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AN EXPLORATION OF POWERFUL POWER OF THOUGHT EXPERIENCES USING INTUITIVE INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

This study explored participant's assumptions regarding power of thought and analyzed examples they provided of powerful power of thought experiences. The method used was intuitive inquiry, which allows for both traditional and transpersonal research techniques to be employed. Each of the four participants produced an initial two page (aprox.) reflection, read each others reflections, and then produced a second two page reflection paper. Clarifying questions were then asked, and the final coding and analysis completed. Six strong themes between all study participants were uncovered: belief that it can work, complexity, guidance, unity, choice, and release. A shared cosmology was observed that centered around participant choice. Two types of choice, and hence methodological attitudes towards power of thought (PoT), were observed: volitional and non-volitional. Volitional PoT participants tended to actively and consciously attempt to control the process and typically viewed guidance received during it as helpful feedback to those ends. For non-volitional PoT participants the process was more centered on the concept of surrender or turning things over to a higher intelligence/power. Feedback for these participants related to developing and maintaining a sense of connectedness with this intelligence/power.

Introduction

For purposes of this study, power of thought (PoT) is defined as the ability for thoughts to directly impact everyday macroscopic reality. This is not meant in the sense of one's decisions affecting the outcome of a particular event in time. Rather it should be seen as the concept of some sort of mental force exerted on reality itself, such that mentation alone literally affects the structure of reality. For example, prior to arriving at your destination you visualize a parking spot right in front of the door and it is there waiting for you when you pull up (Maurey, 1990).

Theories such as this currently enjoy strong support in popular culture as reflected in books like *The Secret* (Byrne, 2006) remaining at number one on a New York Times best seller list for 12 weeks as of this writing (The New York Times, 2007). In recent years many other related titles have also been strong sellers, ranging from more serious works by scholars such as Wayne Dyer (e.g., 2005, 2006) to texts which claim to result from non-human intelligence such as the works

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of Esther and Jerry Hicks (e.g., 2005, 2006a, 2006b). The messages in these texts are highly similar and essentially suggest that an individual's thoughts are directly responsible for the reality he or she inhabits. These suggestions range from total control of reality (e.g., Hicks, 2005, 2006a, 2006b; Byrne, 2006) to suggestions of varying degrees of control (e.g., Maurey, 1990; Dyer 2005, 2006).

Understanding the perceptions of people who believe that this phenomenon is real may be an important early step in understanding both the wider social appeal of these theories as well as the extent to which the theories have any basis in fact. Because of the phenomenon's ephemeral nature, intuitive inquiry (Anderson 1998, 2000) represents an ideal method for use in studying the perceived experiences associated with it. The purpose of this study is to sample a small population of people who believe that they have experienced this type of phenomena in an effort to determine common or otherwise meaningful experiential elements.

Review of the Literature

While a wide range of popular literature exists on this topic, relatively little is available from scholarly sources. Historically power of thought can be traced to the New Thought movement which originated in the U.S. in the late 1800's and was originally associated with using the mind to heal others, typically within a Christian framework (Satter, 1999). For a variety of cultural reasons, a shift occurred in the early part of the 1900's and the more commonly seen individual centered contemporary conceptualizations of it began to form (Braden, 1987). Some of the earliest organizations which advocated these methods are still in existence including: Unity Church and Religious Science (Science of Mind). While there are extensive bodies of organizational literature from various segments of the movement, they primarily contain discussions of doctrine, testimonials, and so forth; and are largely unsuited as an academic resource beyond historical and theoretical uses.

Though generally not designed to explicitly examine the claims of the power of thought community, there are a variety of academic studies which border on this topic and seem to suggest some validity may be found within the theories expressed. Perhaps the most extensive body of research originates from William Broad (2003), who spent decades examining the effects that one person can mentally produce on another's physiological systems. The pioneering work of Glenn Rein explored the effects of mentation on isolated biological elements such as DNA (Rein & McCraty, 1994). Neurologist Jeffery Schwartz (Schwartz & Begley, 2002) has proposed an empirically validated model of mental force affecting the metabolism and structure of the physical brain.

