in the middle of an argument with Kirsten. I didn't even get out the book, I just thought, "Oh, I can see where I've been in the box." So I started to draw it out on the paper and my feelings until I could see the collusion cycle better. That was really surprising to me because it wasn't sitting down and going to the exercises in the book.
I was just thinking about the problem I had with Kirsten and all of the sudden it just went “Whoosh.” I was saying, “Why do I keep having this pattern and why do I keep doing this?” And as I did that I thought, “Oh, that’s the seminar, I’m kind of in the box here.” And I thought, “Oh, then if I see that I’m in the box, does that mean I’m out?” and then I thought, “Not really unless I can see her as a person.” It’s really funny because the whole process went through my mind. I drew the little squares to diagram the collusion, “I do this, they do this, I think this and so they think this in return” and you could see the cycles and so I thought, “Well then how am I seeing Kirsten?” and then I thought, “Well then, if that’s how I’m seeing her and she’s doing this in response to what I’m doing, how is she really?” Then I thought, “This is really how I want to be seeing her” and it just flowed. I was really surprised and at the end I thought, “Then still what do I do?” and I thought, “Oh, I can be responsive to what’s really there, not what I thought was there.” I was really surprised. I have never had that happen before without actually looking at the material. That was really good for me.

So as for this whole journal experience, I think it reinforces good memories, especially when I go back and read it. It reinforces what we’ve learned. I liked doing it because it was pulling me back to things that I needed to be pulled back to. I think I was usually pretty responsive when I wrote, not always, but for the most part. I like writing about my experiences. My life is the way it is now because of all these experiences. I think I’ll stay with it. And Tara’s doing pretty well. She’s doing much better than she had been for a long time. Some things are still hard for her. Some things I still worry about. I really don’t know what will happen in the future for sure. Of course some things are still hard for me, I’m sure Tara and others sometimes worry about me. But we’ve come a long way. She is an amazing young woman and I’m so glad to be her mom.

August 8, 2003: Tim

My reflection on this whole year is that I can’t imagine what it would have been like if we hadn’t had the Anasazi program and had the seminars. I can’t imagine. I really appreciated and thought it was a wonderful program. Everything about it that we went through was wonderful. A great experience for us and I know it was a great experience for Tara. Even though it wasn’t the answer to all of her problems it was a very significant piece in her progress. And I know it will be something that she can look back to and it will make a
difference in her life. The amount of confidence it gave her to take care of herself will really make a difference more and more as she faces challenges in the future.

For me it’s been interesting and it has made me really think. It’s made me actually give some thought to things that I probably wouldn’t have. The whole experience of writing has had me actually assess it all a little more closely than I would have otherwise. We tend to go through life and take things as they occur. We don’t ever really stop and analyze them or assess them. So for me it’s been an opportunity to step back from it all and write my thoughts and feelings. It has been a very worthwhile experience.

Tara is doing pretty well. She may have some problems and maybe more pitfalls. She still has a lot to learn, there’s room for growth. And like Susan said, that’s probably true for me too. But we’re doing pretty well. We’re hopeful.

Even after the analyses here one thing yet remains to determine the truthfulness of this research, and this will have to wait for the real effects this research will have. For me, a profound explanation of what determines the quality, the rigor, and in the end the truth of the texts of qualitative research is given by Lincoln and Denzin (2000):

The truth of these new texts is determined pragmatically, by their truth effects; by the critical, moral discourse they produce; by the “empathy they generate, the exchange of experience they enable, and the social bonds they mediate” (Jackson, 1998, p. 180). The power of these texts is not a question of whether “they mirror the world as it ‘really’ is” (Jackson, p. 180). The world is already constructed through narrative texts... There is no mirror of nature. The world as it is known is constructed through acts of representation and interpretation. (p. 1055)

Will this research have a positive influence on the Anasazi foundation, will it have a continued positive influence on the parents interviewed, will it have a positive influence on other parent alumni of Anasazi, will it have a positive influence on parents of adolescents in general, and will it have a positive influence on researchers in the parenting of adolescents? These questions will be answered beyond the end of this research project by the real effects of the research on the consumers of it.
Parents' Narrative or Visual Presentations

As noted in the criteria for quality, I wanted to give the parents a way to directly contribute to the dissertation, without it filtering through my interpretation. I invited them to make a presentation, either visual or narrative, that would capture for them a bit of the feeling they have in their parenting and in their relationship with their adolescent after the Anasazi experience. I invited them to do this through a letter and in person at the end of the follow-up interview (Appendix E). Unfortunately only two of the parent’s chose to do this project. I had hoped that there would be more interest from the parents. All of them committed to do this, but in the end only the two sets of parents completed it. And this was after following up with them numerous times through email and telephone. Below are the presentations submitted to me along with a description of each supplied by the parents.

The first is a sand painting from Thomas and Laura. They worked on this together, and wrote a detailed description of it for presentation here. Most of the symbols of their sand painting are symbols used in the “Path of We” in the Badgerstone Walking Book (see Appendix A for a description). The symbols are actual ancient Native American hieroglyphics from a couple different cultures and historical time periods. The presentation of the symbols in this manner and for this purpose is their own creation.
HEART AT PEACE

Achievement of a heart at peace embodies a process with many facets. The sand painting's focal point is the heart at peace represented by the vase (heart) and the white (new beginnings, higher world, spiritual purity) diamond (peace).

Everyone (legs of ram) struggles in our earthly (brown body of ram) journey (head and horn of ram) to decrease the evil (black) and increase the good (white). We begin the journey encumbered (black between parallel lines), hiding the bad (upside down black
arch) and progress from bad (black rear of arrow) and cross over to good (red front of arrow). Ultimately we become unencumbered (vacant space between parallel red lines) and enjoy light and a new day (right side up red square).

We must always have a vision of peace (white triangles connected by open parallel lines) as we ascend (yellow forward spiral). We are helped on our journey by being connected with others (turquoise double pointed line) and talking (copper circles connected by a line).

The blue diamond background represents life and spiritual happiness which is the backdrop for a heart at peace. The heart at peace is also surrounded by and radiates sacred light.

As parents of two daughters who have walked Anasazi’s paths, the vision of peace and recognition that life is a journey allow us to have a heart at peace even within the ebb and flow of life’s journey. Staying connected and talking are key elements in our personal journey with our own need to cross over from hidden recesses of an encumbered life to the light and openness of unencumbered association found in a heart at peace.

The following is a poem from Stacy. She wrote this after reading the Journal Story as a part of the member checks. She wrote a message in the email that contained this poem that I would like to include portions of as an introduction to the poem:

I have read a lot of your story. I haven’t quite completed it but plan on doing so. I also forwarded it to our son. I cried tears as I read many parts because of the memories and lessons learned. I even had a moment of truth when I realized how not trusting our son when he returned home from Anasazi brought him pain and perhaps discouragement. As I pondered that awakening I thought of our Father in Heaven and the trust he places in us his children. He knows all of our weakness’ and he knows we will walk backward at times but yet he trusts us to discover and learn through his help and others and find our way to success and happiness. . . . As I pondered these
thoughts I realized how good it made me feel to know God trusts me. I realized how important it is to place trust in our children. . . . But each finds his path a little differently and at his own pace. I am learning to help others, not discourage them as they follow their path. My words can show confidence and encouragement or they can be filled with shaming, critical words. Here is the poem I wrote for your project. Good luck in your presentation. Your research has helped me in many ways as I continue to learn. Thank you for including us.

