

**AN INTERPRETATION OF THE ESSENCE OF GOAL-SETTING
AND EXCELLENCE AMONG TOP ATHLETES
AND PERFORMING ARTISTS**

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**AN INTERPRETATION OF THE ESSENCE OF GOAL-SETTING
AND EXCELLENCE AMONG TOP ATHLETES
AND PERFORMING ARTISTS**

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
of
Master of Science**

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Abstract

This thesis addresses the issue of goal-setting as a component of excellence. Although there has been considerable attention paid to goal-setting in the physical education and psychology literature, goal-setting amongst excellent performers in sport and the arts is an under researched field. Excellence, and more specifically how to achieve it, has been an increasingly popular area of study. The literature indicates that goal-setting has been studied in sport, business, the performing arts and sport. However, this study's focus will be on the performing arts and sport.

Six performers were interviewed as case studies. These performers were: Michelle Sawatzky, Henriette Schellenberg, Tanya Dubnicoff, Tracy Dahl, Evelyn Hart and Colleen Miller. These individuals were high-achievers, Canadian and English speaking. They had all completed a substantial portion of their careers so that a retrospective examination of their experiences was possible. They were knowledgeable and articulate individuals who felt that they had something to say about excellence and their achievement of it.

Each participant discussed events they consider to be highlights in their careers. Following a discussion of career highlights is a discussion of goal-setting and then of excellence. An analysis of the results is then offered. It was found that there were certain skills these performers utilized in order to achieve excellence. Goal-setting was one of these skills. As well, there are skills that these performers felt are necessary in order to maintain excellence. By

combining all responses, a discussion of the essence of excellence and the importance of mental training concludes the analysis section.

A conclusion and suggestions for future research concludes the thesis.

Acknowledgements

"You're responsible for your happiness and you are responsible for how far you go because nobody can say you cannot. You just have to believe you can" (Evelyn Hart, 1997, p.50).

This thesis is not the work of one person. It is a culmination of some very key people who each share in the sheer and utter joy of its completion.

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Chapter One

Introduction and Review of Literature

This thesis addresses the issue of goal-setting as a component of excellence. Although there has been considerable attention paid to goal-setting in the physical education and psychology literature, goal-setting amongst excellent performers in sport and the arts is an under researched field. Though other studies exist, the landmark work of Locke and Latham (1985) was the first to validate the link between goal-setting and sport. As well, excellence, and more specifically how to achieve it, has been an increasingly popular area of study (Orlick, 1990; Orlick & Partington, 1988; Lee, 1990; McCaffrey & Orlick, 1989). The literature indicates that goal-setting has been studied in sport, business, the performing arts, education and health care. However, my focus will be on the performing arts and sport. Since scant attention has been paid to the nature of excellence in performance and the achievement of that excellence, this research will be exploratory in form. A methodology which allows for the emergence of information on how excellent performers achieve superior performances, on the role of goal-setting in those performances, and on how these performers think about being and maintaining excellence will be used. The performers studied are from both disciplines, and were not necessarily formally taught to goal-set. These performers have been involved in their careers for some time and are top performers in their fields. I will be examining, firstly, if performers goal-set and if they do goal-set, how they do it. Secondly, I will be looking at whether their goals and goal-setting changed throughout their careers. Thirdly, I will be examining the link between goal-setting and excellence. More specifically, do people who

achieve excellence come to use mental skills such as goal-setting by a self-taught process? Alternatively, are people who achieve excellence those who have been taught mental skills such as goal-setting in some sort of a systematic manner by someone or something other than themselves? Or, is their acquisition of mental skills a combination of the two? Finally, if they do not believe they use goal-setting at all, how do they feel they have continued to be successful?

Definition of Key Terms

Many performers have the potential to reach the highest level of excellence in their field, to consistently be a peak performer. What makes one performer excellent and another moderately successful? What makes some performers able to handle pressure, to excel in the most adverse of circumstances? Why do some "make it to the top" while others simply achieve mediocrity?

Before I can begin to examine possible answers to these questions, there are eight key terms which must be defined and operationalized. These eight terms, performer, peak performance, peak performer, performance, excellence, success, mental training and mental toughness, are crucial to my thesis. The definitions which appear below are ordered solely in the interests of flow, and because one naturally seems to lead to the other. These definitions were developed by me, the researcher, and represent my own understanding of the concepts.

Performer: A performer is someone who performs a duty, executes a task or series of tasks, usually, but not always, in a particular field of endeavor. Examples of performers include violinists, conductors, actors, dancers, hockey players, figure skaters, and runners. Usually, but not always, a performer

performs the task or tasks in the presence of an "audience".¹

Performance: A performance is a specific point in time where a performer engages in the structured display, either public or private, of the skills they have acquired or are acquiring in a particular field of interest. For example, for a gymnast, a performance might consist of a beam routine at the Olympic Games. For a violinist, a performance might be a recital at their local community centre. However, a performance might also be when a runner embarks on their morning jog. Thus, a performance need not be done for public scrutiny, and may only be done by and for the performer who is performing it.

