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“Mind your Heart”

A study of the possible influence of mindfulness for applying intuitive resources
in decision making.

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Abstract

This thesis explores if mindfulness practise makes it easier to access intuitive resources and how that might facilitate decision-making. The concept Intuitive Resources is applied to emphasise positive attributes and plural perspectives on intuition, and that way be able to take more of human experience into consideration.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analyses, IPA, was used as a phenomenological approach to the raw data from semi structured interviews. Three group themes were identified across four cases, indicating an overarching theme leading to a conclusion about the findings. The three group themes are 1) "Discrimination, and recognition of habitual and/or fear based actions", 2) "Intuition is a physical experience", 3) "Increased sense of calmness and openness connected to intuitive resources." The overarching theme concludes that the informants after starting to practice mindfulness seem to more efficiently make use of their overall resources included intuitive resources, given there are no need to make quick and hasty decisions.

The discussion goes into exploring the findings in relation to two contemporary main views of intuitive resources, and evaluates if the practise of mindfulness influence the access to these resources and how decision-making might thereby be facilitated. The finding in this project indicates that mindfulness practise seems to enhance the availability of perceived information in the present moment and provide the necessary calmness and openness for discriminating between elements of information to facilitate decision-making. The participants appear to be better able to discern if information from intuitive perception is useful to consider in their decisions. At the end light is shed on the usefulness of this research in counselling.

Sammendrag

Denne studien undersøker om mindfulness praksis gjør det enklere å få tilgang intuitive ressurser og hvordan dette mulig kan forenkle beslutningsprosesser. Konseptet Intuitive Ressurser er brukt for å understreke positive sider av og mangfoldige perspektiver på intuisjon, for på den måten å gjøre det mulig å ta mer av menneskelig erfaring i betraktning.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analyses, IPA, ble brukt som fenomenologisk tilnærming til rådata fra semistrukturerte intervjuer. Tre gruppetemaer ble identifisert fra fire intervjuer, som igjen indikerte et overordnet tema og førte til en konklusjon om funnene. De tre gruppetemaene er 1) "Diskriminering, og anerkjennelse av vanemessige og / eller fryktbaserte handlinger", 2) "Intuisjon er en fysisk opplevelse" 3), "Økt følelse av ro og åpenhet knyttet til intuitive ressurser." Det overordnede temaet konkluderer med at informantene etter å ha begynt med mindfulness praksis ser ut til å kunne gjøre mer effektivt bruk av alle sine samlede ressurser inkludert intuitive ressurser, forutsatt at det ikke er nødvendig å ta raske beslutninger.

Diskusjonen utforsker funnene i forhold til to hovedsyn på intuitive ressurser innen forskingen idag, og evaluerer om praktisering av mindfulness påvirker tilgangen til disse ressursene og hvorvidt beslutninger dermed fasiliteres. Funnene i denne studien viser til at mindfulness praksis synes å forbedre tilgjengeligheten av persipert informasjonen i øyeblikket, og samtidig gi den nødvendige ro og åpenhet for å kunne avgjøre hva slags informasjon som kan forenkle beslutningstakingen. Deltakerne ser ut til å være i bedre stand til å skjelne om informasjon fra intuitive persepsjon er nyttig å vurdere i sine beslutninger. Til slutt vurderes nytten av denne forskningen i lys av rådgivning.

Preface

The choice of theme for this master's thesis is grounded in a curiosity of human consciousness, behaviour and the ranges of experience thereof. Throughout the research process I've experienced both joy and regret of choosing to include three such vast concepts as decision-making, intuition and mindfulness in my strictly time limited research. But from my own experience I had a more or less concrete idea that these three concepts could have some sort of intrinsic connection in ways that could be valuable to being a counsellor.

From this vantage point the journey of investigating this theme has truly been both challenging and exiting, at the same time stimulating my curiosity, creativity and a need for diversity and depth.

I would like to thank my supervisor Jonathan Reams for all the good, wise conversations providing all the headroom I need. And for being an invaluable resource for psychological research containing the concepts of both spirituality and wisdom. I am also grateful to all the other teachers at the counselling program for providing a broad approach to being in a helping profession.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Sammendrag.....	iii
Preface	iv
1.0 Introduction	1
1.2. Structure of the thesis.....	3
2.0 Theory.....	4
2.1 Intuitive resources	4
2.1.1 Brief display of antecedents to the prevailing discussion of intuition	5
2.1.2 Rational, cognitive view of intuition, and two processing systems.....	6
2.1.3 Expanded, Holistic view of intuition, and the holographic theory.....	7
2.1.5 Four types of intuition.....	8
2.2 Decision-making	10
2.3 Mindfulness practice	13
3.0 Method.....	16
3.1 A phenomenological approach to qualitative research.....	16
3.1.1 Choice of a supportive frame of qualitative method: IPA.....	16
3.2 Selection of research participants.....	17
3.3 Data collection; qualitative semi-structured interview.....	18
3.3.1 Interview guide	19
3.4 My role as a researcher	20
3.4.1 Process of data analysis and the hermeneutic circle.....	21
3.4.2 Transcription	22
3.4.3 Themes, overarching themes; IPA.....	22
3.5 Research quality.....	23
3.6 Ethical considerations	25
3.7 Limitations of the research.....	25
4.0 Findings.....	27
4.1. Themes	27
4.1.1. Discrimination, and recognition of habitual and/or fear based actions.....	28
4.1.2 Intuition is a physical experience	32
4.1.3. Increased sense of calmness and openness connected to intuitive resources	33
4.1.4 Overarching theme	36
4.2 Two comments about language	37
5.0 Discussion	38
5.1 Theme 1: Discrimination, and recognition of habitual and/or fear based actions.	38

5.1.1 Assagioli’s holistic model as a contrast to Kahneman’s view	39
5.1.2 Possible influences of theme 1 on decision-making.....	41
5.2 Theme 2: Intuition is a physical experience.....	43
5.2.1 Possible influences of theme 2 on decision-making.....	45
5.3 Theme 3: Increased sense of calmness and openness connected to intuitive resources.....	46
5.3.1 Possible influences of theme 3 on decision-making.....	48
5.4.1 Possible influences of overarching theme on decision-making.....	51
6.1 Possible value of being aware of intuitive resources in the counselling meeting...	54
6.2 Limitations and further research	55
References	56
Appendix A: Information letter	59
Appendix B: Consent Form	61
Appendix C: Receipt NSD Approval	63
Appendix E: A possible necessity for inclusion of intuitive resources	71
Appendix F: Table of themes in four interviews	73
Appendix G: Table 2: Example of analyses at three levels.....	74

1.0 Introduction

For several years I wanted to research mindfulness from one vantage point or another, due to my 20 years' experience with yoga, mindfulness and older meditation techniques. During those 20 years these disciplines have been part of a huge process of integration into both western research and culture. In counselling and in other helping professions where frequent and close contact with other human beings is part of one's occupation, it has been clearly shown that applying mindfulness for both helpers and those seeking help can be an advantage from a health, relations and wellness perspective, especially related to stress reduction, coping and treating anxiety and symptoms of depression (Brown & Ryan 2003; Gran, Lie & Kroese, 2011). From a broader perspective on health and wellness, making sound and appropriate decisions in everyday life as well as in bigger transitions in life such as career, place of residence, path of development and partnerships, is a foundation for health and wellness, and also of the strongest concerns of counselling and coaching relations. Every day we make more or less sound decisions based on varying use of our available resources and perspective on present and future consequences. I find it interesting to investigate how to expand the view of how we might use our resources and contribute to widening the understanding of human experiences by looking to what could be developed further.

An obvious counterpart to the analytic and rational is the possible resources and information dwelling in the intuitive and emotional aspects of human beings, and personally I've been both intrigued and very sceptical every time I've encountered the phenomenon of intuition throughout my life – as my own experience, and as the stories of intuition others have shared with me. I seek to take a complementary approach and explore what can provide some kind of equilibrium as a balancing resource to the dominant rational weighing of abilities and skills of individuals, and if this approach might influence how we handle possibilities of development and various challenges in situations. A combination of my curiosity about intuition with my familiarity with mindfulness and the wish to contribute to further understanding of the utility of mindfulness, brought me towards a suspected useful connection within the mind, and a possible influence on decision-making:

"Does mindfulness practice contribute to accessing intuitive resources and how could this facilitate decision-making?"

From here it has been quite a journey of research both theoretically and existentially, and during my investigation of intuitive resources I've been even more aware of the way

people talk about the phenomenon in general. It's been obvious that *intuition* and *intuitive* are popular words that almost everyone uses and the rest seem to principally refrain from using. But when asked, no one can, or wants to, explain further what they are referring to, most often there comes one or another rationalization for using the word, which seems to be more of an excuse than an explanation. Perhaps this reflects a single-minded understanding of our actual experiences? Or could it be that the discourses of our culture do not acknowledge this part of our experiences? According to Kahneman (2011) intuitive judgement is the norm of mental life, and in recent years intuition has received a lot of attention across several disciplines. Intuitive perception has been regarded to play an important role in medical diagnosis, learning, decision-making, creativity, business, spiritual growth, healing and overall well-being (Myers, 2002 in McCraty, Atkinson & Bradley, 2004), which could serve to illustrate a need to balance our analytic and rational approach with a wider understanding of human behaviour.

In counselling conversations there are many different thoughts, opinions and perspectives to follow in the explicit words exchanged between the counsellor and the person seeking advice as well as the cues found in body language (Ivey, D'Andrea & Ivey, 2012). When trying to understand and help others, I find it very useful to pay attention both to the conscious, cognitive and rational aspect of our mind as well as to explicitly make room for the unconscious, intuitive and sensing. I think there are many improvements and enhancements to uncover when it comes to mindful use of intuitive resources in counselling and coaching. According to Assagioli (1993), the founder of Psychosynthesis, "intuition is one of the least recognized and least appreciated, and therefore one of the repressed or undeveloped functions" (p.217) of human beings. He claims that the repression of intuition is similar to repression of unconscious drives, except there is a difference in motivation because "repression of the intuition is produced by non-recognition, devaluation, neglect and lack of its connection to other psychological functions". My interest in this subject has been encouraged by my resonance with and exposure to more holistic explanations of phenomena. At the same time, I have encountered a number of theories relevant to my topic that are grounded in a more traditional or rationalistic view. In this thesis I have tried to inquire into how these different views might inform and relate to each other. Thus a central theme framing this thesis is the quest to understand how to integrate a broader range of theories relevant to my topic.

This thesis looks into a possible influence of the practise of mindfulness on the beneficial use of intuitive resources in decision making. During this research I came across an

article, which seems to represent what I've been looking for. Dane (2011) argues that mindfulness can be a valuable tool for freeing attentional resources, making us more able to be aware of present moment phenomena and thereby also having a larger capacity of noticing and verifying the accuracy of intuitions before applying them in decision-making. This confirmed for me what I was looking for and also resonates with my findings (4.0). Serving as an orientation to where I am going throughout the thesis, this perspective will be further elaborated in chapter 2.0 as well as in the discussion in 5.0.

1.2. Structure of the thesis

In chapter 2.0 the concept of intuitive resources is given the most consideration. First, a clarification for choosing intuitive resources as a concept instead of intuition in the thesis is provided, ahead of a brief historic view of the concept of intuition. Then follows an outlining of two main contemporary perspectives on the phenomena of intuition, closing with elements from a quantitative survey displaying four types of intuition used for building the interview guide (3.3.1). Thereafter succeeds a more succinct clarification of the concepts of Decision-making and Mindfulness Practise. In chapter 3 I describe the methodological choices and concerns during my research, with an extended part for limitations of the research (3.8). The analysis is presented in chapter 4. **Findings**, containing extended extracts from the transcription of interviews, before the discussion in chapter 5, where the themes identified during the analyses are applied as a framework. In chapter 6, the conclusion is presented together with another critical contribution to the transparency of the qualitative phenomenological research performed. In **Appendixes**, tables, forms and additional extracts from the data are to be found.

2.0 Theory

In this chapter the three concepts Intuitive Resources, Decision-Making and Mindfulness Practise will be described and elaborated upon to clarify the scope of the research. Priority is given to the concept of intuitive resources in this chapter, since it is the connecting topic of the research question, and will be presented in terms of two main contemporary views of the phenomena of intuition.

2.1 Intuitive resources

Intuition is commonly referred to as knowing without knowing how we know, and is an aspect of human experience and functioning universally known across culture and time. The dominant approach to intuition among those who study the topic is a cognitively oriented view that intuitive perception is largely a result of past experience (Kahneman, 2011; McCraty et al., 2004). In line with Freud (in Ivey et al., 2012), the view is based upon the understanding of our mind as consisting of one unconscious and one conscious part, and intuitive perception is explained to be “the unconscious mind accessing forgotten prior experience” (McCraty et al. 2004, pp. 135). This dominant view of intuition as reading cues and patterns based on past experience and learning is labeled the Rational, Cognitive View in this thesis (2.1.2). A complementary and expanded approach found in contemporary research on intuition is also provided. This view includes a holographic model of the universe and is labeled the Expanded, Holistic View (2.2.2)

In recent years intuition has been the attention of several fields of research such as psychology, neuroscience, management and leadership, and this vast interest in and amount of perspectives on the phenomenon of intuition generates many different concepts and understandings of what intuition is (McCraty et al. 2004). In this thesis the concept *intuitive resources* is chosen instead of *intuition* to emphasize the positive attributes of intuition as well as being a means of accentuating the fact that there are multiple ways of both understanding and defining intuition within different fields of knowledge and science. This thesis does not aim to define intuition, but is rather an invitation to opening up our ways of communicating and relating to include our intuitive perceptions of each other and the world we live in. The choice of research described below aims to give multiple perspectives on what intuition might be, thereby creating a possibility of both understanding and including more of human experience. What follows below is a selection of different theories that hopefully provides a platform for widened understanding, discovery and further questions to the concept.

2.1.1 Brief display of antecedents to the prevailing discussion of intuition

Throughout history intuition has been seen as a method of refining knowledge and regarded as the purest, even divine form of knowledge, and still is in disciplines such as phenomenological research method and Buddhist and Yogic meditation (Sokolowski, 2008; Shear, 2006). Plato (1956) has shown by the Socratic dialogue in the Meno how all knowledge is possible to understand as innate and ready to be recalled. This understanding is founded upon a worldview that includes an eternal soul, and here one can get into big discussions of the epistemology and ontology of everything ever known to man. There is clearly no room for that in this thesis, but it is included as an interesting counterpart to the dominant cognitive approach to human understanding and development, as well as a notion of what intuition might be, that can respond to the growing research on holistic, or non-local intuition and the function of the heart in information processing which will be elaborated below (2.1.3) (McCraty et al. 2004; McCraty, Atkinson, Tomasino & Bradley, 2009).

Michael Polanyi, a philosopher from the 20th century introduced the term *tacit knowledge* to describe the implicit nature of the process of learning and discovery. He illustrated how the development of knowledge and science has always had the element of using intuitive processes alongside rational analyses, and that at the moment of taking the development further there is no other way to discover or create new knowledge but to *intuit* what we still have no data of, by a tacit and implicit mode of understanding (Polanyi, 1966). *Indwelling* is a term Polanyi (in Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995, p. 60) used to describe how human beings use self-involvement and commitment to create knowledge by involving themselves with objects. From this perspective one can claim that “to know something is to create its image or pattern by tacitly integrating particulars.” (p.60). As a contrast to the demands of objectivity known to be the mark of modern science, this understanding of how one gets to know something integrates the process of acquiring knowledge, not just the results.

In line with the dominant view of intuition described above there is also a common understanding that intuition can be seen as expertise and even mastery (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980; Kahneman, 2011). This is based on the perspective that the more trained, skilful and experienced one is in a field of competence, the more facilitated is the recognition of cues and also the ability to combine these cues into new ways of understanding and acting (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980; Iyengar, 2011). The argument is that it often is impossible for experts to declare the rules backwards from a decision made, but that it's rather more wise and useful to give examples of how one arrived at a decision or conclusion.

2.1.2 Rational, cognitive view of intuition, and two processing systems

These theories of intuition have in common that they represent a cognitive and behaviouristic approach to the understanding of intuitive resources. In his book “Thinking, Fast and Slow”, Kahneman (2011) describes two different systems of thinking which we can operate from: System2 which is a slow, analytical and effortful way of information processing, and System1 which is fast, automatic and intuitive. These two modes of thinking are addressed by an extensive amount of psychological and neuroscience research, and describes how we have two interconnected but relatively distinct cognitive systems, where System 1 is more connected to the right hemisphere, while System 2 depends largely on the left hemisphere, from now on referred to as S1 and S2 and represented by the approach of Kahneman (2011).