The Walking
Our journey begins simply each turn brings change.
Our path full of choice constant goals within range.
A twist on the trail causes a sob of despair.
Feeling alone, knowing not, caught unaware.
A hand reaching out with sure firmness of grip.
Guiding with care each treacherous step of our trip.
A new road is paved one not known before.
With gentle help we learn to endure.
Gaining patience and insight with each crevice and plain.
Hanging tight together through occasion pouring rains.
Retracing steps often and a falling backward.
Once again forward trying not to be lured.
The path is straight but yet we wander some.
Looking behind we see how far we've come.
The walking continues spanning a lifetime.
Line on line, understanding sweet lessons sublime.
LIMITATIONS

There were a few limitations in this research that are important to take note of. These are limitations that potentially affect the overall validity or trustworthiness of the research in minor ways. First, the sample of parents I interviewed were all members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints except for Jennifer. Though Anasazi has a long history of serving the LDS community, currently approximately only one-half of their clientele are LDS. They have a wide variety of clientele from all over the United States and Canada, and many religious traditions are represented. This sample of parents therefore was not perhaps as representative as it could possibly have been. There were many limitations on how I selected the sample as detailed in the “Participants” section, and I was in the end not able to completely control for the sample being mostly LDS. Qualitative methodologies do not require a statistically representative sample of respondents to be valid or trustworthy. Generalizability in the statistical sense is not the purpose. Therefore I do not believe this mostly LDS sample threatens the validity or trustworthiness of the findings of this study, but it does potentially skew or narrow the applicability of the results to some degree that is very difficult to tease out. It may depend on the consumers of the research. Non-LDS consumers will have to judge this research personally and morally to determine if it is applicable and meaningful, if it speaks to their own personal experience as parents or their personal experiences working with parents.

Second, as I mentioned in the section “analysis of after-interview journals” a longer engagement with the parents may have allowed time for even better relationships to develop between myself and them, and this may have added to increased validity or trustworthiness of the research since it centered in validity as ethical relationship. Although I ended up having a positive and relatively close relationship with these parents, it is interesting for me to wonder about what a longer time spent with all of them, and perhaps more interviews, may have meant to the findings.

Third, as noted in the section “Does the Anasazi Program and do the Arbinger Ideas Apply Equally Well to Mothers and Fathers, Boys and Girls?” In retrospect I wish the methodology would have incorporated more clear methods for addressing the gendered nature of these mothers’ and fathers’ experiences of their relationships with their adolescents
after Anasazi. I believe this is an area where future research is needed. It would likely be quite interesting to find out more from these or other parent alumni about how their gender, their adolescent’s gender, the gender of the Anasazi staff, and the gender of the researcher effected and influenced their relationships and parenting experiences with their adolescent, with the Anasazi program, and with the qualitative interviews.

Lastly, as noted in the “member checks” section under “criteria for quality” I had great difficulty successfully soliciting feedback from the parents on their reading of the Journal Story and completing the visual or narrative presentations. Thomas and Laura, Stacy and Kevin, and Angela read over the Journal Story and gave me feedback. Thomas & Laura and Stacy did the visual or narrative presentation and sent them to me. Three other sets of parents agreed to respond to both member checks, and after a number of emails and phone calls they have not as of this writing. I knew that not all the parents would respond to these two member checks, but I expected that a lot more of them would have. These were not the only member checks in the research and the other member checks did allow for direct feedback from all the parents (particularly the evaluation questions done at the end of every interview). The lack of participation in the member check of reading and giving feedback on the Journal Story means that the final writing of the Journal Story is not as accountable to the parents as it could have been and as I wanted it to be. I do not believe any of the parents had strong objections or disagreements to the Journal Story, but I am also not confident that they all read it or even looked at it. The lack of participation in the visual or narrative presentation has me concluding that this was likely too much of an assignment to give the parents. I think I asked too much of them to complete this, and perhaps some other type of participation, with the same ends, that would have been easier for them to do could have been devised. Overall the limitations of this research point to important possibilities for future research both with parent alumni at Anasazi, as well as exploring more fully the ethical demands the researcher-participant relationship requires in terms of ethics as validity in qualitative research.
CONCLUSION

Through my experience working for Anasazi as a family therapist ("Shadow") I saw many times over how parents who placed their daughters or sons in the program ended up having an experience of personal change themselves—often profound. I also saw that many youth (though not all and not even a majority) who had a transformative experience through Anasazi sadly continued to have sometimes serious problems after returning home. As a personal side note, while working at Anasazi I found out that one of my mother's friends had a son attend Anasazi a number of years ago. After attending Anasazi this son continued to have very serious problems in his life, from drugs, to running away, living homeless, and even spent time in jail. Yet this mother noted to my mom that even though her son continued to have many problems, she has always been deeply grateful for what she learned and what she gained from Anasazi. In this research I wanted to find out more about parents' experiences with Anasazi. A lot of my work at Anasazi focused on the youth, their time in the program and after. But always right in the immediate background to each youth was her/his parent or parents. Their experiences seemed to mediate and affect their youth’s experience both in the program and after. And in the same light their youth’s experience seemed to mediate and affect their own experiences as parents. I wanted to know more about how their relationship and their parenting of their adolescent was influenced by Anasazi, if there was a difference from this program what made that difference, and what made their change possible. In this research I have explored this with these 15 parents who gratefully opened their minds and hearts in sharing their experiences, feelings, and opinions.

These parents had differing levels of satisfaction with Anasazi, but all of them acknowledged positive effects of the program on them and their parenting. Since I was asking these parents about their personal experiences, parenting, and relationships and since the training program for parents at Anasazi incorporates the relational ethics work of philosopher C. Terry Warner, the criteria for quality of this research centered in acknowledging that validity and trustworthiness would be primarily established by the ethical quality of my relationships with the parents. According to Warner's' philosophy were we mutually responsive to one another as people, mutually seeking to avoid the resistant way of being and collusions with one another. Throughout this research I have attempted to reveal
my own situatedness methodologically, and I employed a number of practices of moral-relational accountability to help ensure an ethical relationship with the parents throughout the qualitative research. I believe I did engender ethical relationships with each of these parents, and I believe the findings and results of this research are a true (though necessarily limited and partial) account of these parents relationships with and parenting of their adolescents following the Anasazi experience.

These parents spoke and shared openly in these interviews. They spoke to six major themes in addressing the research questions. First the parents spoke overwhelmingly about the influence of the Arbinger seminars and materials on their relationships with their adolescents, and all their relationships. The Arbinger ideas were the center of their Anasazi experience. They spoke to how these ideas took time to make sense and to incorporate but that they were powerful influences. They all said that seeing their adolescent as a person changed or changes their relationship with them. The Arbinger ideas encouraged these parents to have a reflective approach and more self determination in their parenting and the Arbinger ideas had important influences on not only their parenting but also their marriage, family, friends, and work relationships in varying ways. Many of the parents concluded that they wished they would have had the Arbinger seminars when they were new parents.