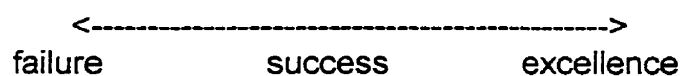
Peak Performance/Peak Performer: A peak performance is an extraordinary performance, or series of performances, where one performs excellently. A peak performance is one where a performer feels completely in control and is able to perform at or near their total potential. A peak performer is an extraordinary performer, one who consistently performs at or near the top of their particular field. Peak performers do not just talk about goals and missions, they translate them into results.

Excellence: Excellence is performance where one surpasses merit, or the standard, and achieves a supreme level of accomplishment for a particular task or in a particular field. When speaking about excellence, we often use words like "the best", the "fastest", the "most outstanding". In fact, when speaking about excellence, we always use superlatives. Excellence refers to the performer (when they accomplish a superior performance) or to the performance (when

¹ If a mime is engaging in a mime routine on a downtown sidewalk but there is no one around to watch him/her, are they not still a performer?

performed by a superior performer). Thus, excellence can refer to both or either the performer or the performance. The performer may define excellent performance as "the best I've ever done" or one where the audience or spectators respond as if the performance is "the best they've ever seen".

Success: Success refers to the performer's achievement of a particular task accomplished in relation to set (or understood) goals, measures, standards or expectations. It refers to completing what one started out to do, but does not necessarily account for the **quality** with which one completes the task. This quality of the completion of the task may or may not be part of the goal, measure, standard or expectation. For example, a novice athlete may have achieved tremendous success at his/her competitive level, as measured by races won, but could hardly be referred to as someone who has achieved excellence in his/her field. While excellence is a more internal or personal definition (but not exclusively), success is more externally defined, that is, by something or someone aside from the performers themselves. If we think of these concepts as being on a continuum with failure at the extreme left, success would fall somewhere at the midpoint and excellence at the extreme right.



Mental Training: Mental training refers to the practice and use of psychological techniques such as goal-setting, imagery, attentional control, team building, focusing, planning, and self-talk to aid one's performance. Mental training can, for example, help an athlete stay focused on performance despite numerous distractions at a major international competition such as an Olympic

Games. Mental training can help a principal dancer in a ballet company relate more effectively with the corps de ballet by using team building strategies.

Mental training can even help an athlete overcome major injuries by employing imagery strategies as coping skills.

Mental Toughness: Mental toughness refers to how psychologically strong a person is. It may, for example, be the quality that allows people to deal with adversity and stressful situations. It may be what allows people to endure, to repeat endlessly, or to stay on task without being distracted. When we speak of toughness, we often use words like "strong", "rigorous", "able", "courageous", and "enduring". Toughness is both an attitude and a behaviour. Mental training can help performers become more mentally tough. Mental toughness is crucial to how well athletes will respond under the stress of a competition. For example, it is the athlete who is psychologically superior, not necessarily physically superior, who will perform at their best on competition day.

Review of Literature

The next section of the chapter will be a review of literature, specifically relating to what is known about effective goal-setting and the essence of excellence. As a preface to this review, it is pertinent to offer brief biographies of the two leading researchers whose names appear frequently throughout. While goal-setting has been researched by many others, the work of Dr. Terry Orlick and Dr. Cal Botterill is that with which I most identify. I identify with them for many reasons, but predominantly for their athlete-centered, qualitative approach.

Dr. Terry Orlick is a sport psychologist and professor at the University of

Ottawa and has been a prominent force in the field of mental training and the pursuit of excellence since receiving his PhD in 1972. He has written numerous books and articles on mental training and youth sports, such as *In Pursuit of Excellence* and *Psyching For Sport*, and has consulted with dozens of elite athletes and performers of all kinds, helping them achieve excellence in both their professional and personal lives.

Dr. Cal Botterill is a sport psychologist and professor of Physical Activity and Sport Studies at The University of Winnipeg. He is currently on sabbatical and on a three-year teaching post at the University of Calgary. He has consulted the Canadian National Men's Basketball team, the Chicago Blackhawks, New York Rangers, The University of Winnipeg Women's Wesmen Basketball Team and countless individual and team sport athletes. Currently, he consults many of Canada's finest athletes at the National Sport Institute in Calgary. He is the author of *Every Kid Can Win* (with Terry Orlick) as well as many articles on mental training techniques.

Although many performers have the potential to reach the highest level of excellence in their fields, few do. Some rise to the top, while others spend the majority of their careers somewhere in the middle. Some performers can survive in the face of extreme adversity and pressure. In fact, some even thrive in the most difficult of circumstances where others would likely crumble. What makes some performers capable of achieving excellence despite the odds? Why do some achieve excellence while others achieve only success?