Similar examples may be found in research from William Tiller, as well as Princeton's former Engineering Anomalies Research laboratory and its current Global Consciousness Project. While researchers like Braud looked at effects on biological systems Jahn, Nelson and others at Princeton have primarily examined the effects mentation can produce on random systems such as electronic random number generators (Jahn et al, 1997). Tiller's work involves imprinting electronics with mental intent in such a way that these electrical devices are later able to affect their environments and the pH of water (Tiller et al, 2001, 2005). Underlying theoretical support

of these empirical results can be found in contemporary quantum theory, which seems to allow for the possibility of mental influence through its casual gap (Martin, 2007; Stapp, 2006).

Intuitive Inquiry and the Research Design

This study used the method of intuitive inquiry as described by Anderson: "intuitive inquiry seeks to provide an approach to research that systematically incorporates both objective and subjective knowledge through a step-by-step interpretive process - cycles of interpretation that shape the ongoing inquiry" (2000, p. 32). Intuitive inquiry can be thought of as a contemporary form of hermeneutics that utilizes the researcher's own perspective in seeking understanding of a topic. According to Anderson, "intuitive inquiry openly invites the researcher to structure the research method, procedures, setting and context to maximize (rather than minimize) the very gateway through which the researcher understands or is inspired by the experience studied" (p. 34).

This is an area of inquiry that I am passionate about. I chose it because of my personal experiences involving it, which is specifically allowed and advocated by Anderson when she comments on the method's suitability "to share and amplify ... personal experiences through the study of the experiences of others" (1998, p. 71). Unlike other qualitative research methods, intuitive inquiry places great importance on a researcher understanding his or her assumptions about the topic and recognizes that our "values and intentions frame the manner of our thinking and actions" (Anderson, 1998, p. 71). Procedurally, Anderson calls for "at least three iterative cycles (or spirals) of interpretation, the simplest version of the method approximating a full hermeneutical analysis" (2000, p. 35). Her first cycle has been omitted from this research design. It relates to topic selection which was done in advance of selecting the methodology. It is also designed to begin a reflective process for the researcher regarding the topic, however I am involved in ongoing, deep objective and subjective analysis in this subject area and did not feel it was necessary.

The second cycle involves reengaging, "the research topic through a ... text (or set of texts) to identify the structure and accompanying values the researcher brings to the topic" (Anderson, 2000, p. 36). In this stage the "researcher's initial structure and accompanying values become the preliminary lenses of interpretation, requisite for engaging with the text of others and interpreting their understanding of the topic" (p. 36). The similarity of this to bracketing in phenomenology can be seen in the following comment from Anderson, "The researcher must be extremely clear about her or his preliminary lenses, so that all conscious and unconscious preconceptions are brought to light" (p. 36).

The third and final cycle deals with data acquisition and analysis. According to Anderson this step involves both participant and text selection. However, in the current design, participant selection occurred prior to the first cycle as a function of the project's design phase. This is due to it being a class project that was discussed during the semester by all participants involved. For this study the third cycle will use the final portion of Anderson's definition of this cycle: "utilizing the hermeneutical lenses developed above [in cycle two], the researcher analyzes the new texts as a means for modifying, redefining, reorganizing, and expanding his or her understanding of the research topic. This final ... step allows the circle of understanding to expand

beyond the researcher's projections (in the positive sense) by spiraling in the experiences of others" (2000, p. 37).

Participants

The study consists of 4 participants, three women and one man. All are students in a class at California Institute of Integral Studies under Professor Allan Combs, PhD entitled "Integral Methods." The course is primarily designed as a qualitative methods class for PhD level students. The participants were self selected and formed around an area of interest. Participants' ages were 37, 43, 57 and 61. Two of the participants are PhD students, one has a Bachelor's degree, and one is a Bachelor's level student (senior level). Most of the women were raised Christian but no longer practice. The man is Jewish but does not practice. All rate themselves as 'spiritual'. Three participants are white, one is African-American. Socioeconomically, all four were raised middle class. Two remain middle class, one lower middle class, one lower class. Participants rate their previous experience with power of thought (on a scale of 0/none to 10/expert) as: 7, 8, 10, and 10. All have lived in multiple U.S. regions, including the West coast. One has also lived in Asia.