Second, each of these parents noted specific changes in their relationships that were not due to the Arbinger seminars, but instead to the Anasazi program experience, meaning their involvement in Shadowing, their relationship with Anasazi leaders and staff, and being in the wilderness with their adolescent for the last three days of the program. In this theme the parents commented about how the Anasazi experience itself took time to sink in for their youth and for them, and this significantly influenced their relationship with and parenting of them. Within this theme most of these parents spoke of how positive and warm and sometimes moving their relationships with their Shadow and/or other Anasazi staff were a great benefit to them personally and influenced their relationship and parenting of their adolescent.

Third, most of these parents related that Anasazi was a spiritual experience for them. For most of these parents, including the one non-LDS parent, the Arbinger teachings and the Anasazi program related directly to their own religious faith and their spiritual beliefs. Many
of the parents spoke about greater and profound feelings of unconditional love and forgiveness toward their adolescents and toward others. Some of the parents also spoke of what they felt were spiritual experiences with some of the Anasazi personnel, namely their Shadow and/or Ezekiel and Pauline Sanchez.

Fourth, these parents all spoke about how Anasazi helped them adopt (to differing degrees) a more reflective and critical approach to their parenting. In this theme the parents related how they are more opposed to using force and being overly-strict and how their relationships with their adolescents have become more compassionate and intimate, with less worry or fearfulness for them. In this more reflective, critical, and compassionate approach to their parenting, these parents talked about how 1) they are now not as concerned about how they will be perceived by others as they focus more on the needs of their children, 2) they have more genuine respect for the humanity of their children, and 3) they also noted that the Anasazi program was a freeing and/or liberating experience for them in terms of their parenting approach.

Fifth, all of the parents talked openly about the disappointments they had with the Anasazi program and where they feel it needs improvement. In this theme they all were disappointed in the way the aftercare services were structured and gave a number of suggestions for improving it. They also all acknowledged that they and any parents with a daughter or son at Anasazi need to utilize all of the Arbinger and Anasazi ideas and activities on an ongoing basis and stay intimately involved in the treatment program both during and after the program. Some of the parents were concerned about Anasazi tending to generalize their treatment approach rather than modifying it appropriately to the specific and unique needs of the families that participate. Lastly, many of the parents wished the program would have involved more specific preparations, for them and their adolescent, for the transition of their adolescent back to home.

Sixth and lastly, all of the parents spoke openly and often movingly about how these interviews were in Warner's term a responsive experience for them. They spoke of how grateful they were that the interviews helped pull them back to the responsive experiences they had through Anasazi and particularly with their adolescents. This helped them be more reflexive about their current relationships with their adolescents and in the end more hopeful
about the present and future family relationships as a whole. The responsive experiences the parents had in the interviews are the primary support for the validity or trustworthiness of their responses and this research which was centered in validity as an ethical relationship between me and the parents.

I identified possible implications of this research for the Anasazi Foundation in three areas. First, for the Anasazi Foundation I suggested that the Arbinger ideas are the core part of the parents’ Anasazi experience and that the Anasazi program would be better served by acknowledging this and structuring the program to more adequately meet this in terms of work with parents during and after the program. Second, I listed suggestions from the parents and myself concerning how the Aftercare services could be improved to meet the needs these parents identified. Third, from these interviews and my own experience working for Anasazi I suggested that Anasazi be much more careful to ensure philosophical and practical congruity between the foundational philosophies of Anasazi and the program intervention practices.

I identified possible implications of this research for wilderness therapy and other therapeutic intervention with parents by highlighting what were the most significant change factors that Anasazi provided for these parents’ parenting and relationships with their adolescents and encouraging other programs and clinical work with parents of adolescents to incorporate these principles into their treatment models.

I also identified possible implications for the parenting of adolescents by suggesting that relational ethics (i.e. Warner’s philosophy, “way of being”) mediate and directly influence both “parenting determinants” (for example Belsky, 1984) and “parenting styles” (for example Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Studying parenting determinants and parenting styles does not go deep enough, parents’ “way of being” (resistant or responsive) toward their child both sets the foundation for and mediates the influence of parenting determinants and styles. Second, parents’ own “way of being” along with cultural discourses about parenting are both important influences on the likelihood of adolescents experiencing severe storm and stress. Parents can perhaps most significantly mitigate the storm and stress their adolescents might experience by actively seeking to be responsive to the humanity of their
adolescents on an ongoing basis, and by being critically aware of the cultural discourses about parenting that most influence their own parenting.

I then included an interpretive analysis. The purpose of this analysis came from noticing a very common pattern in the data of these parents having difficulties lastingly incorporating the Arbinger ideas into their daily lives and relationships. This pattern was also common with people I worked with (parents and colleagues) at Anasazi and in my own life as well. I discussed this pattern as involving six phases; I then presented a theoretical interpretation of this common pattern by appealing to the Arbinger idea of self-justifying images (SJIs) as well as social constructionism as an interpretive lens of critique. SJIs are at the heart of resistance, and therefore at the heart of the Arbinger ideas and Warner’s philosophy. SJIs are about our identity, and the way our fundamental appeal to our identity is the most common place in which our resistance to the humanity of others is enacted. SJIs represent a difficult concept to understand and for this and other reasons they are difficult to dismantle. Social constructionism offers an approach to parenting that discusses the intimate role of cultural influences in parenting. From a social constructionist approach I discussed the role of dominant cultural discourses and the role of institutionalized social and structural constraints on parenting ("cultural constraints"). SJIs are constructed and enacted by parents within the cultural contexts and moments of their lives, and as such they are directly informed by dominant cultural discourses about identity and relationships. I suggested that for parents to effectively and lastingly integrate the Arbinger ideas into their parenting requires that they actively seek to dismantle their own SJIs. This dismantling requires that they actively seek to dismantle the cultural constraints that inform their SJIs and that limit them in their parenting. This two-pronged approach to effectively and lastingly incorporating the Arbinger ideas into one’s daily life and relationships represents what happens at phase 6 of the common pattern identified. Parent participants Jim and Sally were highlighted as exemplifying this phase and two-pronged approach. This two-pronged approach represents a process that takes place over time and is ever ongoing as parents meet the cultural and historical moments of their parenting and the responsiveness to the humanity of their children that parenting requires.
I decided to also present this research data in an alternative form as a means of triangulation in qualitative methodology. For this alternative presentation I wrote a fictionalized “Journal Story” that was created primarily through using the actual quotations of the parents in the interviews and putting them all together into an organized narrative. It has been my hope that this story represents the collective voice of the parents interviewed, and also narratively represents the main findings of the research project re-told in a more poetic way. As a narrative I hope that it is more personal and perhaps in some ways more apprehensible and meaningful reading for any consumers of this research. I particularly felt that the Journal Story may be most beneficial to other parent alumni of Anasazi. It may also be of benefit to parents considering Anasazi for their adolescent, and even to parents of adolescents in general (although such parents may need to have some familiarity with the Anasazi program and the Arbinger ideas in order to understand the story).

