Research Topic/Focus:

***"To explore and understand the re-occurring experience of being lost over a
lifetime."***

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Abstract   My co-researcher has a lifetime's worth of memories involving getting lost, starting from her earliest memory (when she was 4 years old) of being lost on a beach to more recent memories of being lost in a Castle in France. The dichotomy of the childlike excitement of starting off on each adventure is always diminished by finding herself lost and disoriented. For each occasion she finds herself lost, there are feelings of panic, anger, rage, frustration and shame: Anger at those who lost her, shame at getting lost and frustration that getting lost is a repeated occurrence in her life. My co-researcher shares how she is lost whilst walking, in different buildings and on car journeys. She explains how stupid and pathetic she feels after each time she gets lost, and talks about the childhood occasion when she was rescued and found. In my co-researcher's sharing of her re-occurring experience of being lost, I felt her contrasting emotions at the start and end of each journey, finishing with her feelings at the end of the interview of how she had been found. This is my co-researcher's story of being lost and being found.

Introduction and literature review

There seems to be little qualitative research or writing on the phenomenology of being lost – maybe because it's something that everyone experiences but in a different way. It's seems apparent to me that some people get lost more than others, and I wanted to explore why this was the case. Current research suggests that it maybe to do with Attachment Behaviours.

The literature I reviewed I categorise into 2 areas:

1. Literature to do with the phenomena of 'being lost'
2. Attachment theory and Transactional Analysis literature about separating off and getting lost
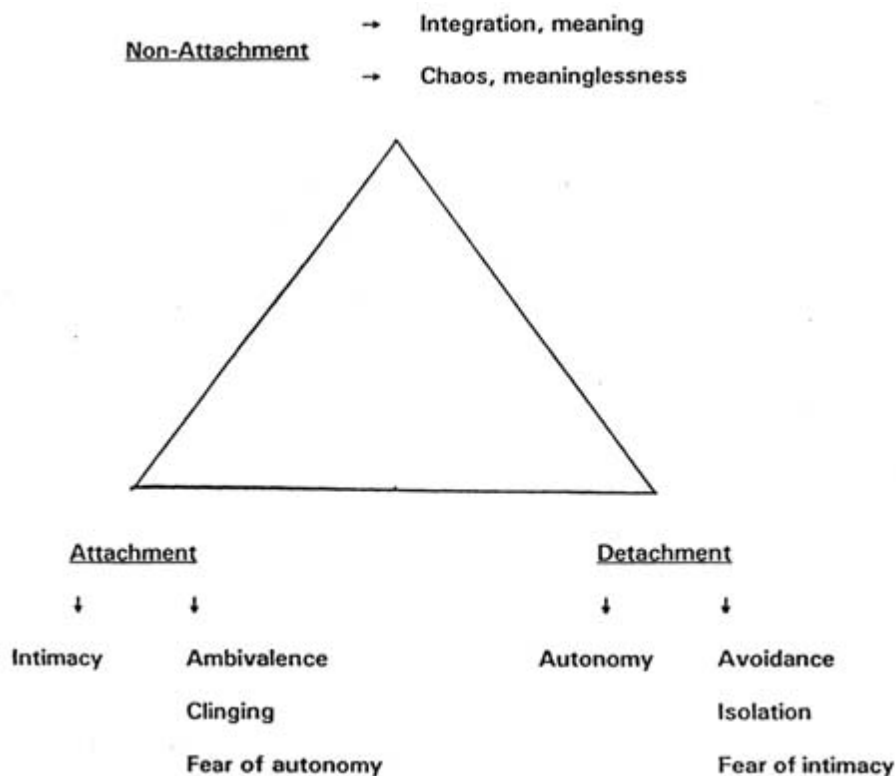
1.   The website: www.gettinglost.ca details a specific condition called *Topographical Disorientation*. This is describes a developmental deficit where the person never learns how to orient themselves, and they continually get lost (up to five times in a day), within their locality and other areas they habituate frequently.   This is different to the experience of being lost that my co-researcher describes.