There are many possible answers to these questions. To a certain degree,

their ability to achieve excellence might be, in part, due to natural ability. Or, perhaps people who achieve excellence simply work harder than the rest. I believe that one of the degrees of separation between an excellent performer and an ordinary one, however, lies in their ability to be mentally tough; i.e. in their ability to surpass all obstacles and stay on the psychological path to excellence. Brent Rushall suggests that by the time an athlete gets to the Olympic level, for example, their potential for excellence is largely, "...determined by psychological factors" (1989, p. 167). In a 1988 study of 235 Canadian Olympic athletes, Terry Orlick and John Partington found that athletes' mental skills and mental toughness strongly influenced how well they performed at the Olympic Games.

The literature (Orlick & Partington, 1988; Rushall, 1992; Friesen, 1994; Williams, 1993) indicates that several mental training techniques are considered pivotal in a performer's ability to achieve. These include goal-setting, imagery and visualization, relaxation, self-talk, concentration and pre-competition/competition planning. A discussion of some of the benefits of goal-setting follows, as well as its potential and demonstrated effects on performance. Finally, a discussion on "how to" goal set will be offered, as indicated in the literature.

Goal-setting

Benefits

One of the most important mental training techniques is goal-setting (Botterill, 1983, 1987; Orlick & Partington, 1988; Orlick, 1986; Jones & Hardy, 1990; Locke & Latham, 1985, Boyce & Wayda, 1994). Weinberg defines a goal as, "...that which an individual is trying to accomplish; it is the objective or aim of an action"

(1996, p. 4). Botterill (1987), Martin & Lumsden (1987) and Orlick (1986) suggest that performers need to set goals in five major areas: technical (skill development), tactical (strategy), physical (fitness), psychological (mental skills), and environmental (interpersonal relationships).

Several studies have been done in the past five years which support the use of goal-setting in a sport setting. In 1994, Boyce and Wayda studied the effects of goal-setting on motivation with 252 weight trainers. Results indicated that the two goal-setting groups were "...found to be statistically superior to the control group [no-goal]..." (p. 258).

Kingston and Hardy (1997) state that the effectiveness of goal-setting programs in a sport setting, "...has been plagued by equivocation" (p. 277). They addressed this and other issues in their study of a goal-setting program with club golfers. Using two standardized methods of assessment (the State Anxiety Inventory-2 and the Sport Psychology Skills Questionnaire), golfers (N=37) completed the questionnaires prior to and following goal-setting intervention. Results indicated, "...a strong argument for the use of goal-setting as a valuable psychological intervention strategy" (1997, p. 289).

In 1995, Kyllö and Landers argued that although the benefits of goal setting have consistently been shown to improve performance in the industrial psychology research, "...its effect has not been clearly demonstrated in the sport domain" (p. 117). Using meta-analytic procedures, they statistically combined thirty-six previously published studies which studied the relationship of goal-setting to performance in the sport and exercise domains. Regardless of whether the goals were vague or specific, Kyllö and Landers found that, "...overall, setting

goals improves performance in sport and exercise by 0.34 of a standard deviation" (p. 126). They also found that moderate goals were more successfully met than difficult goals. Kyllö and Landers further state that, "The greatest improvements came from absolute goals" (p. 128).

The effectiveness of goal-setting on enhancing sport performance is further supported in a study by Wanlin, Hrycaiko, Martin and Mahon (1997) in which the effectiveness of a goal-setting package was assessed with four female speed skaters. Using a single-subject, multiple baseline across individual design, a goal-setting intervention program was used to evaluate its effects on the skaters' off task behaviour. Results demonstrated, "...that the goal-setting package was effective for influencing the skaters to work harder (i.e., do more laps and assigned drills), and show less off-task behaviour" (1997, p. 225).

Goal-setting serves several purposes. Firstly, setting goals clarifies priorities, be that in a practice, performance, or in life (Botterill, 1987; Locke & Latham, 1985). It makes one sit down and decide what one wants and how to go about getting it. As Terry Orlick suggests, goal-setting not only gives you something to "shoot for", it takes away the blindfold so you can see your target (1986). Secondly, goal-setting increases the athlete/performer's commitment, each day presenting new heights to strive for (Botterill, 1987; Locke & Latham, 1985). Thirdly, goal-setting can increase self-confidence and morale due to more frequent successes (Botterill, 1987; Orlick, 1990; NCCP Coaching Level 2 Manual, 1989; Locke & Latham, 1985). Each goal met is a "win" in and of itself. Fourthly, goal-setting teaches a performer self-management skills helpful for all aspects of everyday life (Botterill, 1987; Kassing, 1992). If one can set

performance goals for oneself in hockey, for example, you can set study goals for school, or business goals at work. Garfield writes that an additional benefit of goal-setting is that it encourages mental imagery, an important aspect of mental training (1984). In the process of formulating goals, "...we create detailed mental images of actions and desired outcomes" (Garfield, 1984, p.62). Finally, goal-setting gives more control to the performer over their enjoyment and participation in the activity (Botterill, 1987; Burton, 1989; Kassing, 1992). How hard you want to work tomorrow depends on you and the goals you have set and accomplished for yourself, not just on what your coach and/or significant others expect from you.