The action component of this research was its positive effects on the parents I interviewed and on me. In addition it is my hope that this research spurs further action as the entire writing contained in this document might have a positive, meaningful, and worthwhile impact on those that read it. I also hope that all that is meaningful in this research to readers of it will then in turn encourage readers toward some type of positive moral action that will directly or indirectly benefit them either as parents of adolescents or as those who in any way work or interact with parents of adolescents.
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APPENDIX A

Explanation of the Anasazi Foundation Program for Youth and their Parents:

Youth between 12-17 years are admitted to the Anasazi Foundation program most
often by their parents. Anasazi markets through various media, the internet, and by word of
mouth. The 2003 cost of the program was $375 per day, all inclusive. The program cost is
often offset for families by scholarships and other funding sources Anasazi makes available
to families needing it. Parents usually call wanting to find out more information about the
program, or to have their adolescent enrolled. Many of the parents feel they are in a crisis
situation and require immediate intervention for their adolescent. Anasazi admission
coordinators are trained to help these parents calmly and carefully weigh their options and
make an informed decision concerning enrollment. Many youth enrolled do not want to come
to Anasazi and at first are upset about being required to complete the program, sometimes
very upset. Some parents prepare their adolescent well in advance regarding the admission;
some do not tell their adolescent until the day of admission and use an escort service to take
their child to the program. Anasazi tends to be a more successful and worthwhile experience
for the youth and the parents when the parents are able to prepare their son or daughter
beforehand, and help them have voice in the decision to enroll in Anasazi. Of course, in some
situations, parents feel strongly that this is not possible and that the only way to have their
child successfully enrolled is by force. Anasazi personnel work with whatever the situation
is, and I was constantly amazed at how professionally and lovingly these situations were
handled. During two and one-half years, I witnessed approximately three situations where a
youth completely refused admission and was subsequently not admitted.
Perhaps one of the great strengths of the Anasazi program is what happens on admission day for the youth and the parents. Anasazi is a 42-day minimum program. Admissions to the program are every two weeks by groups, only rarely individuals. The admission day is a crucial part of the whole experience, as it sets the initial tone for the youth and parents. Many wilderness therapy programs utilize what is sometimes called a “chaos model” of intervention. The chaos model is similar to how the military basic training is often described “break them down, and then build them up right.” In wilderness therapy utilizing the chaos model, the youth are confronted physically, emotionally, and psychologically by the program, with the intent to bring them to a state of chaos which can then allow for their issues, and their more “core self” to come forward, thus placing them in a state of readiness for lasting intervention. Anasazi does not utilize this chaos model. Instead Anasazi direct care staff (called Trail Walkers because they walk the trail with the Young Walkers and know the “trail” i.e. the program they are “walking”) are required to love the Young Walkers. To simply care for them in the spirit of cooperation, compassion, and encouragement. When the youth are taken to the Anasazi building, they are introduced to many staff who all great them with friendliness and warmth. They are then entrusted to one or two Trail Walkers who chaperone them through the admission process. The Trail Walkers befriend the Young Walkers and specifically seek to not resist them. The Trail Walkers are required to utilize the Arbinger principles and see these Young Walkers as people, people with hopes and dreams, fears and struggles, people not unlike themselves, and people who are just as legitimate as they themselves are. Though this is a requirement, it is a deeply moral and personal thing asked of the Trail Walkers, something that they can only accomplish if they themselves personally desire to do it. I have been told from many alumni Young Walkers and parents
that this admission process, specifically meeting and being with the Trail Walkers, was one of the most meaningful and memorable aspects of the program. The Trail Walkers then follow a fairly structured protocol in helping the new Young Walker pack up her/his belongings that will be taken on the trek. The parents received a list of supplies to bring beforehand, and each of these things is laid out for the Young Walker as well as the Anasazi gear they are given – a sleeping bag, a canvas sleeping bag cover (called a burrito), a wool blanket, a tarp, a canteen, pack rope, a small bottle of all-purpose soap, a small bottle of chlorine (to purify water), lip balm, synthetic sinew, a comb, and a tooth brush. The Trail Walker then takes all the clothes that the Young Walker brought with them and then shows the Young Walker how to make their Anasazi gear and their clothes into a backpack, and carefully guides them through this.

If the Young Walker has items that are contraband for Anasazi, the Trail Walker asks them not to bring them. If they refuse, the Trail Walker simply makes note of this. Usually Young Walkers do not bring contraband items simply because they did not know they could have tried to, or they leave them when the Trail Walker asks. Occasionally, the Young Walker may bring something like gum, candy, make-up, a mirror, a lighter, cigarettes, or even drugs. Instead of resisting the Young Walker and getting into a power struggle with them, the Trail Walkers wait until their arrival on the trail to invite them to give these items up. I was often amazed when I would watch the Trail Walkers interact with these youth on the admission day and packing up. Their genuine kindness, friendliness and incredible enthusiasm has a powerful effect on these youth. The Trail Walkers know keenly that where their heart is with these Young Walkers on admission day will have a direct influence on
their relationship with them throughout that week. They seek to set a tone of love, kindness and acceptance right from the beginning.

Trail Walkers are not informed about any of the presenting problems of the youth at any time, and Anasazi tries to ensure that Trail Walkers do not ever know the problems or diagnoses of the Young Walkers. The Trail Walkers’ job does not require they know this information, and it is through experience that Anasazi has learned it is best for them not to know. Sometimes Young Walkers tell their Trail Walker this information, but because Trail Walkers are focused on seeing them as people, not as diagnoses, it rarely interferes with their work. Trail Walkers also seem to gain the confidence and friendship quickly of the Young Walkers simply because they are not much older. Most Trail Walkers are in their early twenties and seem to have a natural and easy rapport with these youth. Throughout the Anasazi walking, the Trail Walker’s job is to ensure an environment that powerfully invites awakenings (the term used at Anasazi for the Young Walkers’ and parents’ most meaningful discoveries, learnings, insights, epiphanies, personal growth, and relational growth) in the lives of the Young Walkers.

While they are packing up, and before they leave for the trail, the Young Walkers meet individually with the nurse for a nursing assessment, and with the clinical director or one of the Shadows (staff family therapist) for a psychological evaluation. They then are all taken to a local doctor to receive a physical exam, blood work, and doctor approval to be in the program. The assessments are primarily to insure the safety of the Young Walker and for legal requirements. The psychological evaluation and nursing assessment also give some important preliminary information about the physical and psychological well-being of the youth. The parents fill out a detailed social history prior to admission, and this along with all
the assessments goes into a detailed psychological evaluation written on each youth. These are required for insurance and third party payment, for accreditation standards, and to provide a preliminary treatment plan for each Young Walker. After all of this is completed, the Young Walkers and their Trail Walkers (a minimum of 3:1 ratio, often 2:1, 1:1, or even 1:2) load into a vehicle and drive from one and one-half to five hours to their first camp location in the wilderness roughly northeast of the Phoenix valley.