I found an interesting qualitative research article from a Google Search - *The Psychology Of Lost* (an extract from Lost Person Behaviour, K A Hill, 1998). In this article Kenneth Hill researches the behaviour of lost persons, their emotional reactions and the various methods they employ in order to be found. He describes a lost person as *unable to identify or orient his present location with respect to known locations, and has no effective means or method for reorienting himself.* He explores the behaviour of several 'lost' persons, including their emotional reactions and the various methods they employ in order to be 'found'. He suggests that for a child, close proximity to an adult who will ensure they don't get lost is the usual strategy, but for an adult it is important to know both where you are and how to get to where you want to be is the working strategy. The article also highlights that when a person gets lost on their own it can precipitate a higher emotional arousal than if a couple of people or a group becomes lost enabling a more rational approach to finding their way again.

In the Psychologies Magazine Article "I have no sense of direction" (Issue – March 2011 written by Marion Froh) she talks of Louise (32) who frequently gets lost. Louise says that although friends find it funny, she find that lacking this life skill can be embarrassing and frustrating. The article goes onto refute the myth that this phenomena is linked to our gender: Psychotherapist and Neurologist Beatrice Milletre says "Some people do use their right brain (relating to space and creativity) more than their left brain (relating to verbal reasoning), but it has nothing to do with gender. More likely it is linked to characteristic such as being easily distracted, lacking self confidence or relying on others to make sure we don't get lost. Milletre says that parents who are too authoritarian risk curbing the 'gut

instinct' a child develops by encouraging their children to follow rules too blindly and not using their initiative. The article finishes with 3 tips: 'Get things into perspective: getting lost can be enjoyable, you can explore and ask people the way; 'Play a game': make a game of finding your way, as you'll get the hang of it more quickly; 'Forget technology: rediscover the gut instinct we lost in childhood – don't stifle it with GPS devices.

2.   At this point I ran dry of research on the phenomena itself and started reading more on how getting lost frequently maybe linked to our attachment patterns learned in childhood. In his book The Search for the Secure Base, Jeremy Holmes (a prominent writer on Attachment Theory and Psychotherapy) discusses how having a secure base of attachment (with a caregiver or within the individual psyche) as a child can affect us in the areas of *exploration and play* and *loss.* Holmes suggests that when successful exploration requires that when we feel threatened we can return to our secure base, if this is not possible it can inhibit our enjoyment of the exploration: *"anxiety is the enemy of enjoyment".* He extrapolates Bowlby's attachment theories to state that the paradox of intimacy is that it can only be achieved if one can negotiate separateness more or less successfully. Holmes' Triangle Of Attachment (1996) shown in Figure 1. suggests that someone with an Avoidant attachment pattern may seek isolation because of a fear of intimacy and a need for autonomy.

Non-Attachment

→ Integration, meaning

→ Chaos, meaninglessness

Attachment		Detachment	
↓	↓	↓	↓
Intimacy	Ambivalence	Autonomy	Avoidance
	Clinging		Isolation
	Fear of autonomy		Fear of intimacy

FIGURE 1. HOLMES' TRIANGLE OF ATTACHMENT

In his article Psychotherapy Of Schizoid Process 1999, Gary Yontef describes people having human connectedness (or attachment with others) in safe contexts i.e. at a geographical distance and their disguised longings come through in fantasy.   Yontef explains that the main feature of this process is denial of attachment and denial of the need for other people, but that this can bring on a terror of not being humanly connected. For me this could translate into the process of 'getting lost': i.e. the need to separate / detach from others through distance, but then the anxiety and panic which can ensue when we discover we're lost (disoriented from our position in relation to others / humanity).

In the book Personality Adaptations 2002, Joines and Stewart describe the Creative Daydreamer personality adaptation characteristics as: withdrawn passivity, day dreaming, avoidance, detachment. They say that people with these characteristics may sometimes get lost in their daydreams. When parenting is underdone (tentative), the child senses this and is reticent to make many demands on the parents for fear of overwhelming them. The Child can withdraw, deciding "I won't need you, I'll just take care of myself", the results of which is that the child attempts to fulfil his needs largely through fantasy rather than acting in reality. In adulthood the feelings this person most frequently reports are scare or anxiety, numbness and blankness.

The objective of this research for my co-researcher was for her to understand (through doing the interview) the processes she goes through that mean she gets lost; and the steps she takes or doesn't take to stop getting lost.