Participants' names are not used in the study. Instead, the participants are given labels P1-P4. To further aid in later analysis, a summary of the above information broken out by participant is provided below:

| | Gender/ Race | Age | Birth Socio | Curr Socio | Youth Religion | Curr Religion | PoT Exp | Edu |
|----|-----------------|-----|----------------|---------------|-------------------|------------------|------------|-----|
| P1 | F/W | 43 | Mid | Mid | None | Spiritual | 10 | HS |
| P2 | M/W* | 37 | Mid | Mid | None | Spiritual | 7 | BA |
| P3 | F/B | 61 | Mid | LoMid | Methodist | Spiritual | 10 | MA |
| P4 | F/W | 57 | Mid | Low | Protestant | Spiritual | 8-10 | MA |

*Jewish ethnicity

Procedure

Timeline:

The project's timeline was dictated by the constraints of the class that it occurred during. The initial project group began forming around March 25, 2007 and had finalized the bulk of the design using online collaboration through forum posts and offline conference calls by April 8, 2007 (14 days). The initial research proposal was completed on April 15, 2007 (7 days). Cycle 2 began on April 16 and lasted through April 22, 2007 (7 days). Cycle 3 began on April 22 and lasted through May 13, 2007 (21 days). This final paper was submitted on May 16, 2007

Uncovering assumptions

As noted previously, intuitive inquiry calls for the researcher to carefully examine his or her assumptions about the topic of inquiry. Unlike Phenomenology, these assumptions are not set aside (Creswell, 2007), but rather used in the interpretative process involving the data (Anderson, 2000). The primary task in cycle 2 is for the researcher to uncover his or her assumptions regarding the subject area. Anderson (2000) suggests that this be done by engagement with a

relevant text or set of texts to gain familiarity with the topic of study. As one of the few academics actively working in this area, this is less practical for me because of my previous and ongoing exposure to the subject area's major and minor texts. During the period of cycle 2, I was rereading Satter's (1999) text and working deeply with it as part of another paper.

Clearly, my expertise in this area is significant and I have formed many assumptions. For this project, I attempted to uncover them through intense personal reflection and narrative. For the class project, researchers also served as participants for each others' projects. The work involved with uncovering assumptions was rolled into the generation of texts which could then be analyzed by the other students as primary data sources. For the author, it served a dual role in allowing for deep, cyclical analysis of assumptions.

Data sources and collection

Each of the participants began by writing a paper which outlined his or her assumptions regarding power of thought and provided a description of a powerful power of thought experience. The exchange of these papers among class members participating in the project created the source material for everyone to use during cycle 3. The paper that was written by the researcher him or herself was only used by that researcher to uncover his or her assumptions (see 'Uncovering assumptions' above) and was not used as source material for cycle 3 in his or her individual project.

Once the original papers were circulated, an initial evaluation phase began (cycle 3). Each researcher read the papers of his or her classmates and was asked to revisit his or her original assumptions and experience. Following this, each participant's original paper was revised to incorporate new perspectives, information, depth, or whatever else evolved for him or her during this initial analysis phase. This new set of papers was circulated for another round of analysis. The participants then responded to each other's questions online in an internet web forum hosted by California Institute of Integral Studies. The goal was to provide any final clarifications needed as well as more deeply explore specific areas before final analysis. All papers were written in Microsoft Word and posted to another online web forum hosted by California Institute of Integral Studies. Papers were downloaded by me and archived electronically for later reference.

Intuitive inquiry accommodates a wide range of data analysis methods. As its name suggests, alternative ways of knowing are supported including methods utilizing altered states of consciousness such as meditation. While not ruling out alternative ways of knowing, this study focused on more traditional forms of qualitative data analysis as specified in *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* (Creswell, 2007).

There were three rounds of data analysis. The first occurred at the beginning of cycle 3 after the initial exchange of papers. The second occurred after the exchange of rewritten papers. Each of these involved textual analysis. The process began with reading, making margin notes, and forming initial codes. Each text was read several times and I tried to pay careful attention to the similarities and differences between them. As these were located, I grouped them into relevant contexts and themes. I looked for areas which required further clarification. This included both areas in which a participant's meaning was not clear, as well as similarities between stories

which differed slightly but were not fully documented by one or more of the participants. The latter were followed up on through posts on the web forum.

Results

Six shared themes were discovered among participants, which I've labeled as follows: belief that it can work, complexity, guidance, unity, choice and release.

Belief that it can work

As seen in the participant section, all participants in the study had expressed strong experience with PoT. While the degrees of confidence each felt in the process varied, in general each did believe that there was at least a chance of it working. In some instances this was a strong belief that resulted from actually having taught classes in various PoT methodologies, such as P1. In other cases it seemed softer and more emergent, such as with dance and theatrical performances discussed by P4. For P2 it seemed very context dependant as expressed in comments like,

“...if I truly, deep-down believed in something, that is when it would work itself out the way I wanted. But if I simply asked (or pleaded) out of fear for something, it rarely did.”