When they arrive at their location, which is literally in the middle of a wilderness area, they unload the vehicle and it returns to the city. The Trail Walkers and Young Walkers then usually hike just a short distance to their first camp. Next is a very significant part of the Anasazi program. A Trail Walker takes each Young Walker individually and conducts a “blanket stepping” with them. The blanket stepping is a ceremonial ritual that signifies advancement into new phases and responsibilities in the program. The central metaphor involves moving from one phase, or one way of life into another. In this ceremony the Young Walker is invited to step from an old blanket that represents one’s past onto a new blanket which represents one’s commitments to making right choices and taking on appropriate responsibilities. The Trail Walker lays out the two blankets on the ground, the Trail Walker sits on the new blanket with all of the Young Walker’s gear, and the Young Walker sits on the old blanket. The blankets are about six inches apart. The Trail Walker then “makes a speaking” about the Anasazi program, and talks specifically about the central metaphor of walking forward. Walking forward is a metaphor for making good or correct choices. The Young Walkers are instructed that they have agency and are encouraged to choose to walk forward. Walking backward is a metaphor for making bad or incorrect choices. The Trail Walker then explains that there are many things that can hinder the Young Walker’s walking
during the program, such as contraband items which are explained, and emotional burdens such as hatred, bitterness, and resentment. The Trail Walker then invites the Young Walker to lay down on the old blanket any thing that will hinder their walking in the program at Anasazi, and metaphorically in their walking in life. If the Young Walker is known to have some particular contraband, they are specifically invited to lay it down. If they do not lay down contraband that they have, the Young Walker will have many other similar steppings where they will again be specifically invited to lay it down. The Young Walker is then invited to step onto the new blanket and begin a new walking with Anasazi. Usually Young Walkers like this ceremony, or are willing to tolerate it. Its purpose is to help set the tone for the experience, and to ritualize the beginning step of the program.

Anasazi does not perform any strip searches, nor do they use any physical force or control, except in only very rare circumstances. Since it began in 1988, there have only been 4 incidents at Anasazi where the use of force was required to physically “take down” and restrain a Young Walker. In addition, there have been no deaths or permanently debilitating accidents at Anasazi or any of the wilderness survival groups conducted or overseen by Larry Olsen and Ezekiel Sanchez in the 34 plus years. There have been a number of incidents of close calls, some broken bones, and various injuries, but all those youth and staff have recovered to full health.

After the blanket stepping, the Trail Walkers show the Young Walkers how to unpack their belongings, how to make a shelter with their tarp, and how to use their sleeping bag. They are instructed on how to stay warm or cool as needed depending on time of year. The Young Walkers are also instructed about personal hygiene, and forest service requirements concerning proximity to water, fire, “leave no trace” camping, burying human waste, and
burning used toilet paper. The Young Walkers are given their first week food pack. It consists of rice, whole wheat flour, whole oats, whole wheat macaroni, powdered cheese, bouillon, powdered fruit drink, salt, baking soda, and raisins. After the first week, the Young Walkers receive the following in their food pack each week through the end of the program: lentils, rice, whole wheat flour, cornmeal mix, whole oats, whole wheat macaroni, shelled sunflower seeds, powdered cheese, powdered milk, powdered fruit drink, bouillon, sun dried tomatoes, raisins, two carrots, one potato, one apple, one whole garlic, brown sugar, baking soda, and salt. They are instructed to drink a lot of water, much more than they are usually used to. Hydration is a key element of physical well-being and safety at Anasazi. Hydration is the first line of defense against and treatment for almost any physical illness the Young Walkers might experience. Making sure the Young Walkers are properly hydrated is thus a crucial aspect of the Trail Walkers' job. The wilderness areas Anasazi uses are in the high desert areas of Arizona, where the sun rays are strong, much stronger than what many of the Young Walkers from out of Arizona are used to. Even those from Arizona are not used to being out in it all day long. The terrain is very diverse. It ranges from approximately 4000 feet to 1500 feet elevation. The Young Walkers are at higher elevations in the summer, lower in the winter. They experience a lot of harsh weather from wind, rain, to sleet and sometimes even snow, and of course a great deal of sunshine. There are small mountains, streams, rivers, rocks, creek beds, hills, cactus, and wildlife. Arizona is one of the most abundant states for plant life; there are more varieties of plants in Arizona than almost all other states. The high desert is also quite unique, with a lot of vegetation and some wildlife that are rare and some that are only in Arizona.
The parents arrive at Anasazi with their youth on admission day; they have to arrive before noon. They also are greeted enthusiastically by the Anasazi staff, and staff members have the same requirement to see them as people and be friendly, loving, and compassionate. They have paperwork to fill out, then they are given a chance to say goodbye to their daughter/son. Later that afternoon, after their son/daughter has left for the wilderness, they attend a two and one-half hour parent orientation meeting that is most often conducted by Ezekiel Sanchez, one of the founders. In this orientation, Sanchez gives an overview of his and Larry Olsen’s work with youth over the past 34 years, and the development of the Anasazi Foundation in Arizona. He also shares the “spirit” of the Anasazi program which is clearly something very personal and meaningful to him and that continues to keep him motivated and genuinely caring and loving of each new family that comes to Anasazi. Most parents and youth really like Sanchez. He is a Totonac Indian from Mexico; he dresses in some Native American garb and hair style, and is a genuinely kind and loving man who enjoys speaking and being with people. He and his wife Pauline are the parents of seven children. Pauline is Navajo and sometimes greets new parents and Young Walkers as well. She is often regarded as a spiritual and loving person. Ezekiel often credits much of the romantic Native American ideas and traditions he and Olsen used in constructing the unique Anasazi program to Pauline Sanchez’s input and her Navajo heritage. Some of the uniqueness or magic of the Anasazi Foundation is clearly due to Ezekiel and Pauline; many parents in this study commented on that in the interviews. In 2002 Ezekiel and Pauline were honored as National Parents of the Year. In the orientation, Ezekiel is open and very loving toward the new parents. He and Pauline are often moved to emotion being with the new parents and pledging their commitment to serve them. Ezekiel is also clear to encourage the
parents to take an active role in the program as Anasazi requires this commitment from the parents.

Admissions and the parent orientation are always on Thursday. The Shadow that is assigned to each family also introduces herself/himself and meets with the parents individually on that Thursday. The Shadows share the spirit of their work with the parents, pledge their commitment to helping them and their daughter/son, and intentionally invite the parents to make this 6 weeks a “walking” of their own, a time of personal reflection, change, forgiveness, and seeking forgiveness—a time for a turning point in their own lives, particularly in their relationship with their daughter/son. The Shadow also does a blanket stepping with each parent couple or parent individual. The parents are specifically asked to write their Young Walker at least once weekly, and to attend weekly family therapy sessions with their Shadow (in person or by phone depending on where they live). They are also required to attend the last three days of the program in the wilderness with their Young Walker. Some parents are divorced and sometimes remarried. Anasazi invites all interested parents to take an active part in the program and tries to work with families to ensure that all parents and step-parents and other guardians are invited to take active participation, especially if the Young Walker will be living with them following the program.