S1 is the seat of the concept of intuition according to Kahneman (2011) and other than being intuitive, fast, and automatic, it is also involuntary, non-conscious, experiential and associative, assets that enable this system to create believable narratives of probability and truth faster than the slow S2 can counter with deliberate, effortful action of reasoning. In line with the dominant cognitive view of intuition Kahneman (2011) sees intuition as recognition and uses Herbert Simons’ definition: “The situation has provided a cue; this cue has given the expert access to information stored in memory and the information provides the answer. Intuition is nothing more and nothing less than recognition”(pp. 237). The recognition of patterns depends on what is learned and what is experienced, as well as what the situational factors are cf. Dreyfus & Dreyfus (1980) above.

Even though Kahneman (2011) recommends using S1 under time pressure as well as complementing decisions, he warns against trusting your intuition too much, because we are prone to heuristics and biases. Heuristics are rules or procedures we apply, which help us operate faster and without much effort when we search for answers. Even though these answers can be adequate, they are often imperfect and can generate many different biases, or errors due to a failure to use rules of probability correctly (Egidius, 2008; Kahneman, 2011). A closer look at heuristics and biases will be presented under section **2.2 Decision-making**.

The content of basic assumptions that guide perception, is important for how we use and combine S1 and S2. Kahneman (2011, pp. 99) also introduces the idea that knowing less actually facilitates intuitive thinking – for some it may not even be realized that the decision or situation one is faced with is complicated or hard to solve. In general, we are eager to create coherence and order, making us go for a conclusion without having the arguments building up to the conclusion, and in hindsight we create believable stories to verify why, how

and what we are acting upon. According to Kahneman (2011) most of the time we can trust S1 and our intuitions, but we should be wary of both manipulations and justifications, well informed about that we sometimes should watch ourselves and make the effort to use our reasoning capacity (S2).

2.1.3 Expanded, Holistic view of intuition, and the holographic theory

According to Radin (2011), the Greek word *noesis* or *noetikos* refer to “ways of knowing based on inner wisdom, direct understanding or impressions that transcend rational analysis”, and he describes noetic experiences as “intuitions that appear in a flash, out of the blue, with correct answers to otherwise intractable scientific or technical problems, or with complete scores to intricate musical compositions, or with optimal solutions to complicated decisions” (p.183). He argues that the original, noetic view of intuition as an immediate apprehension is not compatible with the mechanistic, classic physics model of reality and thus the framework for studying the noetic experience is lacking within mainstream research. He points to studies having obtained significant results and reliability concerning three dimensions of mind; unconscious presentiment -as opposed to precognitive - concerning *mind and time*, to *the quantum measurement problem* that quantum objects behave differently when they are observed than when they are not, and to *telepathy studies* performed by the ganzfeld method where immediate apprehension is documented from *mind to mind* (Radin, 2011).

Some scientists’ claim they can explain these phenomena by a new understanding of how our universe functions. The holographic theory, a complex quantum physics theory proposed by Bohm (2002), challenges many contemporary implicit assumptions about the nature of reality and includes implicit models that are too complex and detailed to get into in this thesis. I may not understand all of its consequences (for further reading see Radin, 2011; Bradley, 2011; Talbot, 1992), but I will present some of the key points of relevance here. The holographic model of the universe treats the totality of existence as an unbroken whole, where at a micro-scale, quantum level of order and information, every micro unit contains information of the whole. Within the unbroken whole there are different levels of energetic exchange, and at the core of anything existing is a wave frequency, which interacts with anything preceding and succeeding it. The future of any object is connected to the present by an interface of overlapping frequencies, an atomic information unit called logon (Bradley, 2011; Talbot, 1992). Being not just a witness to this hologram, but a part of it, we can possibly receive information about remote, future or distant, happenings through our psychophysiological system- that is our brain, heart and body (Bradley, 2011; Talbot, 1992)

By the holographic theory, these scientists argue that because of the inherently interconnected nature of the quantum world, communication of information is possible across space and time, and that “intuitive perception can access a field of energy where information about future events is spectrally enfolded” (McCraty et al, 2004,p.133). According to research by McCraty et al. (2004; 2009) the heart plays a significant role in intuitive perception and communicates pre-stimulus information to the brain 4-7 seconds before the stimulus is even available to the brain through our senses. The information they have measured triggering the processing of the heart before it is actually available to other senses, is emotionally arousing stimuli. Another electrophysiological finding pointing to the role of the heart and the body is physiological coherence, which describes a physiological state where brain waves measured by EEG and heart rhythms measured by ECG have synchronized frequencies. When this state is obtained, improvement on tasks requiring attentional focus and subtle discrimination are found, which can be an important aspect of non-local, or holistic, intuition according to McCraty et al. (2004; 2009). Bradley (2011) further adds that it is the quality and intensity of passionate attention to an object (thing or living being) that makes intuitive perception possible. This happens by interference between the frequencies emitted from any object/person and the passionate attention by any observer of the object.

These researchers question the belief that the mind – with its conscious awareness, memory, and unconscious perception – can be understood as a product of the brain and nervous system alone, and therefore also questions if the mind is constrained to the same physical laws as other biological systems where time is perceived to be linear from past to future (McCraty et al., 2004). From the perspective of this thesis focusing on intuitive resources emphasizing the positive attributes and plural perspectives on intuition, the research mentioned in this section broadens the perspective on what intuition might be, thereby creating a possibility of both understanding and including more of human experience.

2.1.5 Four types of intuition

According to Pretz et al., (2014) intuition can be better understood and estimated if nuanced into three different types of intuition, and part of the interview guide (3.3.1) is based upon the survey questions in this quantitative research. Shortly explained “*holistic intuition* integrates diverse sources of information in a Gestalt-like, non-analytical manner; *inferential intuitions* are based on previously analytical processes that have become automatic; and *affective intuitions* are based on feelings” (p. 454). Holistic intuition is divided into holistic abstract and holistic big picture, but for the purpose of building the interview guide it was

more natural to integrate these. Within Gestalt psychology it is believed that all images are intrinsically integrated and that perception is determined in terms of the way it is integrated into the overall pattern or “*Gestalt*” (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). The holistic intuition can thereby be more or less holistic depending on what parts of the whole one perceives – what is in the foreground and what is in the background of our picture or view of the situation or subject (Clarkson, 2004). Inferential intuition can be compared to the expert intuition mentioned above, at one or another stage of refinement. It is the type of intuition dependant on previous learning, recognizing the cues in the pattern of the situation and arriving at a decision faster than through the memory retrieving, calculating, slow analytic mode of inference used before an expert level of the subject matter is attained (Pretz, 2014; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980). Affective intuition might be seen as the emotional aspect of intuition, or maybe also be seen as reflecting the hearts role in information processing and interchanging with the brain (Pretz, 2014; McCraty et al., 2004; 2009)

Jung’s theory of differential psychology is used by Pretz et al. (2014) as a basis for holistic intuition: Jung’s type index where one type being on the dimension of intuition – sensing (Ringstad & Ødegård, 2007). Jung (1971, in Pretz et al., 2014) “understands intuition as a basic and unconscious aspect of perception, and also point out how human beings can be different when it comes to being intuitive describing tendencies in how we use our resources to understand and be in the world”(p. 454). According to Assagioli (1993) Jung “speak of intuition fundamentally as a function which can be active on different levels, and can therefore assume different aspects but remain fundamentally the same” (p.217). Assagioli (1993) describes intuition as “a synthetic function in the sense that it apprehends the totality of a given situation or psychological reality. It does not work from the part to the whole-but apprehends a totality directly in its living existence” (p.217). He sees intuition as an essential part of human development, an instrument of cognition, a valuable approach to reality and a way to understand other human beings thereby facilitating interpersonal relationships. He underlines that it is important to discriminate between genuine intuitions and false intuitions “which are really sentimental generalizations or imaginative notions with no foundation in reality.”(p. 218), and claims that to have a true cognitive process an inclusion of intuitive thinking into the existing body of knowledge is necessary.

Jung’s (in Assagioli 1993) and Assagioli’s (1993) understandings of intuition might be read as similar to both the ancient Greek noetic, immediate apprehension and also correspond with a holographic model of the universe where communication is spectrally enfolded in energy fields not restricted to time and space. Such psychophysiological and holistic aspects

of our intuitive resources are taken into consideration evenly with the rational cognitive aspect in both analyses and discussion to shed light upon nuances of experience.

2.2 Decision-making

When making a decision of minor importance, I have always found it advantageous to consider all the pros and cons. In vital matters, however, such as the choice of a mate or a profession, the decision should come from the unconscious, from somewhere within ourselves. In the important decisions of personal life, we should be governed, I think, by the deep inner needs of our nature.

Sigmund Freud

As we can see from the citation above it is well known that there are both different factors perceived to influence our choices and characteristically different choices to be made. The mind-sets and beliefs behind our approach to making choices are coloured by both cultural differences like collectivism and individualism as well as more personal convictions and values. And whether we believe in the freedom of individual choice or being a part of more cooperative whole, these beliefs about the choices we make are reflected in both society and our personal perception of identity, of who we are, purpose and belonging – the influence it has on our narratives (Iyengar, 2011).

In the scientific investigation of decision making there is a vast amount of literature available, with the dominating theory being *expected utility theory*, originating from the attempt to understand the logic of choice by experiments on gambles to provide a context filled with uncertainty (Kahneman, 2011). Several scientists argue that the uncertainty provided by gambles and the element of risk-taking produced thereby is not naturalistic enough to really say something about how we make decisions in real life settings, and the development of the theories within Naturalistic Decision Making (NDM) seek to provide research mirroring what actually takes place when faced with demanding decisions in our lives. NDM shows that we do not use laws of probability, carefully making estimations based on information available, but rather use a form of cognitive schemas based in earlier experience – “people were relying on some kind of synthesis of their experience” (Klein, 2008, p. 457). According to Coget (2011) the traditional rational decision making models seek to identify very structured “causal sequences among their variables of interest, such as thoughts, intuitions, emotions, decisions or actions” (p.134) and portrays these as distinct,

separate phenomena, but from a phenomenological perspective, when it comes to real life experiences and understanding these as they are in the present moment of experience, the reality of a decision making moment is rather a continuous flow of all above mentioned phenomena. Emotions and cognitions often interact on both conscious and unconscious levels when faced with decisions and choices, which interfere with a strictly analytic way of predicting outcomes, pros and cons of two or more paths to an immediate or distant goal. Schwarz (2000) also shows there is a close interplay of feeling and thinking in judgement and decision making, since there are affective consequences of decisions, and anticipated and remembered affect in turn play a role in decision making. Weick (1995, in Coget, 2011) suggests that our understanding of our decisions depends on our retrospective narratives about how our thinking leads to a decision and ends up as our actions. With this in mind we can look to a similar notion about our rationale behind making decisions, where Kahneman (2011) points to the fact that the believability of the story we make – how convincing our story about why we choose as we choose – is the main reason behind acting on the story, i.e. decision. In other words, what we describe as a process of decision making could rather be the narrative we make up after our actions are performed, than the actual process leading to the decision made.

Using intuitive resources in decision-making can be a tricky business between the need to use as little effort as possible (S2), and seeking to have a state of cognitive ease (S1). Cognitive ease is a state caused by factors such as repeated experience, clear display, primed ideas and good moods, and the consequences of cognitive ease – what we seek to obtain or maintain – is what feels familiar, true, good and effortless. The two systems are referred to by Kahneman (2011) as independently operating agents as a means to illustrate the characteristically different fundamentals that can lie behind our choices, actions and beliefs. S2 operates in a quite economic but lazy way of reasoning, in that it is often capable to be rational and predictive in calculating what is a probable and sound decision, but not very eager to do more than what is strictly necessary. S1 is associative and therefore also creative, but often prone to heuristics based on preferences, availability, stereotypes, good or bad habits. There are many different categories of heuristics such as; availability or what information we already have stored in memory, affective or what we find appealing and emotionally stimulating, and framing, if information is presented in terms of loss or gain, and this will influence how we make decisions (Iyengar, 2011; Kahneman, 2011).

Kahneman (2011) argues that intuitive judgement is the norm of mental life, not the exception, since we seek to be efficient and economical and not use more analytic power than

we have to. However, he displays a range of situations where we should not trust our immediate, intuitive judgement because what is available information in a situation is often limited, and our automatic S1 is built up around plausible stories – stories about ourselves, our experiences and the world we find believable, not estimations of what is possible. We are often automatically driven by for example availability heuristics, affective heuristics and the matching of one situation or experience to another by intensity and similarity. In sum one can say Kahneman (2011) communicates that the quality of our decisions depends on the truth of the most probable story we can make and the amount and quality of information processed.

As mentioned above, intuition is seen as operating with a high level of expertise and mastery by theorists like Dreyfus & Dreyfus (1980), but for experts Kahneman (2011) especially warns against being overconfident, since research has shown that this mode makes us even more prone to confirmation bias, or the tendency to select information that supports our convictions. Also at the other spectrum of expertise, when the information and knowledge is limited, there lies the danger of being able to much quicker and more easily create a believable story or narrative, and thereby convince ourselves by means of poor information quality and nuance. Further, Kahneman explains that we do not want to acknowledge the uncertainty that we face in our very unpredictable environment. We need to feel we are in control, we need to be sure or right, so we choose to believe we are, and he recommends being influenced by intuitive predictions but not governed by them. We even tend to substitute the difficult questions with easier ones, and end up addressing the wrong situation just to feel we are right.

According to Dane (2011, pp. 217-8) psychological research indicates that we fail to attend to some of our gut feelings and that this could be a loss of valuable information under certain conditions such as when individuals have high level of domain expertise and are performing relatively unstructured tasks. He argues that the intuitions we are not becoming consciously aware of will influence behaviour as unconscious intuitions. But by having expertise and being mindful, the freed attentional resources provide opportunities to pay attention to possible valuable information found in intuitive perceptions and evaluate their validity. Though Kahneman (2011) amongst others has demonstrated how following ones intuitions can lead to bad decision making, the same research indicates that using intuitive resources is a necessity when you are under time pressure and also is an effective way of operating which we use quite often to not engage our analytic and effort demanding S2 more than we need. According to Dane (2011) mindfulness can be a valuable tool for making us more able to be aware of present moment phenomena that could be an important source of

information, and that mindfulness also can enhance the capacity of both noticing and verifying the accuracy of intuitions before applying them in decision making.

2.3 Mindfulness practice

During the last decade, practically everyone in western culture has become familiar with mindfulness to some degree, at least as a word in media or through a friend or acquaintance initiating tools to help reduce stress or cope with even more demands in our action and result focused culture. According to Brown & Ryan (2003) mindfulness is a quality of consciousness which can both be understood as a disposition, in the sense that some individuals are more naturally prone to experience this quality, and as a state of mind that can be trained by regular cultivation of present perception. The popularity of mindfulness today is due to all the research that was initiated by Kabat-Zinn's translation of a vast body of eastern meditation techniques into a program to benefit pain and stress management (Gran et al., 2011), and his definition of mindfulness as "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgementally" (Kabat-Zinn, 2011, p.24) is today familiar to many people in western countries. The weight is put on remaining non-judgemental to all external as well as internal events, and thereby being more able to neutrally evaluate the adequate response and course of action, or non-action. One central goal of mindfulness training is to actively choose how you respond to external and internal environments and not be prone to automatic behaviours and reactions, better known as being on autopilot (Gran et al., 2011).

The source of the methodical training towards such an approach and attitude towards existence is to be found in Buddhist scriptures or suttas as old as 2500 years. It stems from Siddharta Gautama, or Buddha, acknowledging suffering as a part of life we all will encounter in one or another way in our lifetime, and that the main reason for suffering, frustration and disappointment is to be found in our own mind, our attitudes and actions. Buddha's work is an offering of strategies and methods to better face problems and challenges without being overwhelmed or helpless when they occur, by cultivating a deeper insight and understanding of ourselves and the world we live in (Lie, 2011)

At the core of many of these strategies is the quality mindfulness, and they are all connected to the eight-folded path of Buddhism, which aims at improving human understanding, ethics and development of the mind. There are specific exercises found in Buddhist texts for applying these improvements onto the experience of ourselves and the world by being aware of four areas to be mindful of; the body, feelings, thoughts and

phenomena (Lie, 2011). Great weight is put on working systematically and determined for cultivating and applying these strategies to know one's mind and its processes in order to develop, actively shape and finally liberate one's mind (Gran et al., 2011)

Another western researcher, Ellen Langer (2014), defines mindfulness as a sustained awareness of thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and the surrounding environment. More elaborated, Langer (1989 in Weick & Putnam, 2006) nuances her definition of mindfulness to be "an active differentiation and refinement of existing distinctions, a creation of new discrete categories out of the continuous streams of events that flow through activities and a more nuanced appreciation of context and alternative ways to deal with it"(p. 276). Here one can see an orientation focused more on active shaping, reshaping and investigation of perceptions combined with an emphasis of a systemic approach, which might have a slightly different effect on being mindful than the weight put on non-judgement and acceptance in Kabat-Zinn's initial program Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) (Gran et al., 2011). In fact, a characteristic addition to many of the original meditation practises within Buddhism and Yoga philosophy that mindfulness has evolved from, is the focus on the content of consciousness for psychological well-being benefits such as reduction of stress, depression and anxiety, as opposed to the eastern tradition of paying more attention to the internal processes of mind as such, not the possible beneficiary effects. In classical Buddhist literature mindfulness is an analyses of the mind and the mental processes, and this undisturbed quality of consciousness aims at producing penetrative insights or wisdom rather than having health improvement, pain relief and stress reduction as main concern (Weick & Putnam, 2006).