My research objective was to try to understand phenomenologically my co-researcher's experiences of getting lost; compare and contrast existing literature and research on the subject; and engage in a reflexive process following the interview of understanding my part in the research.

Methodology
The research interview my co-researcher and I conducted was based on a phenomenological research approach where I aimed to understand and describe her 'lived experience' of continually being lost. We agreed that she would share several memories (including childhood memories) of being lost in order that I could immerse myself in the description and experience. I was interested in exploring the body-world connection that my co-researcher had in being lost and we were open to the fact that this research may potentially transform us both and our relationship.

Permission and Ethics
My co-researcher is another 4th year student of Transactional Analysis Psychotherapy at the Manchester Institute for Psychotherapy. We had known each other for over 3 years when following our 'Research Weekend' with Linda Finlay, my co-researcher approached me in March 2010 to ask if I would be willing to do this research project with her. Her reasons were that she felt 'safe' with me and that we could both be relied upon to do it 'properly'.   We agreed that the co-researcher (rather than researcher) would choose the research topic – we felt that this provided a level of safety for us both, as we could carefully think about a topic that would not cause too much distress. We discussed the fact that we were both in long-term therapy and that we agreed prior to the interview to take anything that was unsettling or left over to our respective therapy sessions. Confidentiality was agreed apart from letting our training group know we were researching together. We agreed to conduct the unstructured one hour interview at my home where I was able to use both my hand-held voice recorder and a video camera to record our session. It was agreed that the boundaries for the unstructured interview were that it was research not a therapy session, however my co-researcher accepted that if any unexpected revelations caused discomfort to her we would stop and she would take these matters to her next personal therapy session. It was agreed that the draft research would be reviewed by the co-researcher prior to submission for marking, and that she could ask for parts of it to be removed or rewritten or ask for it to be cancelled in its' entirety if she was not happy with how it represented her and her story.

The aim of the one hour unstructured interview, from my perspective as the researcher, was to explore alongside my co-researcher her life-world of continually getting lost from a phenomenological experiential view.   I wanted to understand what it felt like to 'be lost' in her shoes, her feelings and her thinking about being lost without trying to rescue her (therapeutically), diagnose her, or induce any shame.

Data Collection and Analysis

We decided to set aside one day in the summer of 2010 for both the interviews, using both a tape recorder and a video recorder which I had setup beforehand in my front room. We agreed to do one interview in the morning (me interviewing her on the experience of being lost), go out and have some lunch and a break, then come back and then she would do her interview of me.

The interview lasted almost exactly one hour. We started by reviewing what had happened since we agreed to do the interview in March and that we'd spent an hour that morning agreeing safety, ethics, boundaries and mutual consent. We verbally contracted again that she would take anything that came up during the interview for her that was uncomfortable to therapy and that she could ask to stop at anytime during the interview or the analysis or after she'd read the draft version of the research.

I then started the interview proper by asking her to tell me about the "reoccurring experience of being lost over a lifetime".

She recounted several experiences, one after the other, from childhood to adult memories of being lost. After several minutes of this recounting I asked her if we could stop and re-orient ourselves as I was starting to feel a little lost also. We agreed to look at one particular instance in a little more depth, one that she said she remembered in a lot more detail and it was a very powerful recollection for her. We spent the majority of the interview on her recollection of being lost in a building which she entered with her husband when they were on holiday a few years ago. Then she joined together some of the other experiences she'd recounted at the start of the interview to analyse patterns and processes, feelings and interpretations. We finished the interview with her paralleling our journey during the past hour, of the resulting feeling she had and how she feels found. I shared some of the impact she'd had on me and we finished the interview.

We went to share some lunch together at a local cafe being careful to leave the interview and its subject matter behind. The day was warm, sunny and pleasant and we both enjoyed the walk, the lunch and each other's company following the completion of the first (of two) interview of the day.

As I had a baby several weeks after the interview, I did not return to complete the research until January of this year. As I was time limited (having a new baby and being pretty sleep deprived) – I had the recording transcribed by a typist, and focused on writing the Research Paper proper.

I started by replaying the video recording several times, and reading the transcript separately and whilst watching the video (to check for any errors). I immersed myself for a couple of days completely in the content of the interview, trying (not always successfully) not to jump to any preconceived judgements, themes or Transactional Analysis models. My aim was just to really try to understand what my co-researcher's life is like in the instances she recounted of getting lost.