On Friday and Saturday the parents then attend the Arbinger relationship seminar. Friday’s part of the seminar is called *The Choice*, and is usually 8 hours long. It is Arbinger’s flagship seminar, the same as may be offered at any Arbinger seminar. The principles taught in *The Choice* are given in the section under C. Terry Warner and the Arbinger Institute under Methodology above. On Saturday the parents attend *The Choice in Intervention* which builds on the principles of *The Choice* and applies them specifically to any situations
involving intervention in a person’s life, such as Anasazi. These seminars are often a pivotal part of the parent’s whole experience with Anasazi. It was my experience that many parents mark the Arbinger seminars as the turning point for them in their relationship with their Young Walker, and often in their relationships with their spouse, ex-spouse, family members, friends, co-workers, and others. The parents in this research also clearly indicated this. The seminars involve workbooks, and the parents are given specific readings and activities by their Shadow to do on a weekly basis throughout the program. Parents are encouraged to spend at least one hour a day on their own “walking” in the Anasazi program.

The shadowing sittings (family therapy sessions) are somewhat similar to typical family therapy sessions. The Shadows focus on the principles of the Arbinger seminars, the readings and activities, and especially the parents’ relationship with their daughter/son. The Shadows’ work is tailored to the unique circumstances and needs of the family, with an emphasis on working with the families very actively and closely through the six weeks. Each Shadow’s main purpose is to see the parents as people, and to invite responsiveness in the parents’ relationship with their Young Walker, their spouse and/or the other parent(s) of their child, and with all people in their lives. The Shadows utilize primarily the Arbinger principles and the unique ideas of the Anasazi Way in the therapy process. Because the Arbinger principles do not constitute a psychotherapy model, Shadows utilize other therapy models, ideas, and resources that are commensurate with the Arbinger principles. The Arbinger principles and the Anasazi Way are always the center of the psychotherapeutic modality of the Shadows.

There are three phases to the Young Walkers 42 day walking, the Rabbitstick walking, the Badgerstone walking, and the Dawnstar walking. The Rabbitstick walking is the
first week of the program, Badgerstone is a minimum of four weeks, and the Dawnstar walking is the last week of the program, the last three days of which is the family camp where each Young Walker and her/his parents are together. The basics of outdoor survival and primitive living skills are taught in Rabbitstick. There is a short psycho-educational curriculum booklet called the *Rabbitstick Walking Book* that is completed by each Young Walker. When they have completed this, they are "stepped" into the Badgerstone Walking, where they most often join up with other Badgerstone Walkers who have been in the program for a longer time. The "stepping" is a ritualized way of advancing the Young Walker into the next phase, and it is attended with unique Anasazi Foundation rituals.

The Badgerstone Walking is the bulk of the Anasazi program. Through what is called the *Seven Paths of the Anasazi Way* Young Walkers are taught lessons of life, relationships, family, friends, choices, and spirituality. These "seven paths" of nature (fire, wind, water, stone, plants, animals, and "we") offer symbols, metaphors, and real life examples and teachings about life, choices, commitments, spirituality, and relationships. There is also a text entitled *The Seven Paths of the Anasazi Way* (Anasazi Foundation, 2002) which is a story of a fictional ancient Native American character learning the lessons and wisdoms of these seven paths. The Young Walkers also complete a psycho-educational workbook called the *Badgerstone Walking Book*. This contains seven chapters that correspond with the seven paths, and has about 220 questions that are short answer, journaling, activities, and projects for the Young Walkers to complete. If they complete this workbook, they can receive up to two and one-half high school credits in five areas: Physical Education, History (American History or Native American History), English, Arts and Crafts, and Science (Biology, Earth or Environmental Science). The Young Walkers are strongly encouraged to complete the
Badgerstone Walking Book, to write to their parents at least once weekly, and to write in a personal journal (which they keep to themselves). They are not allowed to write to or receive mail from anyone outside their family while in the program.

The Young Walkers hike four days of each week, and “lay-over” for three days. They usually hike Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and layover the other days. Each week they are hiking toward a “final destination” or “final D” which is the geographical destination chosen beforehand that the groups are hiking toward for that week. The hikes are usually between 10-20 miles per week. It is very rugged and rigorous off-trail hiking, which usually involves going up and down hills and mesas, walking through creek beds, crossing rivers, and bush-whacking. Final D is also a metaphor for both the Young Walkers’ and parents’ goals, plans, commitments, and destinations they are seeking to accomplish or arrive at in their relationships and family lives. The hiking days are usually from about 4 hours to 9 hours. If the group lags behind or if a Young Walker refuses to hike, they must make up that time the next hiking day, and may end up hiking five or six days total. Trail Walkers seek to not resist the Young Walkers in any way and to continue to maintain a caring, friendly, and helpful relationship with the group. They seek to work out conflicts and difficulties, and usually conduct nightly group discussions called “fire circles” where helpful and encouraging topics are discussed or where particular conflicts and problems are worked out. Trail Walkers receive a minimum of four hours of training weekly to assist them in accomplishing their jobs. This training is done before they go out and while on the trail.

Teachings, rituals, activities, and trainings unique to Anasazi are utilized by the Trail Walkers to accomplish their work. These are all unique creations of the founders of Anasazi and other Anasazi staff through the years. Anasazi tends to change the specific details of the
program often, always seeking to revise and rework the program in such a way to keep it a living experience, fresh, and inviting the input of the current Anasazi staff to tailor it according to their best collective thought. The basic structure of the program though does not change much now as it has been developed and modified over a number of years. One significant ritual the Young Walkers have is the receiving of an “Anasazi Name.” The naming is a one-on-one ceremony where the Young Walker is given an Anasazi Name (similar to Native American names) that symbolically and metaphorically represents her/his character, abilities, talents, experiences at Anasazi, awakenings, growth areas, and relationships. The purpose of the name is to invite and inspire firm commitments to make right choices, to walk forward in life. Most Young Walkers treasure their Anasazi name, and it becomes a good reminder to them of their experiences and changes at Anasazi that they can always return to.

Throughout their walking, each Young Walker meets individually once weekly with their Shadow. The Shadows are in the wilderness area for two consecutive days of each week. They meet in a “pow-wow” with each Young Walker and one or more of their Trail Walkers and then one-on-one with each Young Walker. These sittings are similar to individual therapy sessions. The Shadows use primarily the Anasazi Way the Young Walkers are learning through the program for their teaching, and they also use the Arbinger principles as the central guide to their therapeutic relationship with each Young Walker. The Young Walkers are not taught directly the Arbinger principles, but some of the psycho-educational curriculum incorporates the basic ideas of *The Choice*. The Shadow brings letters to the Young Walker from their family. The Shadow also shares with the Young Walker and with the parents the relevant content of their sittings with each. The Shadows purpose is to love
the Young Walkers, see them each as a person, and invite responsiveness in the Young Walkers' relationships with their parents, family, friends, etc. Each Shadow tailors their Shadowing sessions to the unique situations and presenting problems of the Young Walkers and their parents. The Shadows also collaborate closely with the Trail Walkers and parents in a team effort to provide the most appropriate care, compassion, and intervention needed for each Young Walker.