Findings within contemplative neuroscience, a field concerned with the effects of mindfulness practice on the brain, support the over two thousand years old Buddhist view that mindfulness is related to sensory processes. Highly connected areas in the brain, called poly-modal areas, are found to be affected by mindfulness training, along with a number of other brain regions (Hölzel et al., 2008; Lazar et al., 2005; Luders et al., 2009 in Binnun, Milgram & Raz, 2012). The poly-modal areas have an integrative nature and receive a wide range of sensory, motor, and emotional input that enables them to modulate behaviour through motor and visceral outputs and by direct modulation of the sensory systems (Honey et al., 2007; Mesulam, 2008; Pessoa, 2008 in Binnun et al., 2012). Other areas affected by mindfulness training include the frontal cortex involved in integrating emotion and cognition and sensory cortices (Lazar et al., 2005, in Binnun et al., 2012). It is also demonstrated that an eight-week MBSR course induced changes in intrinsic connectivity networks comprising parts of the sensory cortices and instances of the brain playing a role in diverse functions such as

perception, cognition, self-awareness and interpersonal experience (Kilpatrick et al. 2011, in Binnun, et al., 2012). These findings may reflect the effects often found following MBSR training such as consistent attentional focus, enhanced sensory processing, and reflective awareness of sensory experience. To sum up the above findings from neuroscience, both sensory cortices and areas involved in modulation of sensory processes are affected by mindfulness practices.

According to Davidson (2010), the main focus of scientific research on meditation and mindfulness has until recently been the improvements of cognitive functions and the changes within basic biological processes. However, affective qualities are seen as the central targets of the contemplative practices from which mindfulness arises, and the cognitive elements of our functioning are seen as building blocks whereby one can access the emotional realm which is considered the location of the most important forms of transformation. Since we saw in section **2.1** that intuitive resources have both inferential and affective as well as holistic aspects, the notion of cognition as building blocks, and emotion as the scene of change, all these factors make a possible illustration of what the quality of consciousness named mindfulness can be a suitable method for. This thesis looks into if mindfulness might contribute to the beneficial use of intuitive resources in decision-making, and thereby points to ways of transforming how we approach the choices in our lives as well as providing an expanded perspective of the utility of mindfulness.

3.0 Method

Qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach was chosen to be able to explore experience as thoroughly as possible, within the frame of Interpretative Phenomenological Analyses (IPA) to provide structure to the phenomenological investigation of a possible experienced relationship between mindfulness practice and the use of intuitive resources in decision-making. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted for the purpose of tapping into and making explicit how the research participants experience these three concepts. A further description of the methodological choices and process follows below.

3.1 A phenomenological approach to qualitative research

The use of qualitative methods is well suited for exploring personal and sensitive topics, and according to Thagaard (2013), the conversation during a research interview is a source of knowledge about an individual's experiences and reflections of the different situations they are living. However, any presented knowledge may be seen as a production or a construction of knowledge, and during the qualitative interview a further understanding of the research topic and its concepts is created by the conversation and reflections exchanged between the researcher and the research participant (Postholm, 2010; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009).

The phenomenological approach to qualitative research is founded on the idea of experience as subjective and the basic assumption that reality is as people experience it to be. Further, phenomenology aims for understanding a deeper meaning of the experiences of an individual, to examine and comprehend lived experience (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Thagaard, 2013)

The nature of the research question in this thesis calls for an in-depth exploration of experience and meaning-making thereof, which a phenomenological approach to the qualitative interview is well suited for (Sokolowski, 2008; Smith et al., 2009).

3.1.1 Choice of a supportive frame of qualitative method: IPA

According to Smith et al., (2009), IPA is suited for research focusing on "personal meaning and sense-making in a particular context, for people who share a particular experience" (p.45). Since both intuition and the practise of mindfulness is a highly personal experience (Gran et al., 2011; Davis-Floyd & Arvidson, 1997), and the participants all have

attended the same mindfulness education at Haraldsplass Diakonale Høgskole, the IPA method is chosen to give more structure to the exploration of experience and meaning-making about these concepts and the possible influence on making choices and decisions.

IPA is a method of research analyses built up around and combining the methodological traditions of phenomenology and hermeneutics. From a qualitative interview of a few interview persons, an extended presentation of data is expected in the findings intertwined with the researchers' interpretation on the three levels descriptive, linguistic and conceptual. It is recommended to read through the full interviews at least three times, case by case, and first make descriptive comments of what the sections of the text contains, secondly linguistic comments on use of language and possible meanings communicated, and then finally conceptual comments addressing more theoretical perspectives and interpretations from your field of competence and own experience according to these theoretical understandings. It is expected that you at all time keep the hermeneutic circles in mind and keep track of how, when and why you use your fore-understandings. This also could enable the researcher to discriminate, as well as possible, when she is operating in a phenomenological mode, reducing units of meaning as they are presented in the transcription, and when you employ more of your theoretical and personal interpretations. When one case is analysed the researcher notes the most recurring themes, and continues to the next case. At the end the recurring themes is placed in a table and compared, and one searches for recurring themes across cases. When these are identified one can start to understand an overarching theme. This is just one among several ways of choosing to conduct the IPA (Smith et al., 2009). A further description of the process of identifying the themes and overarching themes is found in section 3.4.1 below.

3.2 Selection of research participants

For exploring the influence of mindfulness in the context of this thesis, I found it necessary to interview persons with prior knowledge and experience of mindfulness. It also seemed to be an advantage to interview persons with a similar experience of and education in mindfulness to have some control for the quality of the concept mindfulness, and thus the prior students of the one year part-time study "Videreutdanning i Mindfulness" at Haraldsplass Diakonale Høgskole were contacted. Initially I sent an email with an information letter to the main teacher (faglig ansvarlig) of this course, whom sent the email forward to the students having completed the course. I got six responses from potential participants, and

thereof four were chosen for pragmatic reasons of being available for the interview during the same week for my stay in Bergen and Oslo.

In the information letter (**Appendix A**) the participants got to know about confidentiality and the approval from NSD (**Appendix C**), and two criteria were set for the participants of interest: to have a regular practice of mindfulness, and to value intuition in decision-making.

3.3 Data collection; qualitative semi-structured interview

Using a semi-structured interview provides the researcher options throughout the interview to explore, investigate and follow up on especially interesting parts of the interview, delve into specific statements, sentences, words and also non-verbal cues to further understand the participants lived experiences and meaning-making (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009). An important part of phenomenological research is establishing a sufficient level of trust to get the participant to share the inside view of their lived world (Smith et al., 2009), and throughout the interview I focused on making room for talking about the less culturally accepted ways of understanding situations, other people and themselves, like intuitive experiences can be perceived to be (Davis-Floyd & Arvidson, 1997). The quite personal quality of my research concepts – what intuition is and how mindfulness practice might influence their use of intuition in different decisions in their lives – made it a key task to make the interview persons comfortable enough to share their true experiences and understanding thereof. From doing the pilot interview I learned it was necessary to improvise follow-up questions that used counselling techniques like paraphrasing to show understanding and encouraging a deeper elaboration of experiences, combined with a careful guiding back to the framing of the questions. The balance between showing understanding, establishing rapport and not getting involved in their personal stories was something I was actively aware of. Also the ambition of staying clear, curious and open to their content of consciousness to be true to phenomenological research was kept as well as presently possible, although I am aware that these balances are a challenge that requires experience as a researcher using phenomenological qualitative interviews (Sokolowski, 2008; Smith et al., 2009).

The four interviews varied in length from 45 minutes up till 1 hour and 50 minutes. During one of the interviews the participant required a break due to intense emotions in response to a question. We had a talk with the dictaphone turned off, and after a little while were able to pick up where we left the interview. This incident made me realize the strong personal aspects of the research topic even more.

3.3.1 Interview guide

The interview guide is sequenced into four different parts; 1) introducing questions, 2) a phenomenological part about the experiences of two qualitatively different decision-makings, 3) a more extensive part based on a survey about four different types of intuition (Pretz et al., 2014) and 4) a reflective part wherein lies my main focus of interest with questions directly asking about their experiences of intuition, mindfulness and decision-making.

Part 1 consists of introducing questions about their occupation, regular workday and their use of mindfulness in their profession. Part 2 contains two phenomenological, experience based questions, which encouraged sharing the experience of two different types of decisions in the participants lived world – one typical decision and one important, big decision. Both part 1 and part 2 serves to obtain a common goal, and is a way of establishing rapport and providing an environment of enough trust to open up and share these often personal and quieted down experiences of own intuitive assets in decision-making. Part 2 also aims to recall and retrieve information about decisions they have earlier made, by asking them to share how this moment of making a choice was experienced and how they think they made the decision.

The third part of the interview is based on a survey on four different types of intuition; Holistic Intuition (combination of Holistic Abstract Intuit and Holistic Big Picture) Inferential Intuition and Affective Intuition (Pretz et al., 2014). The third survey-based part of the interview invites the participants to think about how these different strategies for decision-making resonated with them, and also provides a tidy categorizing of ways intuition can be experienced. The two last questions of part three is included as an attempt to explore aspects of intuition possibly present in empathy, insight and inventiveness (Howell, 2013)

By going through concrete examples from their daily lives and tapping into aspects of decision-making using different forms of intuitive resources, the interview guide aims to go through a range of different ways of making decisions without using the word intuition or intuitive resources when asking the questions. This structure of the interview guide was intended to serve as a way of preparing for the fourth reflective part of the interview focusing more directly on the concepts of intuition, mindfulness and how this might influence their way of making choices. Using the survey questions from the study of Pretz et al.(2014) as a guideline in part three, was also a means for the goal of not priming the interview persons in any way by refraining from using the word intuition or intuitive resources in my formulation of the questions until the last, fourth part. The closing part of the interview guide is both

reflective and at same time inviting the participants to be my co- researcher by asking them more directly about the concerns of the research question of this thesis.

The full version of the interview guide is to be found in **Appendix D**.

A pilot interview was conducted to test the nature and succession of the questions. The feedback from the participant about the feeling of a very natural flow of questions during the interview and at the end an expressed realization of the logic of the structure of the interview made me assured I could go on with the interviews.

However, during this pilot interview I noticed I was bracketing the experience while interviewing, especially the fact that this interview person found it natural to discern between “being guided by the heart” and “being dependent on feelings to make a decision”. This discernment made me think of the guidance in the literature of mindfulness and meditation and how one is taught to observe but not react on /be attached to temporary feelings, but still be guided by the heart, often as an expression of the whole of a person or the soul (Gran et al., 2011). These discernments might reflect the stage or development in the meditation practice and the accompanied learned use of language, and might not be actual differences of the quality of a perceived signal of intuition. This observation made me alert to the programmed language found in the teachings of mindfulness literature as opposed to the participants direct and lived experience, and also contributed to the linguistic level of analyses using the IPA method as a basis for phenomenological investigation (also see **4.2**)

3.4 My role as a researcher

Doing the pilot interview taught me something about adjusting the questions as I go along to keep the conversation as true to experience and as distinct about concepts and meaning - making as presently possible. In the first interview though, I kept more strictly to the questions in the interview guide, but throughout the four interviews I grew more trusting to apply my learned abilities through the counselling program, such as ask curious and exploring follow-up questions to get into their true understanding and experiences. I used paraphrasing formulations both to keep them making explicit their inner experience of subjects like meditation and intuition, but also to take them back to the core of the question when they wanted to go in depth and length in other aspects of their experience. If the interview person wanted to go into depth about other experiences such as workplace conflicts, strains, etc., in the beginning of the interviews I let them talk to find a sufficient mode of trust to share the personal experience of intuition, mindfulness and ways of making decisions. Later in the interview I tried to guide them more back to the actual question by for example

paraphrasing something they said framed as an exploring question. The experiences and communication techniques learned throughout the counselling program I found to be a very helpful set of tools to establish trust and exploring meanings of words and concepts.

During the interview I actively pursued cues in the conversation about the use of intuitive resources. This attentive mode was of course directed at knowledge I have about intuition after my period of reviewing literature about the phenomenon. I was aware of this both being a quality of attention and focus in the conversation, and that it also had the potential of directing the imparting of the interview persons experience with the phenomenon. The latter could be a possible limitation to the research, which I will return to below.

3.4.1 Process of data analysis and the hermeneutic circle

According to Smith et al. (2009), the analyses starts at the beginning of collecting data and goes on until the final writings are finished. From my experience the very start of the project, from playing with ideas about what and how to do the research, searching for literature on the research question and designing the study has been an analysing process, which forms which fore-understandings and attitudes I apply when I arrive at the data analyses.

Reading through the four transcribed interviews three times for the purpose of separating different levels of interpretation also had the function of me knowing their voice very well. This was very helpful when writing the findings section, where the analyses yet again seemed to present another angle or form. Even though I kept three of four group themes, new ways of understanding the whole of this research experience kept coming to me, leading me to revisit literature as well as researching more literature. This way the hermeneutic circles kept on spinning as well, until I by practical constrictions of time and space for this thesis came to the conclusion that all three concepts of my research question – mindfulness practise, intuitive recourses and decision-making- can go on and on, depending on the horizons you are confronting, the perspectives you take, the scientific approach to the concepts and last but not least our unique personal experiences.

At first the analysing process was filled with uncertainty and doubt, both of the method and myself, and it also felt overwhelming to having to read almost 70 pages of transcribed data at least 3 times for 3 levels of interpretation. These feelings are kind of still there, but I've realized that this must be something all researchers feel sometimes and that it is even a sign of research quality to scrutinize your own understanding and process along the way (see 3.5). In retrospect the analysing process was an experience of time and again coming

closer and closer to the real phenomenological experience and content of consciousness connecting all four participants to a common theme wherein the essence of the phenomenon of mindfulness induced beneficial use of intuitive resources in decision-making lie hidden. Only to acknowledge a few minutes later that it is quite impossible to be absolutely sure of my own contribution to that understanding of the essence. And then there is the process of making explicit the connections you see so clearly in your mind. Much of which is the topic of this whole thesis, and it gives yet another ride of the hermeneutic circle –the one between me and the future reader of my finished thesis. All the way pieces of information are interpreted, separated, compared, taken out of context and put into a new - and my question remains: how phenomenological can you be?

3.4.2 Transcription

Translating the experiences of the participants from audio files into a written document, I noted pauses, filler sounds, laughter and also the body language I remembered during the transcription concerning experiences of intuition, to keep the foundation for the analyses as close to what the participants shared of their real and true experience as possible. The reference to body language was also partly communicated through me using techniques learned through the gestalt theory of the counselling program, such as “I see you put your hand on your chest-is the feeling located there?”

To make the extracted citations in the analyses (4.0) more readable, they are lightly edited.

3.4.3 Themes, overarching themes; IPA

Being a novice to the IPA method in particular and to phenomenological research in general, I chose to follow the steps recommended by Smith et al. (2009) to provide structure to my phenomenological investigation. I found it very useful for the purpose of keeping track of different levels of interpretation and my understanding of the different heuristic circles throughout working with the data and how to communicate the findings. The analyses are after all me trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of my questions about the concepts of mindfulness, intuitive resources and decision-making. This in turn is my communication with the research background material, consisting of fore-understandings both on my part and the authors of the theoretical curriculum in this thesis (Smith et al., 2009).

I worked through three readings with different levels of analytical comments for each of the four cases. During the first read through of the transcript I underlined the interesting

parts of the text and made descriptive notes on the document. The second reading I added more linguistic and conceptual notes, making an effort to be aware of when the conceptual comments was based in my personal or theoretical knowledge. The third read through I wrote down the most interesting notes and comments from the two preceding readings in three different columns named descriptive, linguistic and conceptual. After each case was elaborated like this, I wrote down the main themes in relation to the research question as they emerged to me. When all four interviews had undergone this analytical process, I compared the main themes to identify the common group themes, after which an overarching group theme seemed to emerge.