More generally, each participant felt that PoT was something which was a part of their life. P4 stated, “...I have experienced many events in my life that fit within this description [of PoT]...” Participants generally also expressed a belief that PoT was always functioning. P1 sums this up well, “We create with the power of our thoughts whether we're conscious of them or not...” While this was the predominant view among participants, it is worth noting that P2 also stressed the importance of alignment with the universe in order for the process to be most powerful.

Complexity

All participants felt that the underlying processes involved with PoT were highly complex, and this seemed to affect their various decisions regarding how to approach it. This was also reflected in participants' views that there may not be a singular reality. P3 discusses the “multiple varieties and dimensions in which this medium can manifest.” For P4 this clearly takes on an almost mystical tone,

“...every now and then we are reminded, usually abruptly, that others may not share our particular view of the real. Others may not appreciate our lived sense of cause and effect or share in our vested importance. It is on these occasions, after we recover from our momentary disorientation, that we reflect upon the relative nature of our experience in this life. Science is proving that our perceptions are not certain guides to the real at all. What is real apart from our perception of it may be quite different from our constructed panoramas.”

Perhaps not surprisingly P1, the participant who extensively explored and taught these concepts in the past often framed the underlying complexity within assumptions that related to her classes,

“Currently I believe that most people attempt to use PoT within the realm of cause-and-effect, but as we begin to explore more deeply the holographic nature of the universe, as we learn more about how synchronicity works, as the hidden secrets of quantum physics begin to surface, I think we’re going to see that the power of thought encompasses a much broader playing field than we can now imagine.”

P2 Also hints at this but from a more practical, control oriented perspective,

“I am just one small part of the equation that is the universe and I cannot possibly control the universe, much like I cannot control traffic.”

Guidance

The issue of complexity leads directly into the concept of guidance, which was expressed in a number of forms within the participants’ worldviews. P2’s definition of guidance was heavily related to the idea of a ‘higher self’ which is capable of “bridging the gap” between the conscious “ego” mind and “the rest of the universe.” Alignment with this connection was important for PoT to function.

P1 has more of a control orientation and views guidance very differently. To this participant, guidance functions through intuition as a form of feedback to guide the active PoT process. This control orientation is seen clearly in statements like, “With a little practice it’s actually quite easy to bring things into your life.” Despite this, even for this participant there seems to be an acceptance of higher guidance,

“I believe that my physical self is a portion of a greater self, and that while I do have individual choice the best outcomes happen when I open to the guidance of and wisdom of this greater self (who I assume has a greater perspective than my earth-bound aspect.)

Another expression of guidance was seen in the concept of flow. This concept also seemed to suggest altered states of consciousness, and is well expressed in the following comment from P4,

“...consciousness enters a state of “flow.” Your voice within, overself, or whatever, may notice things that you have not noticed in your normal state...”

Unity

All participants felt that there was an overall unity behind everyday experience. This was discussed in a number of different ways by the various participants. Regardless of how it is

defined, the concept of unity is principally viewed as the medium through which information exchange takes place and manifestation occurs. For P3 it was often wrapped up with a notion of “Divine Order” and it was intricately bound to PoT and manifestation:

“Working with this energy, focusing internally, meditating, I experience the pulse of universal energy, the flow. With time, I experience Divine Order anticipating my needs; an item, some knowledge or information becomes available; a person presents her/himself before the need arises.”

For P2 unity is represented by the concept of the “universe.” The previous concept of the higher self plays an integral role as seen in the following statement: “the higher self is at peace when the person is aligned with the rest of the universe and recognized its place and connections.” For P2 PoT is efficacious primarily when this alignment occurs. P4’s theatrical experiences bring out another side of the unity concept. This participant views the interchange of information between dancers, actors, the audience, and so forth as relating to Laszlo’s (2006) concept of an underlying information field. P1 views PoT as “simply the way life works” and to this participant unity is represented as the “rules of the game.”
Choice

Choice manifested in two respects. The first (C1) views PoT as a highly volitional process in which ongoing conscious choice/focus is very important. It is more active. The second (C2) views choice entering the picture primarily in relation to the extent of which guidance from the higher self or a similar concept is adhered to, and thus is more passive. I’ll also refer to this as non-volitional. As we’ve already seen, the concept of guidance is visible in both types of choices however C1 still retains a strongly volitional and ‘personal desire’ element that is less present in C2. The participants fall along a continuum with P1 generally most close to C1, and P2 most identified with C2.