The Dawnstar week starts with the Young Walkers being “stepped” out of the Badgerstone walking into the Dawnstar walking. The Shadows determine when the Young Walker is ready to begin his/her Dawnstar walking. The Shadows attempt to determine whether the Young Walkers are genuinely willing to walk forward at home with their parents, family, friends, etc. In addition, consideration is given to whether the parents are willing and able to have their daughter/son back in their home. The Shadows also consult with the parents and the Trail Walkers to make this determination. Most Young Walkers complete the program in 42 days, approximately 10-20% end up needing to stay longer, which is most often done in two week increments. Since its inception Anasazi has experimented with differing lengths of stay, from four weeks to as many as 16 weeks, and the current collective wisdom is that six weeks works best for most Young Walkers. The Dawnstar walking is a time of reflection on their whole Anasazi walking. At this point the Young Walkers’ hearts are softened and they are ready to reunite with their parents and be back at home with their families. They are also very excited to be back to modern life, showers, “regular” food including junk food, television, movies, music, etc. They complete a Dawnstar Walking Book which is primarily journaling and writing their commitments, their experiences, and their most significant awakenings. During this week the Young Walkers
take charge of guiding their expedition to their final D. The Young Walkers plan the hiking route, use the GPS, and make minimum twice daily radio call-ins to the Ridge Walkers, who are the back-up Trail Walkers who oversee the groups, travel in a vehicle to coordinate all the groups with the base office, and provide emergency services. During this final week, the Trail Walkers walk with the Young Walkers as members of the group as much as possible, with less of a hierarchy. When they arrive at their final D, the Young Walkers are each stepped into their own individual family camp. This is done on Saturday, and then each Young Walker spends two days alone in their family camp before their parents arrive on Monday, called a “lone walking.” The Trail Walkers visit the Young Walkers just twice daily during their lone walking, and primarily just to maintain safety. During this time the Young Walkers complete their Dawnstar Books and prepare their camps for their parents.

The crowning event of the Anasazi program is the reuniting of the Young Walkers and their parents. This is often an emotional experience for all involved. Anasazi staff members keep their distance from this experience and allow the families their privacy. The Young Walker then is purposely in the position of taking care of their parents’ physical needs until they all leave on Wednesday. This is often a fun time for the families, even though it is often physically difficult for the parents. The family camp is a time of a new beginning, recommitment, forgiveness, and a “talking of the heart.” On Wednesdays the families are together stepped into the walking that they will make all together at home.

Anasazi encourages parents to continue with local aftercare services such as individual and family counseling. In some instances, it is necessary for the Young Walker to continue in another program such as a boarding school depending on the severity of the situation. Anasazi also provides an Aftercare program that is run by former Trail Walkers. It
is not therapeutic aftercare, but does provide both alumni Young Walkers and their parents with a minimum of monthly contact with Anasazi aftercare staff for one year following their intake date. The aftercare staff members also invite both parents and the adolescents to call them on an as-needed basis to utilize the aftercare resources according to their needs. For parents, the aftercare staff members orient their services around the belief that the parent alumni are the best aftercare available for their adolescent, and they offer their services as help, assistance, and support to these parents in their parenting and their personal lives. The aftercare staff members are not therapists or counselors. The purpose of the aftercare staff is to provide both alumni Young Walkers and parents with a chance to reconnect to the experiences and awakenings they had through Anasazi. Thus, the staff members help them to return to the principles they learned and make course corrections for any struggles or problems they may be having.
APPENDIX B

Formal Agreement Between Myself and the Anasazi Foundation Concerning Ownership of Data.

The qualitative interview data, and any other data collected in the qualitative interview study conducted by Martin J. Erickson will remain the property of Iowa State University. This includes the audio and/or videotaped interviews, the electronic and hard copy transcriptions, and any other data that is obtained from the parent participants in this research. The Anasazi Foundation shall have access to all such data including audio and/or videotaped interviews, the electronic and hard copy transcriptions, and any other data that is obtained from the parent participants in this research for its (Anasazi’s) internal use. Anasazi will seek approval from Iowa State University, which shall not be unreasonably withheld, prior to publishing such data or using it in any public forum.

______________________________  ________________________________
Lance Wells                        Mike Merchant
Vice President of Operations      Chief Executive Officer
Anasazi Foundation                Anasazi Foundation

______________________________
Martin J. Erickson
Principle Investigator of research study
APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Document

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Study: Parents’ Relationships with their Adolescents Following the Anasazi Foundation Experience

Investigators: Martin J. Erickson, M.S. (Ph.D. Candidate)
Dr. Ronald Werner-Wilson, Ph.D. (Co-Major Professor)
Dr. Sedahlia Crase, Ph.D. (Co-Major Professor)

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to for me, Marty Erickson, to conduct interviews with you to allow you to speak about your experiences of parenting after having your adolescent at the Anasazi Foundation. This exploration interview will focus on your experiences as parents, your experience at Anasazi, and any influence (positive or negative) Anasazi may have had on your parenting and relationship with your daughter or son. I will also ask you about your parenting and relationship with your adolescent before Anasazi, what you feel were the cultural influences on it, and how you would compare and contrast it with the Anasazi Way. You are being invited to participate in this study because you have been chosen from parents who have had an adolescent at Anasazi in the last 2 years.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation will involve you and your spouse (or just you individually) being a part of a face-to-face interview with me in your local area. It is expected that the individual interview will take approximately 1 to 2 hours. I will also likely hold a focus group interview with other parents that I’m interviewing in your state (approximately 3-4 parent couples or individuals total). The persons in the focus group will be persons I also interviewed face-to-face. If you agree to the face-to-face interview you are not required to participate in the focus group, it is completely up to your discretion. It is expected that the focus-group interview will take approximately 2 hours. The focus-group interview will take place in the same location.

The interviews will be audio tape recorded and complete written transcripts will be made of the interviews. The audio and video tapes will be erased following the completion of the research (December '03). The typed transcripts will remain in ownership of Iowa State University.
RISKS

While participating in this study you may experience the following risks:
It is possible that you may experience talking about these ideas as emotional in some way,
and I invite you to share with me the emotional nature of your experiences. This could potentially be emotionally upsetting, unsettling, or difficult to some extent.

BENEFITS

If you decide to participate in this study there may be no direct benefit to you. There are some benefits you might receive from your participation. This may be a positive and enriching experience. This research is research that has not yet been done in a formalized way. This research may potentially benefit numerous other parents, both those who may receive or have received services from Anasazi. You may have the opportunity to give voice to some very important issues regarding parenting and the Anasazi Foundation. It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society and parents at large by providing ideas about parenting adolescents and ideas for improving relationships between parents and their adolescents.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study. Part of your participation will involve a review and correction of my use of your interview(s) in the write-up of the research. If the research is accepted for publication, and only if you desire, I would be glad to indicate you in a byline identifying and thanking you for your participation. Also, if this research is published as a book, you may be given the opportunity to share in the benefits of that publication, which may include royalties, credits, etc. accordingly.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies, the Anasazi Foundation, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.
To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken:

- You will not be required to provide your last name in the interviews.
- The interviews will be conducted in rooms where confidentiality can be assured.
- I will be glad to answer any questions or concerns you may have about confidentiality before the interviews begin, and after they are completed.
- You will be assigned a unique code that will be used on the transcripts instead of your name. These codes and the identifiers will be kept with the data.
- Only myself and my Co-Major Professors (Dr. Ron Werner-Wilson and Dr. Sedahlia Crase) will have access to the data. The audio and video tapes and hard copy transcripts will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. The digital copy of the transcripts will be kept on a password protected computer file. Audio and video tapes will be erased after completion of the research (June '03).
- If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. For further information about the study contact me, Marty Erickson at 602-793-6266; marty6@iastate.edu. If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the Human Subjects Research Office, 2810 Beardshear Hall, (515) 294-4566; meldrem@iastate.edu or the Research Compliance Office, Office of Research Compliance, 2810 Beardshear Hall, (515) 294-3115; dament@iastate.edu.