3.5 Research quality

Important to the quality of the research is the researchers ability to at all times remain critical in her reflections about the methods of data collection, choice of method and of informants, her own perspectives and theoretical basis, her understanding, evaluations and interpretations, as well as how she might both influence and be influenced by all things concerning the research project (Sohlberg & Sohlberg, 2013). The criteria of reliability, validity and generalizability will be further elaborated in this section.

Reliability concerns if the research is trustworthy, if claims and conclusions arrived at are consistent and possible to be repeated by other researchers using the same procedures and methods. For qualitative research the term *confirmability* is sometimes used as a mark of quality instead of reliability as it is known in quantitative research. Since repeating the exact same research is especially difficult to accomplish in qualitative research due to the constantly varying factors of situations, language and relationships in an interview conversation, making the research transparent enough to be confirmable- to be able recheck the methods, concepts and interpretations applied and investigate the truth of the conclusions- is apprehended as more adequate (Kvaale & Brinkman, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1982). According to Sohlberg & Sohlberg (2013) a scientific search for knowledge should be precise and systematic, but the of utmost importance is transparency because it allows for the reader to distinguish the researcher's attitude to and use of earlier research, what the results produced really looks like, what methods are used and how the interpretations are argued for and presented. Due to the common cultural traditions and discourses shared by the interviewer and the interview persons, the presented understandings of the phenomenon researched can be regarded as social constructions of reality (Postholm, 2010).

I have done my best to document my understanding and also discovery of the phenomena throughout my research, both reflected in the choice of theory as well as the presentation of methodology, data and discussion. Also the broadened description of the intention behind and building up of the interview guide hopefully contributes to the degree of verifiability. As mentioned above, during the interviews my informants became my fellow researchers, and phenomenological investigation of their understanding of my selected approach to the phenomena in question was and is still an expanding experience.

When the research is able to methodologically come to an answer to the research question or measure what it set out to measure it is valid. *Validity* addresses whether the conclusions or results actually reflects the reality, and in phenomenological research the reality investigated is experience and consciousness of phenomena – how something appears to another person, how the lived experience is at its essence (Postholm, 2010). To a certain degree it is never actually possible to fully understand the content of consciousness and actual experience of another being (Laing in Rowson, 2014). According to Brinkman & Kvale (2009) a crucial sign of validity is to which degree the researcher is capable of questioning and scrutinizing her own role as a researcher. This is found in section **3.3** above.

Generalizability, or external validity, points to the possibility of applying the results of research to other situations or persons and is usually regarded as reserved for large sample studies (Postholm, 2010). The subjectivity of the responses from informants during an interview and the influence of several cultural, temporal and discursive factors makes the transferring of results, conclusions and findings from a qualitative study, especially with few informants, onto resembling situations and persons less valid if not impossible. But the strength of qualitative research lies in the possibility of gaining new and nuanced insight into phenomena and processes, that quantitative studies might miss (Brinkman & Kvale, 2009).

This study does not claim generalizability, but hopes to shed light on a possible effect of mindfulness practice on beneficial use of intuitive resources in decision-making and how the interaction between human beings always will include the use intuitive resources. It hope to contribute to opening up the field of professional mental helpers of all kind to complement the evidence based, linear and analytical approach with an allowance of also using the more intuitive, holistic and spontaneous understanding and communication in the meeting with the client or patient. At least acknowledging the existence of intuitive resources, if not actively embracing it. For an indication of the possible necessity of this inclusion of the experience of intuitive resources, see **Appendix E**.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Anonymity, confidentiality and the storing of data is always an ethical consideration when doing research (Reuyter, 2003), and these concerns are formally contracted by the approval of the research project by NSD (Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste, **Appendix C**). The research participants were informed about the NSD approval in the information letter (**Appendix A**) as well as in the consent form (**Appendix B**). The research participants were also informed verbally when meeting them for the interview, about their right to stop or retreat from the interview process at any time without any consequences.

Another aspect of ethical considerations is my role as a counsellor program student, researcher and my attitude and management of power when interviewing participants and interpreting data material. How I perceive myself and the interview person in terms of power can be crucial to both the scientific standard of the research as well as the true exploration of the experiences of the interview persons (Brinkman & Kvale, 2009). With bearing this aspect of power in mind throughout the research process I hope to have continually evaluated my attitude and interpretations sufficiently.

3.7 Limitations of the research

The choice of participants could be a possible limitation of the research, and the notion concerns the criteria for being a research participant. To have some quality control when it comes to the practise of mindfulness I chose to ask Haraldsplass Diakonale Høgskole for participants that had completed the Mindfulness program provided there. All the participants have recently completed the study, and this might be a factor when it comes to applying learned “mindfulness language” when describing their experiences with and reflection about mindfulness practise, intuitive resources and decision-making. Still I find securing the actual influence of mindfulness practise to be more important to this research. I also found it necessary to set “valuing intuition in decision making” as a criteria for being an interview person. This might have attracted persons with the stronger both need for and use of intuition and repelled those who experience it but question it more.

Under the section about research quality I mentioned several limitations to qualitative research with a phenomenological approach such as the probable lack of generalizability and limited likeliness of replicating the exact same study to confirm its credibility.

In line with other researchers (Klein, 2008; Radin, 2011) I would like to point to the possible limited validity and generalizability of the strictly empirical and behaviouristic research of for example Kahneman, Amos and Tversky (in Kahneman 2011). Science is full

of the notions about to what degree the experimental research uses too artificial of environments, options and situations to be representative of how human beings actually do behave in a real life settings. The critiques also aim at the concerns of factors like expectancy, social desirability and operating differently when being observed, as well as one could point to that the actual dilemmas and factors usually are much more complex and dynamic, and the risk loaded with more serious consequences than those of hypothetical choices in thought experiments, gambles or reaction times under pressure (Klein, 2008). A lot of psychological research can be said to be too little humble when claiming evidence for unobservable, complex processes of inner life on the bases of triggered behaviour in experiments or isolated physiological and neurological responses.

Even though phenomenology and qualitative, experience based research has its obvious limitations when it comes to measurement and objectivity, one could also say that when it comes to the experienced mental processes and content of consciousness of human beings there is no better way than to provide time, patience and genuine interest and curiosity by means of the in-depth conversation to explore how phenomena are really occurring, evaluated, valued and made sense of. Preferably combined or complemented by quantitative research and cultural and discursive analyses to nuance perspectives and aspects of human experience.

4.0 Findings

The soul is about our experience as such,
while the self is about the commentary we give to experience.

Jonathan Rowson

From the analyses, concerning the three different levels descriptive, linguistic and conceptual, three main themes and one overarching theme was identified across the four cases, leading up to a conclusion about the research data.

The analysing process yielded an understanding that mindfulness practise provides an increased discrimination of the perceived information of an experience or situation for the informants. They also experience a more regular state of calmness and openness. These enhancements of qualities seem to enable the research participants to be more aware of what they actually are experiencing, what their experiences contains, or consist of. Taking a more distanced and observational perspective to their own processes and actions, they are no longer fully occupied in mental processing and/or automatic responses, which in turn seems to allow for paying more attention to bodily sensation with greater openness to what the present situation contains of information. Since all four informants find intuition to be a quite physical experience, and the increased openness and calmness are factors they find connected to both making better choices and enhancing factors for using intuitive recourses, a possible conclusion is that mindfulness practise enhance the availability of perceived information in the present moment and provides the necessary calmness and openness for discriminating between elements of information to facilitate decision-making. A nuanced and elaborated comment on this conclusion is provided in the discussion below (5.0).

4.1. Themes

Two of the group themes represent recurrent topics throughout the interview and the last of the three group themes more directly address the informants' answers to one of the main questions at the end of the interview guide, as explained in the method chapter (3.3.1). The second theme is a combination of recurring notions about intuition throughout the interviews and the direct question about the participants' criteria for saying they've experienced having an intuition.

A case within theme approach is chosen, where for each theme the four cases are represented (Smith et al., 2009), and the fictive names of the informants – Sandra, Martine,

Anette and Liv – are typed in bold fonts. Since the interviews are performed in Norwegian, some original phrases and words are provided in parenthesis.

4.1.1. Discrimination, and recognition of habitual and/or fear based actions.

This theme addresses the fact that all participants experience that their way of choosing how to act has changed after starting to practise mindfulness. The participants express being more able to discriminate between different experiences of conscious, automatic, instinctive and intuitive sensations and thoughts through recognizing habitual and/or fear based actions. In line with Mindfulness teachings (2.3) they all find themselves observing their own actions and reactions, thereby being more able to actively choose a response. Interestingly enough they seem to evaluate both their way of thinking and their feelings or sensations from a perspective of exploration and investigation with greater awareness.

Sandra reflects on her mental process like this: *I think I maybe contemplate more about why I do as I do, why I act as I act and what is the reason behind the choices I make sometimes. I think I have, kind of developed my ability to reflect about my own choices and actions.* These sentences can serve to illustrate the observing mind, the trained distancing to how one operates and acts. **Sandra**, like all the other informants, though with individual reasons for this, expresses this effect of mindfulness upon decision-making as a process she as gone through that started out as difficult, confusing and complicating all choices in the beginning of mindfulness practice. **Sandra** explains: *In the beginning it was really exhausting and I regretted I had started the program. All these thoughts and stuff, I remember thinking I was better off before I started to think about all these things.* The monitoring and observational mode seems to break with years of refined and automatized habits, creates uncertainty and even adds to the stress experienced earlier.

The participants underline that regular practice is a necessity to gain the benefits of mindfulness also when it comes to making use of it in everyday decisions. **Sandra** continues: *I have obtained some tools for anchoring myself within myself and I'm more able to be more rational where I earlier could be governed by feelings, this feeling of panic, catastrophe, I have much less of the catastrophe feelings now.* We can understand from this that she perceives herself to be able to discriminate between what is real and what is fear, or perhaps between what is and what is not, at least not in the present moment. She nuances about being governed by feelings by saying: *There is a difference between trusting your feelings and letting yourself be governed by feelings and impulsivity (...) But to make decisions based on*

feelings or based on experiences is connected, right? She explains she has learned to set these influences from feelings apart throughout her own process and by examples of experiencing her clients acting from impulse. She says you have to trust your feelings, they are truth of the moment and contains experiences, but in her opinion you will have to consider the consequences of your actions for others as well. She seems to equals being impulsive with being selfish, and at the same time valuing the information in feelings and taking time and effort to evaluate the information.

Martine also points to being more observational to her actions and reactions when faced with making choices: *I don't know if it is working all the time, but in a way I am more aware of when I am making choices - I watch myself.* This can be understood as effects of mindfulness practise known as detachment and distancing (Brown & Ryan, 2003), and in line with the origins of mindfulness in Vipassana and Zen traditions promoting a state of witnessing (Shear, 2006). This observational mode can often involve a greater capacity of acceptance and taking responsibility for one's own actions as opposed to trying to control outside influences like other people's behaviour or situational factors. Within differential psychology a similar ability is referred to as internal locus of control (Egidius, 2008). Martine talks about how she is now more able to control her impulsiveness, which she experience is closely connected to her intuitive side, but still different from what she identifies as having an intuition. Being able to control her impulsiveness through slowing down the pace when making choices provides a way for her to embrace her strong intuitive side and let it guide her without giving in to all immediate reactions to situations and other people. But **Martine** nuances her experience:

Intuition is a difficult word, because I think I have a presentiment /sensation ("fornemmelse") all the time, I think I like this word better than intuition. I have a presentiment/sensation ("fornemmelse") about other people surrounding me and where they are at (hvort jeg har dem...). It's how I find an anchor in social settings. I will always be very careful about saying that I can trust this though.

She seems to be on the watch for using the word intuition, and later in the interview she makes an effort to investigate if I find intuition to be a good thing or not. It is probably both an effect of perceiving herself to be very intuitive and all the comments she has earlier received addressing this side of her, but it can also be seen as a product of the cultural discourse in our time. All participants had one or more concerns about how intuition is met in our present society and a further comment on this topic is located in **Appendix E**.

She seems to be rather surprised to be asked if she trusts her feelings, but she sharply points right to the core of many situations where a decision is required: *My feelings is all I've got, of course I trust them. That doesn't mean I make decisions based on feelings. I always investigate how subjective my understanding is, whether I perceive the same reality as others do.* **Sandra** had a similar distinction between trusting feelings and being governed by feelings, indicating that they do regard feelings as valuable information. The statement can be interpreted to point to the way she discerns between different aspects of herself while making a choice, reporting that she values her feelings as true, like everybody else's feelings are true in the moment, but making it clear that she aims to recheck the perspective of reality she is taking. This recheck of reality also seemed to be recurring in the interviews as a part of being more aware of their own way of thinking, behaving, feeling and choosing. **Anette** tells me she is more at home with herself (på plass i meg selv) and perceives herself to have a better overview so that she feels she makes better choices on her own part and in turn it also has effects for the people around her. She expresses that she has reached a new level of acceptance of what is and what she experiences, and through this renewed perspective she even finds a more integrated version of herself:

*I'm sensitive in another way than before, less afraid of fearing my feelings.
Things must feel right, but I don't need to like it. Feelings is connected to what is my ethics, I can't cross that. I'm more present, and that's because of things I wasn't earlier aware of, right, being uneasy and trying to control everything.
It's like I have more peace inside me, that I, my thoughts aren't that hasty (går ikke så fort) and then it is easier to make tidy choices.*

We see here she points out that she is “less afraid of fearing my feelings” and that she values her feelings because they serve as a guide to her ethics. These sentences can be said to be quite nuanced and refined ways of perceiving and communicating inner life. She does not say she is not afraid, but she has accepted that she sometimes get scared because of what she feels. She also points straight to one important aspect of decision making and intuition according to Kahneman (2011) - the potential bias of the Halo-effect; a potential like/dislike - evaluation of factors. She says she is not dependent on liking something for it to feel right, and goes on to explain that the feeling right about something is an ethical sense she orients toward.

Anette's discernment is perhaps more introspective than the reality check **Martine** talks about, and so is **Liv's** version of discernment between different impressions and experiences when making decisions but she combines that with a reflection about how her

relationship to reality has changed: *I would say it (mindfulness) has influenced my choices, it clarifies in a way, the way I relate to reality has changed. It has given me a higher consciousness about things and about myself. Higher consciousness meaning a consciousness more like an acknowledgement of what is.* She shares like the other informants that she is more relaxed, less stressed, and also has more confidence both in herself and in life as such:

I have more faith and trust, I have more openness, I have space. I feel there are resources freed up for the choices coming all by themselves. When you are more in resting modus and can contain more, then the access to information is broader, and the choices can emerge easier without struggle...something like that. I feel that the space for example for intuition is also bigger when you rest, when you contain things, or life kind of runs by itself

As we see here **Liv** directly expresses that she experiences to perceive more or “broader” information. She reflects upon that having an increased amount of information sometimes feels too much, and that she is in need of lowering the pace of decision-making to be able to make use of the information. She often uses the word “space” and it could also be interpreted to illustrate a process of distancing or detachment from earlier ways of operating, acting and reacting, and thereby the freeing of resources. She also uses the word emerge to describe how making choices now almost are self-apparent, at least less of a struggle. She even says she feels there are no longer so many choices to make. Here we also see a direct comment on what **Liv** regards as a necessary condition for experiencing intuition – to have enough rest and to be able to contain things.

The notion of containing things might be seen as not evaluating analytically or reasoning too early between options, but to contemplate in a more open and trustful attitude. **Liv** shares that she has experienced that the feelings and the passions she experience can be both good and bad, when influencing decision-making. She feels a lot of the sayings about the heart as guidance is a little bit too nice, concealing the truth and complexity of being led by the heart or guided by feelings:

The heart is connected to everything. I'm a fan of being led by the heart, of being yourself. But you have to know yourself well to let yourself be guided by feelings - there are many dangers. But of course, you can make the wrong choice even while using rational knowledge.

Here she nuances when she reflects upon feelings, the heart and intellect and their influence on making choices. The notion that the heart is connected to everything can be understood as connected to everything that exists in the frame of holographic theory and also the research on

non-local / holistic intuition. She also equals being led by the heart by being who you really are, maybe another way of saying that our presentation of self today can be perceived a much more strategic construction of selves. In addition she also points to being aware of which aspect of feelings are guiding you and that this requires self-knowledge.

As a sum up of the above the participants seem to have greater degrees of active reflection, analysing more closely their options and following consequences, and at the same time paying more attention to feelings and presentiments/sensations (*fornemmelse*).