Dream Goals

Botterill (Class notes, 1994), Orlick (1986) and Garfield (1984) stress the importance of having a dream goal. Botterill (Class notes, 1994) states that before one develops daily, monthly, even yearly goals, it is important to dream first. What would be your ultimate goal? Would it be, for example, winning the Olympics, dancing in the finest ballet company in the world, or conducting the Berlin Philharmonic? Orlick suggests that a dream goal comes about by, "imagining the possibility of unlimited possibility", where absolutely nothing stands in your way (1986, p.6). Garfield refers to a dream goal as a "mission" for what would be your ultimate accomplishment (1984, p.61). Garfield writes that developing a mission is the first step in developing an effective goal-setting program.

After asking an athlete or performer what their long term dream goal is, Orlick (1986) then asks them what their dream goal for the coming year is. He asks

them, "What is potentially possible if all your limits are stretched this year?" (1986, p.15). Orlick states that the importance of dream goals is not whether one achieves them. Instead, their significance is that they remove some of the psychological barriers which may prevent 100% commitment to one's goals. He writes, "What you aim at affects how you approach a target, how you approach yourself, and what you are likely to hit" (1986, p.6). These words are echoed by singer/entertainer, Michael Jackson who, in his autobiography entitled *Moonwalk*, says that, "If you don't aim for something, you'll never know if you could have hit the mark" (1988, p.272). For a performer, dream goals serve as the mark. For an athlete, that mark may be expressed in annual, quadrennial or career terms, such as a World Championship, the Olympic Games or a career of achievements. For a musician, the mark may be a competition, a position with a particular orchestra, or, like an athlete, a career of achievements.

Performance Versus Outcome Goals

Many mental trainers make a very distinct separation between performance and outcome goals and stress that performance goals are the only goals which should be set by performers (Orlick, 1986, 1990; Botterill, 1983; Beggs, 1990; Gould, 1993; Burton, 1989). Performance goals are those which are set based only on "...attaining challenging personal performance standards" (Burton, 1989, p.105). Weinberg and Gould (1995) state that performance goals, "...focus on achieving standards or performance objectives that are compared with your own previous performances" (p. 318). They focus only on those elements which are within the performer's control, such as skating a clean program or skiing a best personal time (Orlick, 1990). Outcome goals, on the other hand, can be very

dangerous to a performer because they focus on elements beyond their control, such as winning an event or beating a particular competitor (Orlick, 1990; Burton, 1989; Gould, 1993). Weinberg and Gould tell us that because outcome goals focus on a competitive result, achieving them, "...depends not only on your own efforts but on the ability and play of your opponent" (1995, p. 318). A goal of beating someone else can be an unrealistic goal because it involves too many other factors over which one has no control: judges, condition of ice or playing field, the performance of the other individual. All of these other factors could easily combine to disappoint the performer. For example, As Weinberg and Gould state, "You could play the best tennis match of your life, and still lose - and thus fail to achieve your outcome goal of winning the match" (1995, p. 318). On the other hand, a goal of "skating a clean program" versus "winning the event" gives a skater complete control over the situation. Whether they attain that goal or not does not involve or depend on someone else's performance or other things beyond the athlete's control. Burton states that one of the dangers of outcome goals is that they often prevent the performer from taking the credit for their achievement of excellence (1989). For example, a figure skater could enter an event with the goal of winning. That skater could skate a flawless program and win but also see that every other skater in the event performed poorly. The psychological reason for him/her winning the event shifts from his/her great skate to "because no one else skated well". Conversely, if a skater enters an event with the intention to skate his/her best program of the season and does so, he/she has "won" the event, regardless of his/her chronological placing. Their goal was accomplished and, therefore, success was achieved. A potential

danger with setting performance goals in this manner is that it sets up a "success at every turn" mentality where a performer seemingly can do no wrong. This constant achievement of goals might begin feeling false to the performer after an extended period of time. Thus, caution must be used in the number of performance goals set for a given practice or performance.

The second reason why performance goals are more effective than outcome goals is that performance goals allow for consistent and frequent success because they are set on a daily, or nearly daily, basis (Burton, 1989; Botterill, Class Notes, 1994; Orlick, 1990). They help to motivate and build self-confidence because rather than hinging the success of a performer's entire season on one game, one competition, or one performance, the athletes can instead find excellence in all of the accomplishments they make every day (Orlick, 1990). As Orlick tells us, "Achieving a goal, even a short-term one, makes you feel good and acts as a stimulus to pursue the next goal..." (1990, p.27).

In 1996, Lerner, Ostrow, Yura and Etzel conducted a study which investigated the, "...effects of goal-setting and imagery programs, as well as a combined goal-setting and imagery training program, on the free-throw performance among female collegiate basketball players over the course of an entire season" (p. 382). Using a multiple-baseline, single subject design, participants were randomly assigned to one of three interventions: goal-setting, imagery or goal-setting and imagery. "The overall findings for this study indicate the goal-setting intervention increased practice basketball free-throw performance..." (p. 392). In addition, a positive correlation was found, "...between participants' free-throw performance

and personal [performance] goals" (p. 382).