Both, P1 and P3 fall mostly into the first type of choice. Strong volition can clearly be seen in the following statement by P3:

“Another key concept: we have choice, and we are always at choice. Even not choosing is a choice. To consciously choose is to be the active agent, the creator of my own life. To choose is to take responsibility for my actions, decisions, and yes, my thoughts. This also means choosing how to respond, acknowledging my “response-ability.” How I choose to respond determines how I am affected by the situation or events.”

Although strong volition initiates the PoT processes in P3’s cosmology, once underway guidance becomes very important to future choices. P1 and P3’s strong volitional beliefs also introduce the concept of personal responsibility, an example of which is seen in the following statement by P1:

“A couple of dicey topics often come up in conversations about the power of thought. One is the belief that those who subscribe to the

PoT advocate “blaming the victim.” A common argument is, “If you believe that our thoughts create reality then you are saying that women are responsible for acts of rape committed against them,” and “What about the Holocaust? Who would cho[o]se that?” I believe this is a misunderstanding and oversimplification of the process of PoT. However, it brings up the important concept of responsibility. I believe that in order to truly make use of the power of thought, we DO have to dramatically increase our sense of personal responsibility for the events and activities of our lives.”

For P2, choice centers on the degree to which surrender to higher self and the broader universe occurs. Despite the fact that P2’s narratives focus primarily on this idea, other more volitional beliefs do occasionally surface in the texts, suggesting that no participant fell completely within the C1 or C2 categories. At one point P2 discusses how, “...PoT is about making what I want into reality...”, and at other points the participant states:

“I can recall that when I kept thinking to myself during a particularly hard tennis match, “I hope I don’t miss another serve,” I naturally served it right into the net or way out of bounds. When I instead slowed down and envisioned myself hitting a good serve, starting with the wind-up motion, tossing the ball perfectly in the air, and then making true, powerful contact with the ball and watching it land in the service area and away from my opponent, I did just that.”

And,

“However, on the occasions that I feel afraid on a very challenging ski run, I have noticed that my ability drops considerably. Yet, if I take a similar run with a positive attitude and belief about my self—a recognition really that I can ski the run—then I can do it beautifully.”

P4’s focus on theatrical performance offers yet another view into the concept of choice. One of the key aspects of the participant’s methodology is “focal ability” and a high level of volition definitely appears to be involved. However, two different methods appear with P4’s statements as seen in the following quote, “...a dancer deliberately seeks to create a character or allows a personae to bloom and emerge from the immediate experience of the movement...” From this it appears that P4 uses a wider variety of choice than the other participants.

Release

Like the other themes, release is represented in a variety of ways in the participants’ experiences. While not explicitly discussed in P1’s materials, it is clearly visible in the story used as an example of a powerful power of thought experience. At one point the participant uses her PoT process and then falls asleep, releasing it. P2 talks about release in the context of letting go of “...desire – specifically, a feeling of “needing” it...” The participant likens this to “Leaning into” something as opposed to focusing on it with great intent.”

For P3, release could be seen in the way the participant approached trust, as seen in the following statement:

“Trusting also means having faith that the outcome or means may be unknown to me, and that it will be for my good although this might not be apparent at the time. Trusting means not knowing, becoming comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty.”

Release was also a very strong theme in P4’s experiences. The primary theatrical experience relayed by the participant has release at its core regarding the PoT it engendered. It is also directly discussed as one of the three stages in this participant’s PoT methodology. P4’s views are well summed up with her phrase, “You can’t ride a bicycle if you think about it.”

Discussion

Although each participant’s experiences were substantially different, an overall cosmology did appear to underlie all descriptions. All participants had a view that PoT could work, and felt they had seen it work. They also all viewed it as a complex process which was not fully knowable.

The core of the participants’ processes seemed to rely on choice. There were two themes in this regard, those who felt choice meant surrendering to the divine or higher self and those who felt choice meant listening to feedback as part of a more interactive process involving the conscious self. Each of these seemed to be a model in which participants felt they could mitigate the perceived complexity of the process, and each participant had a personal methodology that they used to do so. All participants also included some form of unity concept which was expressed as serving an interconnection, efficacy and/or guidance function.