4.1.2 Intuition is a physical experience

The second theme was the most strongly recurring throughout all four interviews. I was careful not to have the direct question about if their experiences had a physical element to it. The way the term physical was introduced was through gestalt techniques of confronting the interview person about body language such as repeatedly pointing to the chest, arms or head. For example me asking them: “I see you put your hand on the chest – do you have a physical sensation when experiencing this?” These ways of exploring their experience was not a part of the interview guide, but a natural way for me of investigating the narratives due to my training in gestalt techniques throughout the counselling program as well as my own experiences and the literature pointing to the physical aspects of intuitive resources (McCraty et al., 2004; 2009). For this theme some extracts of the four interviews will be cited without much further comment than the ones made above.

Martine: *I think it is a physical presentiment/sensation (“fornemmelse”), that vibrates around the head somewhere. It’s a kind of consciousness that is situated quite physical around my head - it’s a very bodily experience.* She tells me she is a very intuitive person and her intuition is how she co-ordinate in social settings, but that she always tries to question her perspective and view of reality and not mistake it her intuition for being the ultimate truth.

Sandra: *I think it can be different things, but sometimes it’s like kind of clear kind of physical presentiment/sensation (“fornemmelse”). I can notice a smell for example, or I can feel pain sometimes. It is a pain I get in my heart or, some other kind of physical presentiment / sensation (“fornemmelse”).*

Sandra describes how she can smell fear, it’s a significant, strong smell and it makes her aware of people if they are lying or hiding something when she sense this. She also talks about how she can feel sudden pain in the heart, neck and arms when she enters a room, and this is a signal to her about how there is something she should be aware of, something implicit in the situation or the relations within which these things occur.

Anette: *It is a strong feeling, a vibration that tells you something doesn't quite add up. It's more like a... ..an inner voice, a vibration in the chest, a wire... what can I say, something that tells me that here is something that doesn't add up, it can be very strong sometimes, and most of the time I was right about it.*

Anette describes two episodes in her life where this wire or voice in the chest has urged her to take action. One time waking up in the middle of the night by an inner voice telling her to wake up, catching someone close to her in doing something possibly harmful. Another time driving a car and suddenly sensing this voice/wire in the chest demanding to hit the brakes right before a turn in the road and another car came at high speed in the wrong lane.

Liv: *My criteria for intuition is "pling!"(makes a sound) - it is physical and it is holistic in a way. ... Yes, it is holistic. It is like something is melting together like I said about the instant decisions in my field of competence, only this is somewhat different, intuition is directed outwards. I see myself placing my hands over the head, it comes to me like a lightening, from the top down - or maybe it is...because it is suddenly, like a rush through the body that feels like a holistic truth.*

She describes having this sudden rush of truth one time when something important happened to someone close to her, before she received any message about the event.

We can see that their experiences of intuition are very individual but they all point to physical experiences; for Martine it is located around the head, for Sandra it is the sense of smelling and the feeling of pain in the heart or elsewhere (she also mentions pain in neck and arms earlier in the interview), for Anette it is the vibration or wire in the chest also sometimes hearing a voice from within, and for Liv it is a sound accompanied with a sudden rush through the body feeling "like a holistic truth". In line with the IPA tradition, these findings have generated more literature research on bodily perception after analysing the data material (see 3.4), and views on bodily perception provided by Gendlin (1992) will be included in the discussion below.

4.1.3. Increased sense of calmness and openness connected to intuitive resources

The last theme sheds light on the possible connection between mindfulness practise and the use of intuitive resources. It seems like the calming effect and the attitude or state of openness enhances the ability to make use of intuitive resources. **Martine** puts it this way: *Mindfulness gives you greater safety in your silent room, kind of. You have a clearer*

reference within yourself. The noisy uncertainty between your inner room and the world out there is less dominating. Within these sentences one can find a lot of the beneficial effects on psychological health and well-being that research on mindfulness has shown, like being at ease with yourself, less anxiety and judgement. At the same time this also expresses something beyond health closing up to a more existential or spiritual way of reflecting on her own relationship with the world. To have a greater safety and clearer reference within could be understood as if she is trusting herself more, and paying more attention to how her own system is responding to her interactions with the world at both an unconscious and conscious level, thereby respecting what action or reflection gives her balance. She goes on to explain that when she makes choices she is attentive to the level of calmness or peace she can feel in her chest, and that if she makes a conscious choice, she can at least arrive at a form of peace about the unease in the chest: *The peace is greater than the unease, it contains the whole body and the area around. And it is quiet in there.* **Martine** comes to a conclusion of her understanding of intuition at the end of the interview and says: *I think they (intuition and mindfulness) are identical. They are completely concurrent.* Spontaneously she continues to reflect about this acknowledgement about mindfulness and intuition: *It's a very interesting process having this conversation, because I kind of have to go through my own definition of intuition before I can say they are identical. It is like... like kind of getting in touch with the whole of that world kind of.* She explain that she sees this clearly now after having gone through all the questions about different types of decisions, feelings and thoughts, investigating how she acts and operates. This indicates that the interview questions have given a process of self-investigation and self-search that makes her arrive at a new understanding of the workings of her mind. It can also point towards mindfulness being a state of mind quite necessary for experiencing intuition for her, or at least what coincides with her definition of having an intuition, being: *It's a kind of consciousness that is situated quite physical around my head (...) it's a very bodily experience.* She also has defined herself as a highly intuitive person that through mindfulness has learned to slow down before acting and making decisions to prevent her from acting impulsively, and this can point to how she arrives at the conclusion that these two concepts are concurrent. For a nuance on the distinction between impulses, instincts and intuition, see discussion below. Still this can be said to be a strong indication of mindfulness facilitating the access of intuitive resources. These sentences can also provide an illustration of how the participants turn out to be my fellow co-researchers as mentioned in the method chapter.

Sandra emphasises the increased openness she has arrived at and adds a reflection about being better able to discriminate between different impressions and experiences:

Yes, I think they are connected, because, when I practise I become more open, both towards myself and what surrounds me, and this also influences my intuitive resources I think. Perhaps I've gotten better at keeping things apart, so that everything don't get meshed into a chaos of impressions ("sammensurium"), but that I manage to select single elements in a situation, and yes! this was what triggered this! I absolutely think there is a connection and I think it opens up for a lot of things.

She points straight to what Dane (2011) argues about mindfulness enhancing the ability of being more aware of present moment phenomena and making a discrimination between valid and non-valid information. The selection of which elements trigger a situation could provide a valuable sorting out of information available for perception, and thereby freeing system 2 of analysing through unnecessary information.

Anette emphasises the calming effect as providing a peace she finds is connected to the experience of intuition. She has earlier told me about many different experiences of intuitive resources varying from strong and immediate warnings about dangers concerning herself or her loved ones, centred around what she calls vibrations or wires in her heart or a kind of voice from within. But even though these warnings are intuitive experiences for her, she explains that intuitive resources also contain the good things:

I've experienced that when I really am able to meditate, when the meditation has settled in your body, you get an incredible warm feeling and peace, calm. I feel it enhances that side of me (intuitive side) kind of, because I experience such an incredible... I touch my chest, because when I meditate, I often experience such a delightful peace right here in the middle, and I haven't worked towards that, but it just happens, so I feel it is connected, mmm, you do open yourself up to be honest. I feel I'm able to sense much more. And senses and intuition is closely connected I feel.

Here she connects mindfulness to being more open, and from what she says here one can understand that she connects this openness to being able to more effectively use her senses and thereby being provided more information about her surroundings.

Liv talks a lot about her childhood memories when we arrive at this closing part of the interview guide, and a big part of her childhood was closeness to nature and to silence. A recurrent theme for **Liv** throughout the interview is how effectiveness for her is associated

with having a speed of life that isn't good for anyone or anything. She goes back to arguing that effectiveness today is seen as doing things rapidly but that no one considers whether this has any quality to it. She finds the demands of effectiveness to be conflicted with the use of intuitive resources, and accentuates how important it is to slow down and take your time when making decisions. She even talks about acceptance in a way that promotes a way of life where there is less need to make as many decisions:

It is connected (mindfulness and use of intuitive resources). In many ways I think we are equipped with intuition from we are born, it's a natural part of us, and then there is some things enhancing it, and some things limiting it, damming it up in a way. And some of the things limiting it, are the demands to be effective, and the idea that logic or a type of rationality is the only truthful way leading to truth or knowledge.

Her statement about being born with intuition can be read as being born with the ability to be intuitive, our implicit and tacit way of integrating information about the world, ourselves and other persons. Or it can be taken as a comment about the possible innate nature of knowledge that Plato and thinkers within ancient Yoga philosophy talk about. The limiting of her intuitive resources feels to her as a “damming up,” and perhaps this can be read as not using resources she knows is available but not finds room for using in many situations. She talks about her role in occupation life and how having a lot of responsibility makes the demands of being effective stronger but that not paying attention to the immediate solutions she knows to be right really ends up with making poorer decisions. This could explain the last sentence of this cited paragraph. Seen as a whole, one can read from this extract that it is the opposite of the demands of effectiveness implying the high speed of things that enhances her intuitive resources and that mindfulness provides this slower pace for her.

For an overview of the themes found in the interviews, and an example of three levels of analyses, see **Appendix F** and **G**.

4.1.4 Overarching theme

Putting the three group themes together, the sum of it at the end of the analyses can be presented like this: The informants have learned the abilities of “**Discrimination and recognition of habitual and/or fear based actions**” and agree that “**Intuition is a physical experience**” even though the way they physically experience intuition has four individual versions. Throughout the whole interview they recurrently return to having a greater sense of

calmness and openness and at the end of the interview they express that the **“Increased sense of calmness and openness is connected to the use of intuitive resources.”**

Drawing on the above presented analysis of the layers of the language, descriptions and theoretical perspectives in their narratives, I have constructed a synthetic description of the overarching theme:

The calming effect and sorting out of their own behaviour and reactions as a result of mindfulness practice seems to provide trust and confidence in using both the intuitive, quick system 1 associated mainly with the right hemisphere and the analytic, slow system 2 associated mainly with the left hemisphere, given there is no need to make quick and hasty decisions.

In turn these effects might be the foundation for obtaining a greater level of trust in their abilities and overall resources. With an attitude of openness and a greater amount of information available for perception, combined with a refined ability to discern elements of experience, they are more comfortable with utilizing intuitive resources and successfully applying these resources in decision-making. A nuanced and elaborated exploration of this summary follows in the discussion below.

4.2 Two comments about language

As mentioned in **3.3.1**, I find some of the phrases used as quite consistent with the “mindfulness language” from my own participation in an 8-week MBSR training as well as reading about and researching mindfulness. The consistency of a mindfulness language throughout the interviews could reflect the fact that they recently completed the mindfulness education and might be a filter that paints the experiences more right now than it will in some years, even though they continue practising. Another point about language I need to make is the preferred use of the Norwegian word “fornemmelse” instead of “intuisjon”(intuition) that all the participants independently promoted. “Fornemmelse” is not an easy word to translate into English, and is also quite dependent on the context, but presentiment seems to be the most describing in this context. Sense of and feeling have been used in previous translations (the Danish writer Peter Høeg’s novel “Frøken Smillas fornemmelse for sne” is translated into the British title “Miss Smilla’s Feeling for Snow” and the American title “Smilla’s Sense of Snow”), but none of them are quite fitting here. The reluctance of using the word intuition could possibly also be due to the culturally dominant favouring of the rational intellect mentioned in the introduction (**1.0**) and **Appendix E**.

5.0 Discussion

*It is only with the heart that one can see rightly;
what is essential is invisible to the eye.*

Antoine de Saint-Exupery

This thesis looks into if mindfulness might influence the access to intuitive resources and whether this could be helpful in decision-making. This chapter starts out with the three group themes and the overarching theme from **Findings 4.0** serving as a structure for discussing the two contemporary views of intuition described in the theory chapter, evaluating evidence within my data for Rational, Cognitive view of Intuition (2.1.2) and Expanded Holistic Intuition (2.2.2) view of intuition. This evaluation is complemented by an exploration of how the basic support for these two views might be connected to mindfulness practise and influence decision-making according to my findings.

5.1 Theme 1: Discrimination, and recognition of habitual and/or fear based actions

Throughout the interviews all the participants returned to an evaluation of how their way of making decisions had changed. An overall impression from readings of the data is that they evaluate the validity of their own thoughts, emotions, actions and the consequences thereof for themselves and others. **Martine** describes how she is more discriminative of her own way of making decisions by saying: *in a way I am more aware of when I am making choices - I watch myself*. One possible way to look at how the informants discriminate between different experiences and sensations could be that the informants are using S2 to recheck S1 by distancing from experience, watching themselves as the narrator of retrospective stories of action. According to Kahneman (2011) S2 is the system with which we identify our self, while S1 is the real agent of action. So this implies seeing S2 as the person we identify with and therefor the one who picks which narrative to apply in the present situation from the stories provided by S1 of what happens in the intuitive, automatic and involuntary layers of consciousness. But then, what does it really mean to watch one's self? Many of the extracts in the findings seems to point to a third instance other than S1 and S2, or some kind of synthesis perspective of the two systems combined – could this be the experience as such, by Rowson (2014) equated with soul? Or is it an improved version of the rational, analysing S2 that carefully evaluates internal and external information detached of the mind-sets of the ego or previous identity? By means of mindfulness getting used to non-

judgementally observing both the automatized S1 and the analytic S2 one cultivates an ability to experience in the present moment, neither unconsciously relying on the seat of the autopilot S1, nor constantly applying the calculating, rational S2 to predict a fairly unpredictable future (Gran et al., 2011; Kahneman, 2011).

Looking at the findings one phenomenological question about the mind and consciousness returns to me times and again – what is the act of observing? To translate a mode of mindfulness into phenomenological terminology – what is the object of the mind when one is in a mode of “choice-less awareness”? The mode where one observes everything that occurs from within and without responding or evaluating – only observing (Gran et al., 2011). According to Deikman (1996), our experience is fundamentally dualistic – not between matter and mind but between awareness itself and the content of the mind at any time. He explains awareness as “the ground of all experience” and holds that any attempt at describing awareness “ends in a description of what we are aware of” (n. p.) Following from his way of investigation of awareness by introspection the I or observer is the one who experiences and has continuity “independent of any specific mental contents” (n. p.). This is also what McCraty et al. (2004), Bradley (2011) and Radin (2011) address when they question intuition to only be recollected forgotten experience within the brain. Is it really possible to explain consciousness by a two processing systems model or should one see this as a part of a much wider system? For the purpose of contrasting these two approaches to the mind and therefore also to the possible content of intuitive resources a section comparing Kahneman (2011) as representing the Rational Cognitive View and Assagioli (1993) representing the Expanded Holistic View follows below.

5.1.1 Assagioli’s holistic model as a contrast to Kahneman’s view

Both Kahneman (2011) and Assagioli (1993) acknowledge the importance of learning to adequately use both sides of the brain, but Assagioli embraces a wider understanding of intuition. What to Kahneman is the only intuition – recognition of cues more or less informed by valuable information about the present situation, and more or less skilfully recollected from past learning and experience – is to Assagioli either a part of an established body of knowledge or the false intuition, e.g. the generalizations and images with no anchor in reality. So far they agree. But the genuine intuition Assagioli talks about does not seem to have any room within Kahneman’s language. Perhaps could some of the “synthesising of the whole,” which Assagioli describes resemble the expert intuition, where all the steps of understanding can be skipped because of high level of competence, and ends up in an additional

understanding apart from the rules and procedures formally learned, which might be described as the “spirit of the rule” (Feigenbaum in Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980). But to Assagioli (1993) the genuine intuition is also a spiritual intuition, connected to the superconscious, a vast field of consciousness we all can have access to, or that suddenly can break through all layers of reasoning (S2) and false intuitions (S1), and provide sudden insights and inner knowing.

Possibly this seemingly third instance could be the observational mode or awareness itself as Deikman (1996) describes it, and that one from this “ground of all experience”(n. p.) might be able to recognize patterns other than those stored in our brains, through a psychophysiological detection of information units overlapping in a holographic universe. If such a model for understanding intuitive resources is used, a freeing of attentional resources by being mindful (Dane, 2011) could mean that situational information can be sensed immediately by our hearts by being aware, present and not locked up in an automatically operating S1 or over-actively calculating S2. It certainly is an expanding as well as an exciting way of understanding such phenomena that e.g. **Anette** describes: *an inner voice, a vibration in the chest, a wire... what can I say, something that tells me that here is something that doesn't add up, it can be very strong sometimes, and most of the time I was right about it.* From a Rational, Cognitive View, this experience might be explained in terms of selective attention, remembering only the times when one was right, forgetting all the times where heuristics and biases led one astray, and that any extraordinary sensation about any situation is a lucky guess between choices in an unpredictable world (Kahneman, 2011). Such a Rational, Cognitive View could explain some of the stories of intuitive prediction, but perhaps not all, e.g. **Anette's** story of hitting the brakes while driving (4.1.2.).