It was clear to me in writing this research that I was encountering some of the 'lostness' that my co-researcher described. I struggled to start writing, my planning of the research was written and rewritten several times before completion – at some points I lost sight of the beginning and the end and felt I was going round in circles. This possible counter-transferential experience was important for me to account for and try to understand how it impacted my experience of my co-researcher's story. I therefore have incorporated my thoughts on these transferential phenomena and separate out my feelings of being lost from my co-researchers in the next section.

Prior to submitting the completed research contained herein, I gave my co-researcher several days to read and digest this document and ask for her feedback.

Findings / Analysis

There were four apparent sections to my Co-researcher's interview:-

1. Us both '***Getting Lost***' in her experience
2. Focusing on one instance of being lost (***The castle in France***)
3. Going back to the childhood experience and comparing it with the France experience ***Comparison of two different experiences***
4. Analysis and '***Being Found***'

Getting Lost

In the first 7 minutes of the interview, my co-researcher speaks about 4 occasions that she remembers being lost. She described them very quickly, briefly and one after the other without pause. I share with her that I was starting to feel the feelings of loss and confusion that she described.I shared that I felt it may be useful to slow down a bit and look at where we've been so far and where we are going to. She agreed to my suggestion and that it would be useful, and explained what was happening to her in the first 7 minutes of the interview:

> *"Because I can feel it myself, I can feel me sort of like in my head panicking a bit, and you know all the voices and that, oh you are stupid and, you know erm, yes I can feel it, I can feel it as I am tell you them because it's an endless list."*

She then clarified her objectives through focusing on one specific example of her experience of being lost:

> *"Erm, well I want to understand the processes that I go through that mean that I get lost. Erm, and the steps that I take that [02] or the steps I don't take, to stop it."*

The Castle in France

We then went onto the second section of the interview where she focused on one recent experience of being lost which she recounted in detail. She told me the story of how her and her husband had visited a museum in an old building in France and how she became separated from her husband and found herself lost. There is several instances in the recounting of this experience where she repeats herself several times (this is a theme throughout the interview) a couple of examples are below:

> *"So I didn't know at this point I did not know that we were on the top floor, I didn't know and because I hadn't thought about it, I hadn't thought about I just assumed you go through one door and you come out of another door, you go through something to the other door, and you arrive. So I didn't know at this point, that this was the last floor and that, I, this sounds incredible, I will come to it in a second. So there I am, right, I am on this last floor and I can still see him and he is at the end right, so there is a big arch things do you know what I mean so you can see through, I could see him, I could see him so then I continue with my looking at things, and then I get to this point which is, I didn't realise was an end, I wasn't expecting an end, I am expecting a circle, I don't know what I am expecting but I am not expecting an end. And he is not there. He is not there."*

The repetition seemed to articulate in some way for me the panic she went on to describe that she was feeling:

> "*And I am panicking I am panicking* because I am thinking this can't be right, come to the bottom of the staircase and I am now outside this castle thing, not a human being in sight. [07] so I started thinking and I thought right, *I couldn't understand where he was. I couldn't understand where he was, I really couldn't understand where he was.* And I started getting angry. [04] *so I am panicking* but angry as well, both things."

Then she talked about the anger she felt with her husband, this feeling re-occurs in most of the experiences she recounts during the interview:

> "*I am angry with Neil because he has left me, he has abandoned me, he hasn't taken care of me is what is going through my mind, and obviously a young child spot erm, and I have not been taken care of, and he is not, you know he has just gone off basically, he has gone off and hasn't bothered to check and my head, he had gone he has exited.*"

She recounts some more about asking for help and trying to find her husband, but then moves back to the feelings she was experiencing:

> "*the rage Susie, the rage. I was so and he wasn't apologetic, he was but I was here, and you did what you always do, you know you you know, you separate off or whatever it is, you I don't know what he said but basically what I always do, and he was actually quite angry with me, right, he was quite angry with me. Now I was so angry I could hardly speak, so I didn't speak to him then I went into the gardens, there wasn't anybody about and then I absolutely let rip. I went, I went you know, I could have hit him,*"

> "*and so because he didn't accept any blame I just went berserk. Berserk. [03] Berserk.*"