Performance goals ensure that "...success is evaluated based on the one aspect of competition that athletes completely control-their own performance" (Burton, 1989, p.107). Also, performance goals increase confidence and morale based on the potential for more frequent and immediate success (Botterill, 1987, Orlick, 1990).

Short Term Goals Lead To Long Term Goals

Once a performer has identified their dream goals, the next step is to develop daily, monthly and yearly performance goals to achieve them (Orlick, 1990, Botterill, 1983). It is important that these goals are developed sequentially, that is, that short term goals lead to long term goals (Botterill, 1983, Class Notes, 1994). Wann (1997) states that "When goals are established in an improper fashion, they may actually inhibit motivation, effort and performance" (p. 166). Olympic gold medalist in swimmer John Naber (in Locke & Latham, 1985) describes wanting to improve his time in the backstroke by four seconds in four years. Four seconds became his long term goal, however he then broke this goal down into improving 1/300th of a second per day. Suddenly, his goal seemed manageable. He then broke his goal down further to improving 1/1200th of a second every hour. Improving four seconds in four years now felt like a surmountable task.

Short term goals are important for several reasons. First, short term goals provide motivation to the performer because they provide frequent success (Gould, 1993; Orlick, 1990; Botterill, 1987). Second, short term goals help the performer focus more effectively (Botterill, 1987; Gould, 1993). They provide

order and clarity to training programs and help one focus on the tasks at hand (Botterill, 1987; Orlick, 1990). Finally, short term goals help keep the performer on the track to fulfilling his/her long term goals (Orlick, 1990; Gould, 1993). They are a daily reminder of the mission you are on (Garfield, 1986). Orlick (1990) suggests that examples of short term goals might include mastering a skill, getting enough rest, running through a certain number of clean programs. Long term goals might include a personal best performance in the season, including the skills one has mastered in one's routine, or running a race in a certain time (Orlick, 1990). For example, a long term goal might be to complete this thesis in six months. The short term goals then become the daily, weekly and monthly goals one sets in order to meet this long term goal. Short term daily, weekly, and monthly goals should follow a natural progression to the achievement of long term goals (Botterill, 1987).

When developing a daily goal-setting plan for performers, Orlick often suggests that before each training session, they ask themselves the following questions: "What am I going to do today? How am I going to approach what I'm going to do today? What am I going to do today to improve my mental strength?" (1986, p.17). Orlick (1986) maintains that what you do with each individual training session is what will carry you to your ultimate goal. Orlick (1990) also stresses the importance of keeping one's goals realistic to one's capabilities in order to avoid repeated disappointment. Orlick and Partington in their study of Canadian Olympic athletes found that the most successful athletes were those who set clear daily goals, those who "...knew what they wanted to accomplish each day, each workout, each sequence or interval" (1988, p.111).

Specificity of Goals

Locke and Latham (1987) state that specific goals elevate performance much more than do vague or general goals (1985). This has been further supported by Orlick (1986, 1990), Botterill (1983, 1987), Gould (1993), Lerner & Locke (1995), and Zimmerman & Kitsantas (1996). An example of a vague goal might be, "I want to do the best I can today". Whereas, an example of a specific goal might be, "I want to do a full ten minutes of stroking and two clean run-throughs of my program today".

In 1995, Lerner and Locke undertook a study which, "...investigated the effects of goal-setting, self-efficacy, competition, and personality on the performance of a sit-up task" (p. 138). Subjects were randomly assigned to one of four conditions: (a) competition, medium goal; (b) competition, high goal; (c) no competition, medium goal; and (d) no competition, high goal (p. 138). Several conclusions were drawn from this study. Among them are, first, "...the do-best participants performed worse than participants with specific, hard goals" (p. 149). Second, personal goals proved to be very significant factor when assessing the level at which a subject performed.

Botterill suggests that using specific goals enables one to be able to translate one's idealistic dream goals into measurable, achievable goals (1987). Botterill goes on to say that, "When goals are specific, there is less confusion, more *obvious responsibility*, and greater commitment to the plan" (1983, p.72). Locke and Latham support this notion of specific goals helping the performer focus more effectively by stating that, "...specific goals will regulate action more precisely than general goals" (1985, p. 209).

Difficult But Realistic Goals

Goals should be difficult enough to motivate but realistic enough that achievement of them is possible (Locke & Latham, 1985; Gould, 1993; Garfield, 1984). Locke and Latham (1985) state that goals which are difficult or challenging tend to be more successful in creating elevated performance levels than those that are easy or moderate. It must be said, however, that while setting difficult goals is important, one must also remember not to exceed the performer's capabilities and skill levels when doing so (Gould, 1993; Martin & Lumsden, 1987). This will only lead to frustration. As Garfield states, "...each goal must have a high probability of success" (1984, p.85).