If one includes the electrophysiological evidence for intuition and a holographic model of the universe as we saw in section 2.2.2, the two cognitive systems S1 and S2 are operating on the basis of a vast interconnected information background where both the heart and the brain cooperates in information processing. Could the observing mode be connected to the coherence state where brain and heart frequencies find a harmonic fine-tuning (McCraty et al., 2009)? When being freed of unnecessarily use of the analytic S2 as well as actively choosing how to respond rather than react from automatic, unconscious S1 it might be possible to detect signals more easily by being more aware of bodily perception and heart information processing (bodily perception; see section 5.2). Dane (2011) sees both the expertise model of intuition and mindfulness as contribution to the freeing of attentional resources. And possibly could mindfulness, as a quality of consciousness, be seen as a form of expertise when it comes to adequately make use of our minds resources?

5.1.2 Possible influences of theme 1 on decision-making

The informants mentioned that at first the mindfulness training was both emotionally challenging and confusing when making choices and decisions, as **Sandra** illustrates by saying: *In the beginning it was really exhausting and I regretted I had started the program. All these thoughts and stuff, I remember thinking I was better off before I started to think about all these things.* Maybe this is an expression of the process of learning to use S1 more adequately and the confusion that occurs when de-learning what is perceived to be safe and familiar, calculated by the culturally coloured mind-sets of S2 (Iyengar, 2011). Cognitive unease (Kahneman, 2011) would be the uncomfortable experience in such transition periods, and the watching of the operating S1 by the fragmenting identity mask of S2 might leave the practitioner both frustrated and confused. Still – something is carrying the two systems through to another operating level. From one experience to the other they keep on cleaning up the experience based, heuristic prone, believable narratives by activating a constant reality check in S2 without allowing any rumination, and arrive at an ability to for example recognize the difference between fear and fearing the fear, based on stored experiences from the past (Gran et al., 2011). **Anette** explains an experience like this in 4.1.1 and how she now can discern what is actual information available in the present moment about the safety or danger of a situation, and it becomes a kind of a validating of intuitions when she states she is *“less afraid of fearing my feelings.”* In line with Dane (2011), such discrimination shows how mindfulness can be a tool to validating intuitive resources as valuable information about the present moment, or be discarded as habits and heuristics that do not serve the decision or choice in question. One can understand this as a distinction within automatic S1, discerning what is based on earlier experiences from what is the experience right now and a possible new experience to store as a reliable information unit, evaluated with S2. But S2 is also repeating a circle of selected information by way of cultural socialisation and the confirmation bias – for example are experts as we have seen prone to not asking new questions to the procedure (Iyengar, 2011; Kahneman, 2011). Maybe the consciousness quality of mindfulness opens both S1 and S2 to the wider information background for perception mentioned above, by investigating everything as if perceived for the first time with a beginners mind (Kabat-Zinn, 2011).

When being faced with a decision and having an immediate feeling or apprehension of what is right to do, it might be the system as a whole taking not only factors of the outer situation into account but also the inner personal needs and thereby arrives at a rapid, clear

understanding of what needs to be done. Much like what the citation from Freud points to (2.2), these decisions are likely to be the bigger more complex decisions, where the rational pros and cons do not really answer the question, because the logic rules out the importance of deeper needs and emotional qualities of life, such as happiness, belonging and empathy. Opposite of Kahneman's (2011) scenario of S1 substituting a difficult question with an easier one to rely on the false or automatic intuition, it could be situations where the rational brain does not manage to ask the right question either. The careful clarifications of what is experienced that the research participants describe could perhaps also be considering the small signal from deep within our heart of the totality of the situation, made possible by a quantum order level of a holographic universe. This does not exclude the broader network of previous experience in S1, the rechecking of realism in S2, as well as another round of tuning into which rational thought is logic and which are the doubts produced by the reasoning mind. In fact, Assagioli (1993) argues for such a back and forth between reason and the synthesising intuitive levels of cognition and claims that to have a true cognitive process an inclusion of intuitive thinking into the existing body of knowledge is necessary.

Logic is relative to what factors are included into the equation, and often devoid of an attempt of synthesising into it the consequences for the emotional and bodily health of the person in question or other people involved. The essential here is to combine the reasoning part of the brain (S2) and the experiential part of the brain (S1) in such a way that the optimal decision for the exact situation, for this particular person and his surroundings is made. It is also possible to understand the distinction between feelings as valuable and true information in the present moment to the person having them, and the impulses where one is prone to act on feelings and emotions with no evaluation of consequences (see 4.1.2), as a distinction made by the reasoning S2 of whether to include S1 affective heuristics to be considered into the present set of perceived factors or not. After having learned mindfulness, the informants more commonly approach decisions by containing things, neither spontaneously acting upon nor actively rationalizing, but rather contemplating about the situation and its factors before acting. **Liv** says that *the way I relate to reality has changed. It has given me a higher consciousness about things and about myself. Higher consciousness meaning a consciousness more like an acknowledgement of what is.* It seems like the freeing of attentional resources within and not needing to analyse factors as stepwise as before, brings an opportunity to pause, weigh and rest in patient uncertainty, having experienced a value of accepting what is currently the present moment as mindfulness teachings most often convey (Gran et al. 2011).

A combination of the two views of intuitive resources would be to listen to Kahneman's warnings of heuristics and biases, not letting the temptations of personal preferences and cognitive ease prevent from using the possible ability to sort out the signals of upcoming events as a consequence of the past of the whole, transmitted on a quantum level. The heart would here be regarded as processor of incoming information from the wholeness of the frequencies of a quantum order field of available information. From such a perspective the rational and calculating S2 might miss valuable information by being trapped in learned but not adequate strategies, and that way restrict possibilities and analyse the wrong factors according to the present situation. In sum one can say that it is an advantage knowing your preferred strategies and habits of like and dislike (S2 and S1) in pursuit of being able to detect additional information in the ever-changing moment where decisions take place.

5.2 Theme 2: Intuition is a physical experience

As mentioned in 4.2, the participants found it more natural to use the Norwegian word "fornemmelse" translated into presentiment /sensation, rather than intuition. The word "fornemmelse" indicates a physical experience or sensation rather than an idea or a thought. In section 4.1.2 I explained that the findings throughout the interviews were absolutely in agreement when it comes to the physical aspects of intuition. For that reason Gendlin's (1992; 2003) perspective on how the body processes information is included in this part of the discussion. I will here focus on the preference of talking about intuitive resources as sensations/presentiments ("fornemmelse") and Gendlin's theories of the technique of focusing, as well as how these aspects could resonate with the Rational, Cognitive View and the Expanded, Holistic View.

Sandra elaborates about what intuition is to her by saying: *I think it can be different things, but sometimes it's like kind of clear kind of physical presentiment/sensation ("fornemmelse"). I can notice a smell for example, or I feel pain sometimes. It is a pain I get in my heart or, some other kind of physical presentiment/sensation ("fornemmelse").* Within the Extended, Holistic view of Intuitive Resources an experience of presentiment can be viewed as possible compared to the Rational, Cognitive view where it easily could be discarded as precognitive (Radin, 2011). When the heart perceives emotionally arousing stimuli 4-7 seconds before the brain as shown by McCraty et al. (2004), this can be interpreted as the quantum order of our being responding to chains of movement or frequencies in the holographic unbroken whole we are a part of. There are no cognitively observable cues to be

aware of yet, it is not a precognition as Radin (2011) specifies, but a presentiment – a matter to mind communication.

According to Gendlin (2003) focusing is a skill and a process of tapping into bodily knowledge by a special internal bodily awareness called felt sense. This skilled process is possible to learn for everybody, but some people know intuitively how to use it, while others are not aware of it. The felt sense is not just there to recognize like an emotion, but is a bodily awareness of a situation attended to from inside the body – not an attention through the interpretative filters of the thoughts, feelings and emotions. “A felt sense is the body’s sense of a particular problem or situation” (p. 11). Gendlin (1992) uses the philosophical works of Merleau- Ponty to argue that the body’s interaction with the world is prior to perception of the world by our senses or our language about the experiences. He shows how our body like other animal bodies “sense themselves and thereby sense the interactional living we are. In sensing themselves, our bodies sense our physical environment and our human situation. The perception of colours, smells, and sounds is only a small part of this” (p. 334).

Even though Kahneman (2011) regards cognition as including both body and emotion, it is another perspective to acknowledge this bodily felt sense as a result of our bodies *being* interactions in the environment and take into account that the bodies “interact as bodies, not just through what comes with the five senses”(Gendlin, 1992, p. 344). The felt sense can probably be similar to the observational mode of mindfulness focusing on body sensations, and it is close to assume that from this attentional state, the access to the silent language of the rhythms of our heart is easier to notice. If one takes Holographic theory into consideration as a possible structure of the universe, the felt sense, mindfulness of body sensations, being aware of coherence between the brain and the heart or lack thereof could provide intuitions of the immediate apprehension kind (Radin, 2011). Being both carriers and receivers of information of the state of the whole as a part of a holographic universe – it is possible to tap into a deeper bodily awareness of frequencies connected to a quantum order level of information units called logons (Bradley, 2011). As Polanyi (1966) says about our implicit, tacit knowledge we can often know more than we can explicitly tell about the things we see and do.

Each of the participants had their own individual version of the physical aspect of intuitive resources, and maybe this goes to say something about what types of situation they’ve been in and what kind of reactions and responses they met the situation with, thereafter stored as an experience they tap into when sharing their stories. These specific locations in the body probably carry a lot of information, and according to Gendlin (2003) it is

through these portals of the body one can go deeper to find answers to promote positive and needed change, which in turn could affect how decisions are made. The two informants that connected their intuitive experiences with the heart talked the most about fear, and according to McCraty et al. (2004) it is emotionally arousing stimuli that can be received by the heart before it is available to our other 5 senses. **Liv** talked about very positive experiences of using intuitive resources and described it as a sudden rush through the body from the top down “*feeling like a holistic truth.*” This resembles the description of noetic experiences where there is an immediate apprehension of a situation or problem (see **2.2.2**), and also Assagioli’s (1993) description of the superconscious where a sudden understanding breaks through the layers of reasoning, the ego’s doubt and the S1 heuristics and biases. From the Rational, Cognitive View one would estimate these intuitions according to their ability to predict or make optimized decisions. One would say that if they found themselves to succeed they had either recognized cues from similar situations in the past and successfully by the careful evaluation of S2, applied that experience and skill to the present situation, or just been lucky that the situational factors turned out that way in this unpredictable world. If they failed, one would explain it by heuristics and biases of the storytelling S1, accompanied with the slow and lazy S2 skipping the checking of biases of intuitive prediction (Kahneman, 2011).

5.2.1 Possible influences of theme 2 on decision-making

One could say that within this Rational, Cognitive view S1 is seen as just as valuable to efficient human decision-making as the genuine intuition or immediate apprehension of the Expanded, Holistic View, especially if one looks to the expertise version not flawed by confirmation bias and the risky and time pressured situation where S2 could not perform. But even if the body is mentioned as a part of cognition it is not really accepted within the Rational, Cognitive View that the bodily knowing could extend beyond perception by the five senses, like the research on heart as information processing (McCraty et al., 2004) and Bradley’s (2011) elaborations on information units overlapping in the universe as a whole and thereby providing a field of frequencies available to us as a part of the hologram. As McCraty et al. (2004) underline, there is no doubt our brain is capable of rapidly providing intuitive answers by recollecting stored information from previous experience. But new research on the heart, as well as old consciousness methods within Buddhism (Shear, 2006) and psychotherapist like Assagioli (1993) and Gendlin (2003) indicate that our consciousness, minds and bodies are so much more vast sources of information than the circuits and cerebral workings of our brain.

For **Anette** the criterion for being an intuition is a vibration or wire in the chest and also sometimes hearing a voice from within. This finding seems to be closely connected to an Expanded, Holistic View of Intuitive Resources and registering information processing of the heart from a quantum order of the whole of a situation. Applying a Rational, Cognitive View of intuitive Resources, the wire in the heart would be a S1 response interpreted as a reaction to internal factors of thoughts or worry about a situation, or perceptions of cues from external factors not yet put into the right frame and fully recognized at a conscious level. The last explanation could also apply to an Expanded Holistic View if the heart is acknowledged as an information-processing unit responding to arousing emotional stimuli before the events occur in the world. Because of the overlap of logons, information units at the quantum level preceding and succeeding the current situation always will provide accessible information about the whole according to Bradley (2011). As we can see so far, many of the experiences provided by the informants, could be explained adequately by one perspective or another, they even could be seen as to agree.

5.3 Theme 3: Increased sense of calmness and openness connected to intuitive resources

According to Langer's (2014) definition of mindfulness, being open to new categories and being able to create new ones is an aspect of this quality of consciousness. **Sandra** puts it this way: *when I practise I become more open, both towards myself and what surrounds me, and this also influences my intuitive resources I think*. A state of openness and calmness could indicate an absence of the strain and effort of using S2 to analyse the present situation. The participants could possibly be free of ruminating and over-analysing, of worrying and anxiety like earlier research on mindfulness has shown (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Gran et al., 2011). The freeing of effort combined with a heightened awareness of inner and outer factors (Gran et al., 2011) possibly gives a renewed way of watching or being aware of S1, and thereby evaluate what reactions are due to past experience based on heuristics and habits, and what reactions are triggered by factors from intuitive perceptions in the present situation.

Research has shown that the frequencies of the heart are more coherent with the frequencies of the brain when a person has experiences of being calm and open as opposed to worried, filled with anxiety and judgemental attitudes and thoughts (McCraty et.al, 2004; Bradley, 2011). We have seen that connective and sensory areas of the brain are influenced by MBSR training (Binnun et al., 2012), and Langer (2014) has shown how categories are more easily combined and new ones invented by being mindful. Such research might indicate that

mindfulness practitioners could be able to make connections between information more freely, i.e. being associative and thereby more creative when facing problems and decisions (Iyengar, 2011; Kahneman, 2011), possibly due to their overall increased calm and harmonious state and open attitude towards any situation occurring. If mindfulness also increases the ability of validation and evaluation of intuitions as they arise (Dane, 2011), inventiveness by making connections could be facilitating decision-making in a constructive way. *Perhaps I've gotten better at keeping things apart, so that everything don't get meshed into a chaos of impressions*, **Sandra** reflects about her renewed way of operating.

From the Expanded, Holistic View of intuitive resources the participants could also be more tuned into paying attention to the information processed by the heart, not yet available for the brain to process neither by S1 nor S2. By having an openness to experience one could assume that subtle sensations of situational factors perceived by the psychophysiological system as a whole – the heart, body and the brain – could receive more awareness and attention, making the mindfulness practitioners more able to seeing the whole of a situation. It does not need to be a question of either the brain *or* the heart and body, but the whole of our resources appreciated as capable of providing information about the whole situation, with ourselves as an interacting part of that very whole (Talbot, 1992). **Martine** said that after training in mindfulness she met choices in a different way: *The noisy uncertainty between your inner room and the world out there is less dominating*. This could point to having freed attentional resources of S2, thereby paying more attention to her intuitive side S1, and being able to evaluate which intuitive perception to use as valid information, as Dane (2011) has shown. But it might as well include the Expanded Holistic view of intuitive resources, finding a state of greater coherence between heart and brain frequencies (McCraty et al. 2009) and that way trusting her decisions by coming to peace with what she can know at the present moment. It is not the version of trust that Kahneman (2011) warns against as overconfidence, but rather a careful weighing of internal and external factors until, with **Martine's** words: *The peace is greater than the unease, it contains the whole body and the area around. And it is quiet in there*.

Depending on the approach one takes to what intuitive resources include, these experiences can be interpreted and understood within different frames. By including the Expanded, Holistic View of intuition as electrophysiological signals processed by the heart and the body in addition to the Rational, Cognitive View of the brain recognizing previously learned and experienced cues, one could possibly provide an inclusion of a wider range of human experiences. By taking a holographic model of the universe as one's viewpoint these

questions does not need to imply an eternal soul. According to the holographic model (Talbot, 1992), everything existing in the universe, including human beings, is also a part of the hologram, not only observers of, which means we interact by way of existing, receiving and sending information at the quantum order level. That makes it more understandable to include perception of information from the psychophysiological system as a whole, included information processed, emitted and received by the heart and the body (Gendlin, 1992; McCraty et al., 2004). Bradley (2011) further adds that it is the quality and intensity of passionate attention to an object (thing or living being) that makes intuitive perception possible. This happens by interference between the frequencies emitted from any object/person and the passionate attention by any observer of the object. Here one can contemplate the role of mindfulness as an expert quality of attention possibly facilitating a perception of information from the heart and the body's felt sense as indicated by respectively McCraty et al. (2004) and Gendlin (1992; 2003).