> "*My anger was bigger than his anger, my anger was scarier than his anger, erm, [03] yes I just, I shouted him down, I didn't accept that I was to blame, erm, and even if I, yes I can see now, [29.12] I can see that I didn't follow the signs, I didn't have any erm, cognitive of where I was, I never you know worked out where I was, I was using Neil as the guide to where I was, because he was just in front of me. And it's when he disappeared because he looped around that it all went wrong, so I can see that there is responsibility, there is always a responsibility in all the cases that I have given you, I can see my own responsibility.*"

The anger with 'the other' in each situation she describes in the interview and the reasons behind the anger are a big theme, along with the repetition in my co-researchers story. As this became apparent to me, we went back to compare the France experience with the one of being lost on a beach when she was 4 – the third section of the interview.

Comparison of two different experiences

She describes her need to separate off from her husband, not be close to him in the exploration of the museum, so she could do it her own way. This is similar to the recounting of how she was lost on the beach aged 4. She remembers setting off towards the sea, then turning right and toddling along enjoying exploring, but then turning to look for them and panicking that she couldn't see them. There was a happier ending though in the story of being lost at 4, because she recounted being found by another family who took her home and gave her chips and ketchup and how much she enjoyed being 'rescued and found'. But there was still the anger. The anger towards her parents, the anger which is comparable to that she describes having for her husband in France:

> *"what I am angry about is my parents letting me wonder off, thinking I could just look after myself, they might have delegated my brothers to look after me I don't know, it doesn't matter does it, but I feel very angry"*

She describes the process of getting lost in the two events as a) the first part which is enjoyable it's setting off on a journey to explore, of being free and on her own. Then the second part of the process b) which is when she gets lost. There was tangible excitement on her part as she retold the 'setting off' part on each of her journeys, the thrill of being on her own and being able to explore. Then when she had finished each 'exploration' and wanted to 'reconnect with humanity' I experienced her panic and anxiety as she realised she was lost and didn't know how to navigate her way back to the people she had originally left.

'Being Found'

In the 'Castle in France' experience, my co-researcher didn't recount 'being found' – she searched and searched for her husband until she found him, then she shares her feelings of rage she felt for him, and the anger he had with her. He wouldn't take any blame and she ended up feeling it was her fault. Then she goes on to see her own responsibility:

> *"And it's when he disappeared because he looped around that it all went wrong, so I can see that there is responsibility, there is always a responsibility in all the cases that I have given you, I can see my own responsibility."*

I ask her if she could have been responsible for not getting lost when she was four years old, and she agrees she couldn't have been responsible for getting lost at 4. She shares her enjoyment of being found by the people who took her to their static caravan and let her have chips and ketchup and how they were nice to her, how she felt 'found' and her fantasy of being rescued:

> *"Being found. And I did have this fantasy about you know erm, I would be rescued, that the King and Queen would find me, and erm I would be rescued."*

But how this was spoilt when her parents turned up to get her:

> **"***and when my parents turned up I don't remember being pleased to see them"*

We begin to analyse together the process and patterns we've explored and I share with her that I'd been thinking about the fairy story of Hansel and Gretal and how they begin their journey with a preparedness to return, in that they drop pebbles then crumbs. She responds to this by sharing with me how her sat nav has helped to be on her own, exploring and free, but that she can always switch the sat nav on and be found if she wants to:

> "Not with my sat nav no. I don't need to, I don't need to. I can have fun, and not get lost."

I asked whether the sat nav is a good thing or a bad thing for her and does it stop her enjoying her journey. She responds by saying:-

> "At the moment I have changed the voice from a female to a male, well I got [my husband] to do it, and I chat to him actually, erm, as we are going along, as he sort of tries to send me the wrong way, because I know the local area much better, I sort of chat to him. But I do also trust him, so I can, erm I can still sort of enjoy myself, whilst knowing where I am going but it does interfere a bit to be honest with you because like when I am, because I have got a lovely drive to Doncaster it's such a beautiful route, but then I don't need to put it on do I, in fact I don't put it on because I know where I am going and I am not going to get lost, because I have done it so many times. So I don't have him on, so yes, he would spoil my journey in some ways because he is, er, yes he is always there isn't he"

She goes onto say that she puts it on when she needs it, because she trusts her sat nav, but she doesn't let it spoil her adventures. She also mentions, very briefly that she feels found in Chorlton, which is where we train together and have our individual therapy sessions.