In addition to goal difficulty, many mental trainers advocate making the task itself more difficult so that when the performer has to complete the skill for real, it will seem easy (Locke & Latham, 1985, Smith, 1980). For example, in preparation for the 1994 Winter Olympic Games, figure skater Nancy Kerrigan completed at least five run-throughs of her long program, in a row, each training session. The intention in doing so was to elevate her fitness level to such an extent that when only having to complete one run-through of her program, it would feel like a Sunday stroll through the park (CBS Sports Coverage, February, 1994). Nancy built this training technique right into her goal-setting program by having it part of her daily goals. However, this technique must be done within reason and with adherence to fitness recovery principles to avoid over training. Over training could lead to serious physical and psychological problems such as fatigue, injury and burnout.

Athlete/Performer Involvement

Another important component of an effective goal-setting program is ensuring that the athlete/performer is involved in the process (Locke & Latham, 1985; Botterill, 1987; Orlick, 1990; Gould, 1993). In order for goals to be the most effective, a performer's commitment to them is essential. If an athlete is actively involved in setting his/her goals, it is more likely that he/she will be more committed to them, thereby increasing the chances that the goal-setting program will be effective (Botterill, 1977, 1987; Orlick, 1990; Locke & Latham, 1985). Beggs (in Jones & Hardy, 1990) states that goal commitment refers to, "...one's attachment to, or determination to reach, a goal..." (p.141). For this commitment to happen, participation in goal development is key.

Theodorakis (1996) studied the effects of goals and goal commitment on tennis performance. Forty-eight subjects, "...performed four trials of a specific service task" (p. 171). Players set personal goals before the third and fourth trials. Results indicate that goal commitment and personal goal-setting appear to be key factors in improved performance in a sport setting.

Locke and Latham (1985) suggest that joint goal-setting done by performer and coach/teacher is just as effective as if it is done by just the performer. Further evidence of the need for athlete/performer involvement in goal-setting is provided by a study done by Botterill (1977) which found that the type of goal-setting which had the most profound effect on performance were group goals, set *by the group for the group*. Orlick tells his performers that, "It is important that you set your own goals, rather than having someone else set them for you. Your decision increases your commitment and motivation" (1990, p.28). Orlick goes

on to say that shared goal-setting, those where the performer's parents, coaches or partners are involved are valuable as well, but only if the performer is sure that the eventual goal is one that he/she really wants (1990).

The notion that athlete involvement is critical in the effectiveness of a goal-setting program is further supported in a study by Fairall and Rodgers (1997). In this study, sixty-seven athletes from various track and field events were used to examine, "...the relationship between athletes' perceptions of their goals and the method of goal-setting used" (p. 3). At the conclusion of the study, athletes who had been placed in the assigned condition (where their goals were assigned by the coach) and those placed in the participative condition (where goals were mutually decided upon by the athlete and the coach) reported feeling significantly less involved in the goal-setting process than the athletes who were placed in the self-set condition (where the athlete set their goals with no outside influence). "These results indicate that the athletes recognized the degree to which they were involved in setting the goals" (Fairall & Rodgers, 1997, p. 13).

Keeping Written Records

It is important that goals, when decided on, be written down and expressed in terms of a date for achievement (Orlick, 1986, 1990; Kassing, 1992; Gould, 1993; Rushall, 1992). There are several reasons why goals should be recorded and their progress charted. First of all, recording and charting keeps the performer on track over the course of the entire year (Gould, 1993). Gould (1993) states that while a goal which has been recently set might be in the forefront of one's mind, six months down the road, it may be starting to fade. Recording goals will serve as a reminder throughout training (Gould, 1993). Botterill (1983) suggests that

the coach make a goal-setting card for each athlete where individual goals are recorded as a contract. The coach and athlete both sign the card and the coach can refer to the card later to remind the athlete of his/her goals (Botterill, 1983).

Secondly, an important component of goal-setting is ensuring that the goal being set is done so in measurable terms (Kassing, 1992; Orlick, 1990). By writing a goal down and being able to see it on paper, it is easier to chart its progress and/or success. One of the criteria stated for goal-setting in the dance class in a study done by Kassing was that the goals developed by the dancers be measurable (1992). If goals are written down, they are easier to measure in terms of their accomplishment. Orlick and Partington (1988) also found that the most successful athletes wrote down their goals in specific and measurable terms.

Another benefit to keeping a goal and its target date written down is that it serves to motivate the performer to achieve it (Orlick, 1990; Gould, 1993). Gould says that by keeping goals and their target dates written down, an athlete is constantly reminded of the, "...urgency of accomplishing their objectives..." (1993, p.163). Orlick further suggests that by writing goals, a performer is able to chart his/her progress more systematically, which serves to motivate his/her to continue (1990). As well, charting progress helps the performer make adjustments to unrealistic or inappropriate goals when necessary (Orlick, 1990). Finally, keeping goals and their progress recorded in a systematic way helps provide feedback to the performer, which is a crucial step in the success of a goal-setting program (Beggs, 1990; Martin & Lumsden, 1987; Gould, 1993; Locke & Latham, 1985). It provides independent feedback because the performer can

see, in writing, his/her achievements or, perhaps, where adjustments need to be made (Orlick, 1990). But also, written records help a coach or teacher provide feedback to the performer for the same reasons as above (Botterill, 1983).