Martine found mindfulness & intuition to be practically concurrent. Such an understanding could be close to Kabat-Zinn's (2012) concept of "glimpses of wholeness" describing moments of clarity of consciousness where a wider perception of one's experiences and existence emerges. When mindfulness and intuition is found to be concurrent, it might also imply a state of mind where the person is not caught in the previous operations of S1 or S2 but observing both and moves more flexibly amongst them, i.e. being more present in pure awareness as a "ground of all experience" (Deikman, 1996, n.p.). Assagioli (1993) emphasise the role of directing the attention to activate intuition as a cognitive function by saying "attention has an evocative power, a focusing power that implies appreciation and valuation" (pp. 218-219). Here one can apply Bradley's (2011) holographic view of intuition, which emphasises a positively charged attention towards the object of interest to enable the subtle communication between the observer and the observed at a quantum level emission of information micro-units called logons.

5.3.1 Possible influences of theme 3 on decision-making

Anette described her mindfulness training in relation to intuitive resources as: *I feel I'm able to sense much more. And senses and intuition are closely connected I feel.* This increased awareness to the senses combined with a less burdened S2 and a more flexible use of categories about the world (Langer, 2014) could imply that more of the intuitive perceptions are considered and validated as an effect of regularly practising mindfulness. The informants might have trained themselves into evaluating mindfully the origins of their

intuitive perceptions as well as their S2 thinking or S1 emotionally coloured field of experience before making a decision or choosing course of action. By investing time and awareness to explore if intuitions originate from within the brain's patterns of learning and provide presently useful information, or originates from the processing of the heart (McCraty et al., 2004) and the body's interactive ability to perceive from a felt sense (Gendlin, 1992) providing possible valuable information of the situation as a whole, the informants could be better enabled to utilize intuitive resources in decision-making seen from either of the views presented in this thesis.

Liv underlines how she finds the demands of effectiveness to be conflicting with the use of intuitive resources, and accentuates how important it is to slow down and take your time when making decisions. This could be commented on from Kahneman's (2011) Rational Cognitive View where the quality of information and the situations of time pressure will influence how useful intuitive predictions are, much due to the fact that S2 in these situations is to slow and effort demanding. But **Liv** also talked about intuition as something you are born with, which can be enhanced or hindered, and goes on to explain that: *some of the things limiting it (Intuition), are the demands to be effective, and the idea that logic, or a type of rationality is the only truthful way leading to truth or knowledge.* As an ability to implicitly and tacitly make sense of the world, intuitive resources can be seen as putting pieces of information together, by a process of synthesising information from external and internal stimuli according to the present situation (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Alternatively, these resources can be regarded as an innate source of unlimited knowledge with a Socratic view of the world (Plato, 1956). This innate view of knowledge might as well be understood in the frame of Expanded Holistic view of intuitive resources, that the information about everything that exists is available to everyone at one quantum level order if you believe in an eternal soul or not. Seen as a whole, one can read from this extract that it is the opposite of the demands of effectiveness implying the high speed of things that enhances her intuitive resources, and that mindfulness provides this slower pace for her. This provides a contrast to the Rational, Cognitive view of intuition as the rapid, readymade answers one can tap into as a consequence of expertise or the extreme lack thereof. The evaluation and validation suggested by Dane (2011) to be a possible positive effect of mindfulness could be a crucial element for making use of intuitive resources in decision-making, if seen from either views of intuitive resources compared in this thesis.

5.4 Overarching Theme:

The calming effect and sorting out of their own behaviour and reactions as a result of mindfulness practice seems to provide trust and confidence in using both the intuitive, quick system 1, associated mainly with the right hemisphere and the analytic, slow system 2 associated mainly with the left hemisphere, given there is no need to make quick and hasty decisions.

The expressed need to have space and time for being able to use intuitive resources is an indication that the respondents associate intuition with something else than just a quick and effortless answer suddenly provided by an automatic and heuristic prone S1. According to Kahneman (2011) the typical and most useful situations where expert intuition should be used are under time pressure and in risk filled situations. But the informants didn't find themselves to be using intuition in these situations, they expressed it was similar to, but not the same. **Liv** describes the subtle difference this way: *It (intuition) is like something is melting together like I said about the instant decisions in my field of competence, only this is somewhat different, intuition is directed outwards.* The expressed a need for having time and quiet, having space, for being able to use their intuitive resources, resembles Assagioli (1993) when he instructs how to use the will to wait in silence of the mind, with no emotional agitation, for the genuine intuition to occur. **Anette** says: *It's like I have more peace inside me, that I, my thoughts aren't that hasty and then it is easier to make tidy choices.* This could point to not any longer being governed by neither the old cognitive schemas of conscious thought processes in S2 nor the automatic heuristics of S1 (Kahneman, 2011; Klein, 2008). "*Having more peace inside me*" could also indicate an experience that includes an Expanded Holistic version of intuitive resources paying more attention to bodily sensations and presentiments when making choices, as we saw all the informants themselves find intuition to be in **4.1.2**. On the other hand it could also indicate a confirmation of Dane (2011) in that the time and space needed is used to include intuitive perceptions otherwise overlooked, and in addition evaluating the usefulness and validity of the extra information.

No matter what perspective one approaches intuitive resources from, the informants all convey they have reached another level of trust and acceptance in general, which probably gives them more confidence in using their intuitive thinking as well as the reasoning part of their brain. A wider and still more evaluated use of the overall resources the informants have available – including intuitive resources and the ability of considering them with a detached approach, not hunting a possibility of being right - could be more probable with a peaceful, open attitude and profound level of trust and acceptance. The overall effect could be a wider

range of information available and a nuanced way of evaluating intuitive perceptions before applying them in making a decision. They could also have trained their minds and psychophysiological system into perceiving more and broader ranges of information by being more open and calm about any present moment. Langer (2014) sees the flexibility of categories that mindfulness might contribute to, of seeing things as if for the first time, as a great advantage to solving problems. In addition we have seen that Dane (2011) argues that mindfulness will enhance the ability to detect intuitions as they arise and to evaluate their validity, instead of either losing important information or repressing the intuitions to the unconscious and from there direct behaviour with or without being valid. These unconscious intuitions might also be information processed by the heart and the body (Gendlin, 1992, 2003; McCraty et al., 2004) not only the brain and perceptive systems. The potential evaluative and validating ability could make mindfulness practitioners confident in the use of intuitive resources in a whole other way than the overconfidence Kahneman (2011) warns about as a possible trap of intuitive perceptions – the feeling of being sure backed up by confirmation biases and shortcuts provided by heuristics.

Mindfulness is regarded as skill or a quality you can cultivate (Brown & Ryan, 2003), and it has been shown by contemplative neuroscience that MBSR training influence sensory areas and connective areas in the brain (Binnun et al., 2012). How one perceives, senses and makes sense of inner and outer stimuli could be altered by the practise, and thereby it is also influencing how to approach decisions and their possible consequences.

5.4.1 Possible influences of overarching theme on decision-making

Research indicates that the analysing, rational, slow-pace S2, as well as the intuitive, immediate, rapid S1 is useful in decision-making, but perhaps have distinct decision-making situations where they each appear to be particularly necessary. Maybe surprising enough, but still pointed to by Freud (2.2), when facing the big, important choice with a lot of influencing and complex factors it could be wise to make extended use of S1, much due to the need to consider deeper needs, past experiences and include to the equations the aspects of emotional consequences and effects created by the decision (Schwartz, 2000). S1 is also activated in the decision-making done in a second, when in a risk prone situation or in your field of expertise (Kahneman, 2011). One could also here point to the information processing of the heart (McCraty et al., 2004) or the felt sense of the body (Gendlin, 1992, 2003) in the unbroken coherent model of the universe, and how feeling or tuning into a deeper order of information could be possible by use of focused attention and awareness in a world of holographic

wholeness (Bohm, 2002; Bradley, 2011; Talbot, 1992). An openness to new ways of seeing the complexity of the big decisions and a calm attitude towards the factors in a time-pressured situation with a mindful attention of the present factors, are maybe characteristics of an expert quality of mind.

Tapping into S1 can be seen to include the information processing of the heart from an approach of the Expanded Holistic View of intuitive resources. An experience stored in S1 could contain unconscious intuitions (Dane, 2011) in the form of valuable information that the heart and body registered, but the brain failed to take any notice of. This information could be impossible to catch by the other five senses because they were never available at this level of perception, only as quantum order information of the situation as a whole. But at an implicit, tacit level something might be silently understood, or just carried on to the next similar situation and thereby influence how a decision might be made, for example through having a feeling of something and perhaps remembering how the last time in the resembling situation the decision was not made successfully (Schwartz, 2000). By being mindful of what exactly is influencing the decision – is it something from the past, and if so is it relevant now? Is it an unconscious, deep fear or a dislike of something present or something I worry will be the consequence and how probable is this to occur? This evaluation process is likely done with S2, and therefor requires some time and effort. But as we have seen before, a contemplative, meditative state of witnessing, or *observing how you observe* is another level of awareness (Deikman, 1996) where possibly both S1 and S2 are the object of investigation to carve out the essence of the situation. Here of course I assume a high level of phenomenological and skilled interpretation of a situation as a consequence of being mindful. These systematically observational processes could be perfectly suitable to go beneath the surface and learn from the synthesis found implicitly in body and heart. If one acknowledges the findings of McCraty et al., (2014) and the evidence of Bradley (2011) as information we have a possibility of accessing, there is a whole new range of recognition of cues available in addition to the patterns of skills and experiences stored in the brain about the cues present in external factors of a situation. If mindfulness as a quality of consciousness is regarded as expertise of using resources of the mind, and learning includes the experiences registered by the heart and the body as “interaction in the environment” (Gendlin, 1992, p. 344), it would be wise to consider the experience based S1 also in situations where one can take time to deliberately engage the reasoning S2.

6.0 Conclusions

The aim of this project has been to explore a possible influence of mindfulness on applying intuitive resources in decision-making. From evaluating two main views of intuitive resources I've looked into how the participants might have enhanced their abilities to use the two systems of the brain as well as a wider awareness to their whole psychophysiological system in decision making by practicing mindfulness.

Mindfulness practise and application of mindfulness techniques in everyday life may provide a tool for discriminating which system to rely on in a given situation, how to combine them, and also accentuate the usefulness of pure awareness to observe oneself in the situation before taking action (Deikman, 1996; Gran et al., 2011; Polanyi, 1966). To only trust the analytic ability and rational mind at all times may put people in a dangerously slow decision-mode, and also be prone to calculate with the wrong factors for the present moment. Being in touch with your body and keeping aware of signals from the senses seems to sometimes conflict with the analytical S2 in the way of relating to the present situation, especially if one is not aware of the heuristics, preferences and biases of experience based S1. By combining these operations of mind without a judgemental approach as to whom represents reality most accurately, an increased amount of perception could be provided. A complementary use of the rational and intuitive resources probably provides the best ground from where to make a sound decision since one is rational (S2) and the other experience based (S1), both containing and providing information of value. One's position to and use of resources in the decision-making process could be skilfully evaluated by a mindful approach to the relevance of internal and external factors presenting themselves as cues and patterns.

The informants seem to have trained themselves into an increased perception through having a calm and open attitude, which provides a greater field of information background, not being restricted to previously learned categories (Langer, 2014). Trusting their wholeness, their whole range of internal and external access to information is possibly increased, and their ability to evaluate between these sources of information probably provides a more solid foundation from where to choose actions. The information stored implicitly and unconsciously could become additional emotional factors that influence decision-making by memories and expectations of a previous similar decision (Schwartz, 2000), and noticing them as they arise would seem to be the better option. Thereby one makes use of both sources of knowledge by applying the evaluative and validating awareness of mindfulness (Dane, 2011).

In any given situation such enhanced awareness and calm interpretation of information might make what comes to the foreground or becomes explicit easier attainable and still carefully investigated (Dane, 2011).

Depending on the view of intuitive resources with which one approaches the findings, one could imply that mindfulness cultivates an ability of trusting but still carefully evaluating information from processing in the brain, the heart and the body. Mindfulness might also play a role as an expert quality of attention by enabling a perception of information from the heart (McCraty et al., 2004) and the body's felt sense (Gendlin, 1992; 2003). This way mindfulness could facilitate the recognition of internal and external cues, train the skill of discriminating the values thereof to the present situation and also stimulate to combine or synthesise the information into both innovative and sound decisions.

6.1 Possible value of being aware of intuitive resources in the counselling meeting

From the perspective of this paper, focusing on plural perspectives on intuitive resources as positive attributes, I've assumed as well as elaborated upon how such an approach includes more of human experience. Because this phenomena of intuitive thinking is going on in people, probably at several levels, a counsellor can take it into account and even use the tool of disclosure by telling the client openly and genuinely about using intuition to understand the counselling situation, as a conscious choice to bring the counselling relation further. Using the tool of mindfulness to validate the intuitions as they arise (Dane, 2011) combined with an appreciation of the information available in intuitive resources could be efficient ways of enhancing the understanding of communication and relation within the counselling meeting. The counselor could, by allowing the use of and showing the richness of information dwelling in the intuitive and bodily aspects of human resources, enable the client to trust and accept herself, and to acknowledge that the authority of any decisions for change and development lies within the client, not as an externally imposed way of behaving, thinking or feeling (Kvalsund, 2003). Counsellors could contain and set an example of acceptance and inclusion of a wider range of possible experiences, by regarding intuitive perceptions as valuable no matter with what perspective or view one might see them through. Having an expanded frame for what could be the client's true experience by accessing both the reasoning and the intuitive ways of thinking might improve understanding and helping in counselling situations and support constructive development, change and choices.

6.2 Limitations and further research

Holistic thinking includes rational science and tries to go beyond possible limitations thereof (McCraty et al., 2004). I am curious about both approaches to human behaviour and experience of the world. Since mainstream research so far rests in the rational and mostly mechanic model of the universe, it has been an interesting journey to investigate other approaches to science and knowledge. However, I do acknowledge that this is a personal agenda, which to some degree could be a limitation to the research (see also sections **3.4**, **3.6**, **3.7**). I've tried to suspend my view in line with phenomenological approach to qualitative research, being aware of the temptation of looking for a confirming answer to my agenda that supports and validates it. I have made an effort to include a broader frame of research about the concepts in my research question to see what I can learn. Even though my agenda has been to gain a deeper understanding of the holistic approaches, I've at the same time recognized there is value to the rational, cognitive approaches. To evaluate and integrate these seemingly contrasting current views is a challenge that keeps expanding my understanding.

Some of the findings in this thesis point to the usefulness of including such phenomena as the heart processing information and the felt sense of the body into future research on intuitive resources. This could perhaps inspire to integrating measurements of embodiment and the fascia system with phenomenological investigation, since such research possibly could yield understanding of the bodies role in shaping the content of the mind by being an interaction with the world, receiving, sending and storing information.

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Appendix A: Information letter

23.01.15

Informasjonsbrev til aktuelle intervjupersoner

Hei!

Jeg er student ved NTNU, og skal denne våren skrive masteroppgave I Rådgivningsvitenskap. Oppgaven skrives under veiledning av førsteamanuensis Jonathan Reams.

Jeg skal gjøre en studie av hvilken innvirkning mindfulness kan ha på vår bruk av intuitive ressurser når vi tar beslutninger og løser problemer.

I denne sammenheng ønsker jeg å intervju personer som har gjennomført utdanningen ”Videreutdanning i mindfulness. Den oppmerksomt nærværende profesjonsutøver.” ved Haraldsplass Diakonale Høgskole og som har opprettholdt en regelmessig bruk av mindfulness-øvelser i sin hverdag.

Utgangspunktet for denne studien er at jeg ønsker å bidra til et nyansert syn på nytten og verdien av mindfulness i menneskers hverdag, så vel som dens rolle i rådgivningsmøtet. Jeg inviterer deg med dette til å delta som intervjuperson og slik være med på å skaffe fram ny innsikt i de erfaringer og opplevelser som mindfulness mulig kan gi tilgang til.

Utover kriteriet om kunnskap om og regelmessig praksis av mindfulness-øvelser, er det også nødvendig at intervjupersoner i denne studien verdsetter intuitive ressurser i beslutningstaking og problemløsning.

Intervjuene vil kun lagres inntil studien er fullført, og datamaterialet som benyttes som empiri i masteroppgaven vil anonymiseres slik at informasjonen ikke kan tilbakeføres til deg som person.