This guidance function varied and, as with choice, could be said to exist in two forms conceptually among participants. For some, guidance was simply feedback for a highly volitional process. A good example might be the feedback provided by road signs while driving a car. Even if you know where you want to go, they are still helpful to let you know whether you are on or off course. This form of guidance was commented on principally by those using C1.

A second form of guidance was also present in the narratives, and related to participants’ use of C2. Participants who gravitated towards this method of choice generally felt it was best to surrender conscious control, and this required a feedback process of some kind. In this case, guidance essentially took the form of knowing the state of connection to the higher self, divinity or a similar construct.

It could be said that this study found two different worldviews regarding PoT. One relies on volitional, conscious control of situations and views guidance as means to that end. The second involves feeling connected to a higher form of intelligence/power and views guidance in relation to the degree of connectedness with that intelligence/power. It should be noted that even the most dogmatic practitioner exhibited at least some tendency to use their less dominant worldview. Among volitional participants, this was often expressed as a decision to occasionally give up control and accept that sometimes a higher intelligence knows better. Among non-volitional

practitioners, this was typically seen in less conscious ways and still wrapped in the language of alignment to a higher power, even though it was clearly a volitional method that was being employed.

Limitations

This study has severe limitations and should be regarded as exploratory, at best. It was done within a very short timeframe for a college course in which the participants had just learned the methodology. This is the first study I have conducted with this methodology, and there is the possibility that I did not understand it and that the study is flawed.

There are also questions about the study methodology itself. The methodology is only loosely defined in a book chapter and published paper. It has been used in a handful of dissertations, but not in a standardized form. It does not appear to have been used in any other peer-reviewed, published paper. Accordingly, it might not be valid for that purpose.

The study was also limited by the participants available. Participants self-selected based on an interest in the topic. The study involved only 4 participants. There are strong questions as to whether a self-selected group of 4 participants who study at the same school, within the same class, can produce results that are generalizable.

The study was also limited by the communications methods and levels among participants. The participants responded, in approximately two pages, to the initial questions defined in the methodology section. They then read each others’ work and wrote another revised response which also averaged 2 pages. Only a handful of clarifying questions were asked and answered online about these writings, towards the end of the study. A conference call was attempted to explore the materials more deeply but could not be organized due to schedule conflicts. The result is that there was only a small amount of material to work with from each participant, and it may not have been enough to adequately explore the topics under investigation.

Implications and Future Potential

The limitations of the study make its implications difficult to speculate on. Despite the limited amount of primary data, the analysis did appear to uncover quite a few shared themes between the participants. In addition, 16 themes were identified which were shared by two or more participants. It is reasonable to expect that additional communication with the participants could have produced new findings and clarifications that may have converted some of these partial themes to full themes.

Several of the six themes also overlap with themes in Heath’s study on the phenomenology of psychokinesis (2000). These are paired in the table below:

| Current study | Heath (2000) |
|-------------------------|--|
| Belief that it can work | Openness to the experience |
| Complexity | [Not specifically mentioned, but implied in several of Heath’s themes] |

| | |
|----------|--|
| Guidance | A sense of “knowing” Overlap with ESP Suspension of the intellect |
| Unity | A sense of connection to the target or other people that involves a transcendent level of interconnectedness A feeling of dissociation from the individual ego identity |
| Choice | Guiding the process |
| Release | Release of effort/attention |

It should be noted that Heath’s (2000) study was limited to 8 participants that were specifically chosen because of proven PK abilities. Therefore our study participants were more alike than different. However, Heath also found strong correlations between her categories and other similar studies which had been performed, effectively widening the number of trials. Because of the similarity of portions of the data to hers, it is reasonable to assume that additional replications might be beneficial.

Summary

Despite this study’s limitations, six strong themes between all study participants were uncovered: belief that it can work, complexity, guidance, unity, choice and release. Each corresponded with findings by a similar study which focused on the ability of mind to control matter (Heath, 2000). In addition, a shared cosmology was observed which centered around participant choice. Two types of choice, and hence methodological attitudes towards PoT, were observed: volitional and non-volitional. Volitional PoT participants tended to actively and consciously attempt to control the process and typically viewed guidance received during it as helpful feedback to those ends. For non-volitional PoT participants the process was more centered on the concept of surrender or turning things over to a higher intelligence/power. Feedback for these participants related to developing and maintaining a sense of connectedness with this intelligence/power.

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