Goal of Self-Acceptance

As a final goal-setting step, a performer should be encouraged to set a goal of self-acceptance, which, Orlick states, is where one will "...resolve in advance that you will accept yourself (your totality) even if a performance happens to go badly..." (1986, p.7). There are many things which simply lie beyond a performer's control. In the end, no matter what the outcome of any of the goals one has set for oneself, one must be able to accept oneself. Reaching this goal of self-acceptance will reduce anxiety and help to avoid poor performances by reducing the irrational pressure performers often put on themselves (Orlick, 1986). It also helps one avoid the depression which often results from a disappointing performance (Orlick, 1986). How a performer performs on a given day in an ice arena, on a stage or on a field, should not affect his/her worth as a human being. Challenging oneself to believe this sentiment should be one of the most important goals one sets.

Goal Perspective Theory

A recent development in the goal-setting literature has been the introduction of goal perspective theory. Developed by Duda (1989, 1988, 1992, 1994, 1997), it was originally formulated for application in an education setting to increase student motivation. Applied to a sport setting, goal perspective theory assumes that, "...the goals individuals emphasize guide their thoughts, feelings and behaviours in achievement activities" (Duda, 1997, p. 245). Goal perspective

theory states that there are two types of goal preferences: task involvement and ego involvement. Wann tells us that task involvement goals, "...concern the mastery of a task and are found in persons interested in improving their own ability" (1997, p. 170). Ego involvement, "...involves the desire to be better than others at a task" (Wann, 1997, p. 170). Therefore, an individual who is task involved is likely to set performance goals (goals set in relation to bettering themselves). An individual who is ego involved is more likely to set outcome goals (goals set in relation to other competitors). Duda tells us that if someone is focussed on task involved goals, "...the experience of learning, hard work and task mastery are fundamental to a sense of accomplishment in this case" (1997, p. 245). Conversely, "...one meets an ego goal when she/he demonstrates superior ability relative to others" (Duda, 1997, p. 245). In addition, studies which have examined goal perspective theory indicate that athletes who are task oriented view sport activities as an opportunity to work hard, work with others and reap intrinsic rewards (Duda, 1994). Athletes who are ego oriented view sport as, "...a vehicle to extrinsic gains and personal glory" (Duda, 1994, p. 130).

In 1998, Gilbourne and Taylor discussed goal perspective theory in a sport injury context. Goal-setting is discussed as a skill which can, "...empower the injured athlete with skills that encourage a stronger task orientation..." (p. 124). Encouraging injured athletes to focus their goals in a task oriented way is said to be beneficial to their recovery. Gilbourne and Taylor state that, "...there is value in injured athletes having the option of directing behaviour and reviewing rehabilitation progress from a task-oriented perspective" (1998, p. 136). Doing so focusses them on that which is within their control and away from that which is

not.

Also in 1998, Hall, Kerr and Matthews investigated, "...the links between perfectionism, achievement goals, and the temporal patterning of multidimensional state anxiety in 119 high school runners" (p. 194). Prior to a cross country meet on four separate occasions, runners' perfectionism, achievement goals and multidimensional state anxiety were assessed. Among the findings was that, "...ego and task goals contributed to the prediction of cognitive anxiety and confidence, respectively" (Hall, Kerr & Matthews, 1998, p. 194).

In conclusion, the literature indicates that goal-setting can be a useful tool that athletes can utilize to increase level of performance. It is important for athletes to set dream goals and performance goals and that their short term goals follow a natural progression toward their long term goals. In addition, goals should be set in a specific way and should be difficult enough to challenge but realistic enough to achieve. The athlete/performer should be involved in setting their own goals and, once these goals are set, they should be recorded in written format. It is important for the athlete/performer to set a goal of self acceptance. Finally, goal perspective theory purports that individuals should set task oriented goals rather than ego oriented goals. Many studies are currently being conducted using the goal perspective theory.

Excellence

The most significant study conducted on sporting excellence in the last fifteen years was done by Orlick and Partington in 1988. *Mental Links to Excellence*

was the result of an extensive survey of 235 Canadian Olympic athletes who participated in both the summer and winter Olympic Games of 1984. The authors found that there were many commonalities among athletes in terms of how they prepared, physically and mentally, for practices and competitions. Some of these "links to excellence" included quality training (versus quantity training), clear daily goals, imagery training, simulation training and mental preparation for competitions (Orlick and Partington, 1988). Many of the athletes stressed the importance of being "mentally tough" and felt that "...they could have reached the top much sooner if they had worked on strengthening their mental skills earlier in their careers" (Orlick and Partington, 1988, p.119).