Jeg håper du ønsker å delta! Dersom du vil være intervjuperson, send svar på solskje@yahoo.no, så vil jeg ta kontakt med deg.

Det er ønskelig å gjennomføre intervjuene i løpet av mars måned.

Med vennlig hilsen
Solbjørg Skjelstad

23.01.15

Information letter

Hi!

I'm a student at NTNU, and this year I will write a master's thesis at the program Science of Counselling (Rådgivningsvitenskap). The paper is written under supervision of Jonathan Reams.

The subject of my project is investigating if mindfulness has any influence on the way we use our intuitive resources in decision-making and problem solving. For this purpose I want to interview persons having completed the education program "Videreutdanning i Mindfulness. Den oppmerksomt nærværende profesjonsutøver" at the collage Haraldsplass Diakonale Høgskole, which has maintained a regular practice of mindfulness exercises in their everyday life.

By doing this research I wish to contribute to a nuanced perspective on the usefulness and value of mindfulness in peoples lives, as well as it's role in the counselling relation.

I invite you to participate as an interview person and thereby provide new insight into the experiences mindfulness might give access into.

Besides the criteria of knowledge and regular practice of mindfulness, it is also necessary that the participants of this project value the use of intuitive resources in decision-making and problem solving.

The interviews will be stored only until the research project is completed, and the data used as empirical evidence in the master's thesis will be anonymised so that information can not be returned to you as a person.

I hope you want to participate!

If you want to be a interview person, respond to solskje@yahoo.no, and I will contact you. It is desirable to conduct interviews during the month of March.

With best regards
Solbjørg Skjelstad

Appendix B: Consent Form

Consent form

I declare that I am willing to be a participant in the project about mindfulness, intuitive resources and decision-making.

I am aware that I can withdraw from this project at any time during the research; either during the interview, or at any given point in the process without having any consequences for me.

The project is approved by NSD, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste, and thereby subject to ethical guidelines for anonymization as well as for storing and use of data material. I have been informed, and I am aware, that the conversation with the researcher is confidential, within the framework of counselling, and that all personal information will be anonymous.

If desired, the research participant will receive an electronic copy of the completed thesis as an appreciation of their contribution .

Name informant

Researcher

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg gir med dette en bekreftelse på at jeg ønsker å delta som intervjuperson i forskningsprosjektet ” Mindfulness og bruk av intuitive ressurser i beslutningstaking”.

Jeg er klar over at jeg når som helst i løpet av prosjektet kan velge å trekke meg – så vel underveis i intervjuet som senere i forskningsprosessen, uten at det vil medføre noen konsekvenser for meg.

Prosjektet er godkjent av NSD, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste, og er slik underlagt etiske retningslinjer om anonymisering, samt lagring og behandling av innsamlet data. Jeg er blitt informert om at samtalen med forsker er konfidensiell innenfor rammen av rådgivningsvitenskap, og at all informasjon vil bli anonymisert.

Dersom det er ønskelig kan forskningsdeltager få tilsendt en elektronisk kopi av den ferdigstilte masteroppgaven som takk for sitt bidrag.

Sted/Dato

Underskrift

Appendix C: Receipt NSD Approval

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES



Harald Hårfagres gate 29
N-5007 Bergen
Norway
Tel: +47-55 58 21 17
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Jonathan Reams
Institutt for voksnes læring og rådgivningsvitenskap NTNU

7491 TRONDHEIM

Vår dato: 18.02.2015

Vår ref: 41860 / 3 / AGL

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 26.01.2015. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

41860	<i>Mindfulness and its influence on beneficial use of intuitive resources in decision-making</i>
<i>Behandlingsansvarlig</i>	<i>NTNU, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
<i>Daglig ansvarlig</i>	<i>Jonathan Reams</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>Solbjørg Skjelstad</i>

Etter gjennomgang av opplysninger gitt i meldeskjemaet og øvrig dokumentasjon, finner vi at prosjektet ikke medfører meldeplikt eller konsesjonsplikt etter personopplysningslovens §§ 31 og 33.

Dersom prosjektopplegget endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for vår vurdering, skal prosjektet meldes på nytt. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>.

Vedlagt følger vår begrunnelse for hvorfor prosjektet ikke er meldepliktig.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Audun Løvlie

Kontaktperson: Audun Løvlie tlf: 55 58 23 07

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Kopi: Solbjørg Skjelstad Solskje@yahoo.no

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Avdelingskontorer / District Offices

OSLO: NSD, Universitetet i Oslo, Postboks 1055 Blindern, 0316 Oslo. Tel: +47-22 85 52 11. nsd@uio.no
TRONDHEIM: NSD, Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet, 7491 Trondheim. Tel: +47-73 59 19 07. kyrrsvarva@svt.ntnu.no
TROMSØ: NSD, SVF, Universitetet i Tromsø, 9037 Tromsø. Tel: +47-77 64 43 36. nsdmaa@svt.uit.no

Appendix D: Interview Guide

The participants were initially informed about the structure of the interview:

The interview consists of three main parts; one concerning your experience of decision-making situations, second part is based on a survey about decisions, and at last a part focused on reflection.

Introducing questions:

-What is your current occupation? How is regular a day at work?

-Do you apply mindfulness during your day at work?

*If so; Could you describe how mindfulness is helpful to you in your work?

-What stands out as the most important thing you learned at “Videreutdanning Mindfulness”?

Part 2 Phenomenological/Empirical: Decision-making

- Now I would like you to think about and briefly describe some typical decisions and choices you make during a regular week.

- Imagine a familiar situation like that right now, and try to describe what you experience right before you make the decision.

(* Guide through: what environment, situation, relations, feelings, thoughts, sounds body sensations, what do you see and hear?)

-And now I want you to think about and briefly describe to me a particularly important and significant decision you have made in your life.

- Imagine right now that situation where you made this important decision – which happened a long time ago or recently, and describe to me what you experience right before you make the decision.

(* Guide through: what environment, situation, relations, feelings, thoughts, sounds body sensations, what do you see and hear?)

Holistic

-Would you describe yourself as a person who sees the big picture in various situations where you make choices or solves problems? Or do you rather prefer to break down problem into smaller pieces and focus on the details?

*In what way do you think your strategy is helpful to you?

Inferential intuition

-If you are asked to – are you able to explain a choice made instantly /immediately /spontaneously?

* Do you have an example of such a choice?

-Are there situations where you find it especially adequate to make quick decisions to make the best choice?

* What kind of situation is this?

- When you make a quick decision within your field of expertise, are you then able to logically justify why you chose as you did?

* Could you briefly tell me about a decision like that?

-Would you say there is a logical explanation to all your immediate or instant decisions and judgements?

* How come?

Affective intuition

- Would you describe yourself as a person who lets your heart guide your decisions and actions?

* Could you elaborate this for me?

-What is your opinion about making decisions dependent on feelings?

- Do you trust your feelings when making choices?

*What determines if you trust –distrust your feelings?

- Do you sometimes experience to let your emotional reactions matter more than logical evaluations in decision-making?

* Do you experience any advantage or disadvantage from this?

Trans-rational/non-local intuition

-Have you ever experienced spontaneously discovering something completely new? Like finding a sudden and surprising solution to a problem to which you could not explain why or how you found this solution? Or experienced having a sudden insight or an aha-moment when successfully making a decision, which you later could not explain why or how you new what to do?

Empathy

-In relation to other people, in your private or professional life, could you describe some clues to how you understand or connect to the people around you?

Part 3: Reflection on intuition and mindfulness

- What is intuition for you? /What does the term mean to you? What are your criteria for saying you've experienced having an intuition? How do you know you've had an intuition?

-How do you become aware of an intuition? Do you hear, see, feel something or have an immediate thought?

-What influence would you say mindfulness has on you everyday life?

- Do you think anything is different in your decision-making now compared to before you started practicing and learning about mindfulness?

- Does something about mindfulness practice stand out as particularly helpful in decision-making or in problem - solving?

- When it comes to using intuitive resources – does it matter what kind of situation you are in?
If so, in what way?

- Are there any disadvantages associated with mindfulness practice and decision-making for you?

- Do you experience mindfulness to somehow be connected to how you use your intuitive resources?

Intervjuguide, Norsk versjon

Forskningsdeltagerne ble først informert om intervjuets struktur

Intervjuet begynner består av tre hoveddeler ; en knyttet til opplevelse av valgsituasjoner, andre del er basert på en survey om beslutninger, og til slutt en refleksjonsdel.

Introduserende spørsmål

-Hva jobber du med? Hvordan er en vanlig arbeidsdag for deg?

-Benytter du deg av mindfulness i løpet av arbeidsdagen?

* I så fall, kan du beskrive på hvilken måte mindfulness hjelper deg i arbeidet ditt?

-Hva framstår for deg som det viktigste du har lært på Videreutdanning Mindfulness?

Del1 Fenomenologisk/Empirisk: Beslutningstaking

-Nå vil jeg gjerne at du skal tenke på og beskrive kort for meg noen typiske valg og beslutninger du tar i løpet av en vanlig uke.

*Forestill deg en slik typisk valgsituasjon her og nå, og forsøk å beskrive hva du opplever rett før du tar beslutningen

→ Guide igjennom: Hvilke omgivelser, hvilken situasjon, hvilke relasjoner, følelser, tanker, lyder, kroppsformennelser, hva hun ser og hører.

- Nå vil jeg at du skal tenke på og beskrive kort for meg en spesielt viktig beslutning du har tatt i livet ditt.

* Forestill deg her og nå en slik viktig valgsituasjon som enten skjedde nå nylig eller for en tid tilbake og beskriv hva du opplever rett før du tar beslutningen.

→ Guide igjennom: Hvilke omgivelser, hvilken situasjon, hvilke relasjoner, følelser, tanker, lyder, kroppsformennelser, hva hun ser og hører.

Del2 Ulike typer intuisjon-Variabler

Holistisk "big-picture"

-Vil du beskrive deg selv som en person som søker å se helhetsbildet i ulike valgsituasjoner eller foretrekker du å heller dele opp problemer og valg i små deler?

* På hvilken måte synes du at denne strategien/ holdningen til valg og problemløsning er nyttig for deg?

Inferential

-Når du tar et umiddelbart valg- basert på et innfall eller en anelse- kan du da i etterkant gi en logisk forklaring på hvorfor du valgte som du gjorde? *Kan du kort beskrive et slikt valg ?

-Er det for deg noen situasjoner hvor du mener det er spesielt gunstig å ta raske avgjørelser?

* Kan du gjengi en slik situasjon for meg?

- Når du tar en rask avgjørelse innenfor et felt/område du har stor kunnskap og kompetanse /ekspertise - kan du da i etterkant gi en logisk begrunnelse for valget du tok?

* Kan du fortelle meg litt om en slik situasjon?

-Vil du si det er en logisk forklaring på alle de valgene du tar umiddelbart og på stående fot?

* Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?

Affektiv intuisjon

-Vil du beskrive deg selv som en person som lar hjertet lede deg eller guide deg i beslutninger og handlinger?

* kan du utdype dette for meg?

-Hva er dine tanker rundt det å ta beslutninger basert på/som avhenger av følelser?

- Stoler du på dine følelser i valgsituasjoner?

* Hva gjør at du stoler/ikke stoler på følelsene?

- Opplever du noen gang å la emosjonelle reaksjoner bety mer enn logiske evalueringer i valgsituasjoner?

* Ser du noen fordeler/ulempes ved dette?

Non-local intuition- Trans-rational/tacit/transpersonal intuition

-Har du noen gang opplevd å spontant oppdage noe helt nytt? Slik som å finne en plutselig og overraskende løsning på et problem, som du ikke kunne forklare i etterkant hvordan du kom

fram til? Eller slik som en plutselig innsikt eller aha-opplevelse som ledet til løsningen på et problem eller en beslutning du var fornøyd med?

Empati

- I dine relasjoner til andre mennesker-både profesjonelt og privat - kan du beskrive noen elementer i hva som gjør det mulig for deg å forstå andre og oppnå kontakt med andre mennesker?

Del 3: Refleksjon rundt intuisjon og mindfulness

-Hva er intuisjon for deg? Hva er dine kriterier for at du kaller noe en intuisjon? Hvordan vet du at du har opplevd å ha en intuisjon?

- Hvordan blir du oppmerksom på en intuisjon? Hører du noe, ser noe, føler noe eller får du en plutselig tanke?

-Hvilken innflytelse vil du si at mindfulness har på din hverdag?

-Synes du at noe har endret seg i måten du tar valg og beslutninger på etter at du begynte å praktisere mindfulness?

-Kan du nevne noe ved mindfulness som er spesielt nyttig for deg når du tar beslutninger og valg? Noe som hjelper deg i en valgsituasjon?

- Når det gjelder å benytte intuitive ressurser - spiller det noen rolle for deg hva slags situasjon og kontekst du befinner deg i? På hvilken måte i så fall?

-Er det for deg noen ulemper forbundet med mindfulness-praksis og det å ta beslutninger, valg og løse problemer?

- Opplever du at din praksis av mindfulness på noen måte henger sammen med bruk av dine intuitive ressurser?

Appendix E: A possible necessity for inclusion of intuitive resources

There are indications of a cultural discourse or sociocultural determined learning which creates a hesitation for sharing the use of intuitive resources and the experiences associated with using intuitive thinking and acknowledging intuitive perception.

This appendix is included as a note for showing some of the data which made me quite assured that increasing the acceptance and openness of these aspects of human experience is quite necessary for working as a mental helper and facilitate a profound understanding of what people are perceiving and thereby create meaning form.

For assisting people facing difficult decisions as well as transitions and developmental phases of their lives, intuitive resources and reasoning resources should be equally valued, at least to promote an open and trusting environment, but preferably as a genuine source of knowledge about oneself interacting with others and the world. And perhaps an allowance on a cultural level for regarding both intuitions and reasoning as valuable will both be efficient and healthy.

Extracts from each of the participants are here provided, without further analyses.

Sandra's extract is brought in because it seems like something holds her back from validating her experience.

Martine: *I think this is one of the most important discussions we can have, because I think all people have intuitive presentiments/sensations (fornemmelser) about the other person one is talking to. But when we are not allowed to talk about it we can't make it conscious (cf. Dane, 2011). I think that is pretty scary. (...) And in a way it's those who very clearly states a very spiritual understanding of the world that also choses to flag intuition so strongly. And that way the whole debate is harmed I feel.*

Sandra: *Sometimes there is some things I just can't get a hold of, and I think, there is something here and that is when I think intuition strikes. This thing that I can feel, or smell if people are afraid, right? But it is only in my head of course (laughs), but it is a very physical presentiment/sensation (fornemmelse) though..*

Anette: *This (intuition) is also things that are difficult to talk about in our society, because it's regarded as a bit crazy. And working with people I feel I have to be very careful with those things, because it's just how it is kind of. (...) I think it's important to give some space*

for that people can have strong presentiments/sensations (fornemmelser) or intuitive experiences without necessarily...I've for example experienced sitting on the death bed of people seeing and hearing things- can everything be explained by the medical? Is it because of a lack of oxygen or could it be real experiences? Who amongst us can sit and claim...

Liv: *When I reflect on my occupational life, I know that if I had trusted my immediate experience more, the results would have been better. By creating doubt about if I could trust myself and the immediate understanding, I've kind of gone up in my head and started fuzzing around up there. Then I became insecure and tried to observe, investigate and almost became more confused, and in retrospect I think ... I should have gone with it But it is quite difficult because it has to do with our culture, and you are supposed to kind of make everything so scientific. But I think about people I've let experience more than they should have because of this hesitation.*

Appendix F: Table of themes in four interviews

-Physical presentiment/sensation(“fornemmelse”)
-Increased calmness and openness to self, others and experience
-Intuitive resources and mindfulness practise experienced to be closely connected
-More able to discriminate between automatic behaviour, instinct and intuitive experiences
-Less fear based action
- Increased active reflection and analyses of options and following consequences
- Increased attention to feelings and sensations
-Choosing how to act, less hasty and impulsive decisions
- Watching themselves
-Being more able to trust decisions
(- Not making as many decisions anymore: 2 of 4)

Appendix G: Table 2: Example of analyses at three levels

Exert of transcription	Descriptive	Linguistic	Conceptual
<i>I'm sensitive in another way than before, less afraid of fearing my feelings.</i>	She experiences her sensibility to have changed and is not so afraid to feel what she is feeling	She does not say she is not afraid- only less afraid of being afraid of what she actually feels.	Increased ability to discriminate between fear and the reasons in present moment to be afraid. Recognition of fear based behaviour: seeing fear itself as separate from factors in present situation to be afraid of.