Then as we finish the interview she sums up the value to her of doing the interview and how it's similar to having a sat nav:

> "It's, well it feels good. It does feel good. Erm, there is sort of like a relief that I can have fun and not get lost at the end of it all, it's a wonderful thing to take away. And I understand you know, how I have got lost, and I am just, erm, so happy that sat navs have come along and that I have got one."

Discussion

This research doesn't refute any of the literature review content, in fact, they seem to compliment each other at many different levels. In *The Psychology of Lost* article, Hill says the usual strategy for a child is to stay in close proximity to an adult – in the 'beach' experience, my co-researcher wanted to go and explore and didn't use this strategy. Her need to explore on her own seems to be something that has been important throughout her life, and maybe not having this strategy of proximity as a child may have led to different strategies as an adult too. Hill also highlights the higher level of emotional arousal when a person is lost on their own (rather than in a group). The instances of being lost my co-researcher retells in our interview are all about getting lost on her own, and high levels of panic and anxiety, which then lead to anger and rage at the other for 'losing her' and then ultimately become embarrassment and frustration with herself that she has 'allowed' herself to get lost again.

This embarrassment and frustration is mentioned in the Psychologies article written by Marion Froh – the characteristics of someone easily lost are: being easily distracted, lacking self-confidence or relying on others to ensure we don't get lost. To a certain extent, I experienced my co-researcher being easily distracted as she jumped from one 'lost' situation to the next at the beginning of the interview. I also experienced her relying on others to ensure she doesn't get lost: the castle in France experience, she was very angry with her husband when he lost her; the drive to meet her first husband – she was frustrated with the directions her Dad had given her when she got lost in the car; she was also reliant on her parents when she was four years old to ensure she wouldn't get lost on the beach. When she recounted her childhood fantasy of wanting to be "found and rescued by a king and queen" I wondered whether her need to be separate from others was necessary in order for the 'king and queen' to find her (i.e. in order to be found and rescued one must first be lost). I felt inordinately moved by this fantasy she had in her childhood and maybe it soothed me in trying to understand why she finds herself continually lost. One of Froh's 3 tips in the Psychologies article was to 'Forget technology' – however my co-researcher explains her relationship with her Sat Nav as important in that she doesn't let "him" spoil her adventures/explorations, in that she will only switch "him" on if she is uncertain of the way, or is actually lost. It seems that the Sat Nav is the balance between her need to separate off and explore the world without getting lost, and I felt very reassured and happy that she'd found this balance.

The Jeremy Holmes' (The Search for the Secure Base) quote "anxiety is the enemy of enjoyment" articulates for me exactly the process of getting lost my co-researcher describes. She sets off, on each occasion she relates in our interview, enjoying exploring on her own, happy in her child ego state, revelling in the fact she can go at her own pace and do what she wants to do. However, as she realises that she is unable to navigate back to the attachment figure (i.e. her parents, her husband etc) anxiety floods her child ego state and her enjoyment is immediately curtailed. It seemed also important to me, as I thought about Holmes' theory that 'intimacy can only be achieved if one can negotiate separateness more or less successfully', that my co-researcher's sat nav has maybe enabled her to finally negotiate separateness successfully and that the enjoyable feeling of being found (intimacy?) has been replicated from her childhood experience on the beach getting ketchup and chips to her ending up being found in Chorlton.

When I first heard the subject my co-researcher wanted me to research ("...the experience of being lost.....") – I immediately thought about the Creative Daydreamer personality adaptation and their continual cycle of separating off then needing to re-connect with humanity or an other. I tried and failed to leave this thought separate whilst I started immersing myself in the taped interview and transcript. So the Gray Yontef article from the Transactional Analysis Journal helped me explore further my co-researcher's experience from a Transactional Analysis perspective (which is what me and my co-researcher are being trained to become: Transactional Analyst Psychotherapists). Whilst