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the signed and dated written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant’s Name (printed) ____________________________

(Participant’s Signature) ____________________________ (Date)
APPENDIX D

Invitation Letter to Parent Participants

Dear [parent(s)]:

Hello! I am one of the Shadows at the Anasazi Foundation. I'm writing to let you know that I will soon be conducting interviews in your area with parents who have had an adolescent at Anasazi. This letter is an invitation for you to participate. The interviews are the central part of a research project I’m doing for my dissertation in Marriage and Family Therapy at Iowa State University. I hope this will be a positive, strengthening experience for you if you agree to participate. I’m also hopeful that this research experience will provide invaluable guidance to our work at Anasazi.

I will conduct one individual interview with each parent couple (or parent individual) who agrees to participate in this research. I will also be conducting a focus group interview with you and other parents that I’m interviewing in your state (approximately 4-8 parents total in the focus group). You are invited to participate in the focus group, but you are not required to even if you agree to the one-on-one interview, it is up to your discretion.

- The interviews will focus on your experience with Anasazi. Specifically what your experience as a parent and your relationship with your adolescent child after having experienced the Anasazi program. I will especially be interested in your experience of the “Anasazi Way” and how it may have influenced your parenting and your relationship with your adolescent, both positively and negatively.
- I will conduct the interviews at (Anasazi, your home) on [dates] at [times].
- The individual interviews will take approximately 2 hours.
- The focus group interview will also take approximately 2 hours.

The interviews will be audiotape recorded and videotape recorded and complete written transcripts will be made of the interviews.

Every effort will be made to ensure you complete confidentiality in these interviews. You will not be required to provide your last name if you prefer not to. The interviews will be conducted in rooms where confidentiality can be assured. Your name will not be associated with the research findings in any way, and your identity as a participant will be known only to us the researchers. We will also provide time to discuss confidentiality at the beginning and the end of the interviews and I will be glad to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

Do not hesitate to ask any questions about this study either before participating or during the time that you are participating in the interviews. I will also solicit your help in the direction and focus of the formal write-up of the research as it pertains to your interview(s), and I will share with you the findings after the research is completed.
It is possible that you may experience talking about these ideas as emotional in some way, and I invite you to share with me the emotional nature of your experiences in the interview. This may be a positive and enriching experience and it could potentially be emotionally unsettling or distressful as well.

There are numerous expected benefits from your participation. This is research that has not yet been done in a formalized way. This could potentially be significant research that may benefit numerous other parents, both those who may receive or have received services from Anasazi, and parents at large. You may have the opportunity to give voice to some very important issues regarding parenting and the Anasazi Foundation.

Please be aware that you are free to decline to participate in these interviews, and if you agree to participate you are free to choose to withdraw from this research project at any time or for any reason without any obligation and without affecting your relationship with Anasazi or with me. It is my hope that you will feel at ease with this experience and open to sharing any of your thoughts and feelings about it at anytime during the process.

Please let me know if you’d like to participate in these interviews. I will follow up this letter with a phone call to you. I very much look forward to talking with you and walking a bit with you through your experiences in parenting and your relationship with your alumni Young Walker.

Kind regards:

Marty Erickson
Anasazi Foundation
(800) 678-3445
(480) 892-7403
APPENDIX E

Narrative or Visual Presentation Invitation and Explanation Letter

Dear [parents]:

Thanks again for doing these interviews with me. Your thoughts, feelings, and responses are greatly appreciated. It has been great for me to walk a bit with you in your experiences as parents and your experience with Anasazi.

From doing these interviews, I have thought a lot about your experiences with Anasazi. I have learned a lot about your relationship with your son, and your parenting of him. I want to provide you a way to share this even more from your own experience, so that my research is not only my analysis of the interviews. Therefore, I would like to offer you a special invitation.

I would like to invite you to make some kind of small “presentation” that would capture for you, either visual or in written, spoken, or musical form, anything that would richly describe even just a “slice” of the differences you feel in your relationship with and parenting of your son that you would attribute to your Anasazi experience.

This invitation is not for a big project, actually something small, something that would not take much time. This may be something you have already made or written. This would be something different or in addition to what you have already shared in the interviews. Here are some ideas.

Ideas for a visual presentation

This would be any type of visual art that would capture and/or be symbolic of this for you. Please feel free to do literally any type of visual presentation that you can think of. Here are some examples of what you might do:

- a photograph
- a photograph collage
- a scrapbook page
- a drawing
- a painting
- a poster
- a collage
- a video
- a crotchet or stitching
- a flower or garden planting
- a room decoration
- a computer graphic
- a woodwork piece
- a metalwork piece
- a clay piece or pot
- a jewelry piece
- a dance

Anything visual that would be symbolic of the changes you have felt in your relationship with and parenting of your son that you would attribute to the Anasazi experience.

Ideas for a written, spoken, or musical presentation

This would be anything written, spoken, or musical that would capture and/or be symbolic of this for you. Please feel free to do any kind of presentation that you can think of. Here are some examples of what you might do:

- a description of these changes
- a brief story of your experience
- a fiction about it
- a poem(s)
• a collection of letters
• a short play
• a short story
• a scripture or a collection of scriptures

• an audio presentation
• a song
• a melody
• a musical arrangement:
• a music collage:

• a collection of parts of the transcript from the first or second interviews

Anything written, spoken, or musical that would be symbolic of the changes you’ve felt in your relationship with and parenting of your son that you would attribute to the Anasazi experience.

A couple other ideas. As you may remember, the seminar room at Anasazi has a number of photographs and pictures. However, many of these are in need of updating. We would like something fresh to put on the walls that could be a conversation piece for all the new parents and everyone who visits Anasazi. In addition, if you do a written/spoken/musical presentation, we would love to provide it in audio or written form for new parents and visitors of Anasazi, or that could be utilized by seminar presenters in the Arbinger Seminar or in the new parent orientation.

Whatever you choose to do, please give a written (or audio or video) commentary or presentation on it.

Please be creative with this in whatever way you want to be. I also would like to encourage you to have this represent not just the positives, but the difficult or negative things also as you wish. I would like to encourage you to work on this together, or for each of you to do something separate, whatever you choose. Again, feel free to keep this simple and something that would not take much time.

I would like you to have this completed by July [12th or 19th] 2003. I would really like a copy of it or a picture, audio, or video description of it. This will be a part of this research, and a part of the dissertation report. You may also choose to gift this, or a copy of it, to Anasazi if you would like. I will contact you on or after July 12th and we will make arrangements for me to receive this presentation or a copy of it from you.

This is not required, and you may choose to not do this if you wish. If you do this, thank you so very much, it will be deeply appreciated.

Thanks!
-Marty Erickson

602-793-6266
801-763-0361
marty6@iastate.edu