my intent is not to do any diagnosis of my co-researcher, it was useful for me (from a TA learning perspective) to understand the Creative Daydreamer process and compare and contrast it with my co-researcher's process of enjoyable exploration then getting lost. My conclusion is that it is a similar process, cyclical and repetitive. Joines' and Stewart's description of Creative Daydreaming processes (in their book: Personality Adaptations) is that a person may sometimes get lost in their daydreams. I experienced this somewhat as I listened and relistened to my co-researcher's interview, particularly the exploration she went on when she was on the beach aged 4 – it sounded so fun to go off looking for shells and looking at the sea and seeing other people and children enjoying themselves, but so scary when she realised she was lost. Joines & Stewart suggest that the Creative Daydreamer adaptation is created when the child is worried about making any demands on its parents which may overwhelm them, and the child decides "I won't need you, I'll just take care of myself". There is no way I can link this decision they describe to my co-researcher – but if I were to extend this research, I would like to find out more about the link between childhood attachment and the 'lost process' and if there actually is one.

As I reflect on my part in this research, I feel some guilt about the possibility I went too quickly to a point of diagnosis (i.e. the Creative Daydreamer process of separating off then needing to reconnect – and it's similarity to the process of getting lost). It was not my research brief to diagnose my co-researcher using TA theory, but only to understand phenomenologically her recounting of being lost and write a research article that contains reference to other literature which maybe relevant to the subject. I will leave the reader to decide what I have achieved.

I think my 'psychotherapist' self also contaminated the interview somewhat by the amount of times I intervened verbally, asking for clarification, qualification, the interview objective to be restated, or the pace to be slowed. How much more 'retelling' would I have benefited from receiving from if I hadn't spoken. However, I understand my interruptions to be a need for ME not to feel lost in the re-telling. Certainly I felt there maybe a considerable amount of transference in my feeling lost during the interview process – I felt uncomfortable, out of control, anxious. I was worried that I wouldn't be able to do the research if I didn't understand what my co-researcher was telling me in the interview. Interestingly, I struggle to remember a time when I have ever felt lost or without a sense of direction. Maybe when I've been on the tube in London, or driving round the 'Peripherique' in Paris, I know my anxiety levels have been higher than usual, but I've never felt lost in the way my co-researcher describes. It therefore makes sense that I wouldn't be comfortable to allow myself to be lost with her during the interview, and how it would have been important that I made up the strategies above such as verbal interventions to stop and slow down, diagnose rather than risk getting lost myself.

There was a huge amount of safety for the co-researcher and myself in choosing the research subject; where and when we did the interviews; and how detailed we went into discussing ethical issues, confidentiality and the ability to call a halt to the process at anytime. This safety aspect I believe is a strength of this research as we were both maybe more able to disclose ourselves: my co-researcher in how much she shared in the interview, and myself in this section where I am able to reflect on how I may have created some weaknesses with the research in not wanting to get lost with her.

It would be impossible for me to say if my co-researcher's goals were met through this research. My goal was to try to understand phenomenologically my co-researcher's experiences of getting lost – I believe I achieved this to a certain extent, whilst protecting myself from actually joining her transferentially during the interview. I believe I have succeeded with my objective of comparing and contrasting existing literature and research on the subject with my findings, although with more time I'm sure I could have found more literature and research on the subject. This is one of the main limitations of this research article for me.

Also, I am aware of and want to account for my need for this research to be as perfect as I can make it – and the fact that having a 3 year old daughter plus a 4 month old baby has limited the amount of time I have been able to spend writing and rewriting it. This is my first attempt at writing a research document and I have learnt a lot from the process, not least about myself, but also about the process of getting lost from my co-researcher. If I approached this process again, I would ensure that I had given myself more time (in larger chunks – rather than the couple of hours every weekend I managed) to research the existing literature, review the tapes and write the document.

Included here, at the end of this document, is a poem I've written to encapsulate my experience of my co-researcher's story:

Lost and Found

Excited! Exploring! Adventuring! Dashing Off! Imagining!
Daydreaming! Doing it MY way!
THEN
Oh, no.......Lost........I can't find you!
Panic, anxiety, rushing, scare, confusion AND shame,
frustration, humiliation, anger, rage, blame, responsibility
THEN
I'm found!
King & Queen, ketchup & chips, my sat nav with his trustworthy
voice , and Chorlton.
Finally....relief
Relief I can have fun and not get lost at the end

Wordcount 6,323

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