More recently, Davis and Mogk (1994) attempted to address whether athletes who achieve excellence possess unique personality traits which pre-dispose them to be successful. Sub-elite athletes, those who were athletes only in the recreational sense, and non-athletes, those who do not participate in athletic endeavors, were compared to elite athletes. Davis and Mogk (1994) found no support for the notion of excellent athletes possessing a unique personality profile.

Kriener-Phillips and Orlick (1993) studied the psychology of ongoing excellence; of winning after winning. In-depth interviews were conducted with 17 world champion athletes, "...representing 7 different sports and 4 different countries" (p. 31). The authors state that it is ironic that we focus so much attention on winning and so little on the consequences of winning on the performer (1993). The athletes interviewed stressed the importance of a mental component involved in maintaining excellence. This mental component involved

having a game plan and being task-focused, keeping things in perspective and loving what you do. It also involved maintaining good physical conditioning and keeping a positive outlook. Kriener-Phillips and Orlick state that in order to remain successful in spite of the increased demands of winning, "...there are a number of key factors that need to be in place. These include enjoying what you are doing, remembering where you came from, and keeping it all in perspective (1993, p. 44).

In 1997, Krane, Greenleaf and Snow conducted a case study with an elite female gymnast to examine the effects of "reaching for gold and the price of glory" (p. 53). The gymnast participated in three unstructured interviews with the authors. It was found that her goals were ego oriented because she had a "...reliance on social comparison, emphasis on external feedback and rewards, need to demonstrate her superiority, and acting out behaviours in the face of adversity" (p. 53). "Susan" (not her real name) also struggled with eating disorders, participating through injury, and low self-esteem as she pursued excellence at any cost. At age seventeen, Susan fell off the high bar and landed head first, resulting in a severe injury which left her paralyzed for ten days and in rehabilitation for nearly a year. Despite medical advice, Susan returned to gymnastics and trained for a regional meet. She competed in the meet, finished second and then retired from gymnastics. The authors suggest that it could have helped Susan's mental state if her coaches and parents had encouraged her to pursue more task-oriented goals.

In *Little Girls in Pretty Boxes*, Joan Ryan studied the "making and breaking of elite gymnasts and figure skaters" (1995). In gymnasts' and figure skaters'

pursuit of excellence (or, at least, of success) Ryan heard countless tales of starvation, injury and extreme abuse suffered at the hands of their coaches. Young athletes such as Michelle Campi, Tiffany Chin, Shannon Miller and Debi Thomas discuss their pursuit of excellence at any cost. In the end, as Thomas herself says, "What makes you really come together under pressure is determination and focus and toughness" (p. 136).

Within the performing arts, Carole Talbot-Honeck, in her master's thesis entitled *Excellence in the Performing Arts: A Study of Elite Musicians' Mental Readiness to Perform*", describes how sixteen top classical instrumentalists from six different countries strive for excellence (1995). She states that the primary purpose of the research was to, "...explore and document the mental readiness to perform and excel of elite classical musicians" (p. 2). Talbot-Honeck found that a love and enjoyment of music and music making was at the core of what motivated them as musicians. These musicians had a strong commitment to their field and possessed a clear perspective as to where music fit into the larger picture of their lives. She also reported them as stressing the importance of setting non-materialistic goals, being spontaneous, creative, and flexible and setting goals on a regular basis, of being constructive, using imagery and being mentally ready to perform. All of the musicians interviewed had a strong sense of self. Talbot-Honeck states that there are considerable gaps in the literature with respect to the mental aspect of the performing arts. "While the performing arts are probably the most closely related to elite athletic performance...only the very beginnings of performance psychology as applied to the arts are present in the literature" (Talbot-Honeck, 1995, p. 1-2). She says that the psychology literature,

with respect to the performing arts, is at the stage which sport psychology was in the late 1960's.

In *Peak Performance and Leadership*, Perry (1995) analyzed the essence of excellence among conductors. Three top conductors were studied and it was found that they too, shared common characteristics as both peak performers and effective leaders. As peak performers, these conductors had a clear mission, recognized the importance of striving for self-mastery, were doers rather than thinkers, loved and thrived on challenges, responded well to unexpected changes and were team oriented as opposed to being the "star". As effective leaders, the conductors made rehearsals and performances fun for the musicians they conducted, quickly established a relationship/rapport with their groups, and possessed an intense love of music. Above all else, however, it was found that all three conductors shared one important quality: humility. Perry (1995) concluded that humility was the greatest asset to them in their pursuit of excellence both in and out of music. This was because it formed the basis for their constant striving for improvement.

Making Music (1995) is comprised of the accounts of the personal and career development of twenty one Canadian principal orchestra players and concert pianists. Written by John Partington, it explores the musicians' performance preparation, practice regimens, and recollections of most and least satisfying performances. The musicians spoke about the importance of concentration, preparation, relaxation, and about the mental aspects of practicing and performing.

Also concerned with excellence is the book entitled *Human Potential* (1996)

written by Botterill and Patrick. *Human Potential* is a handbook of the kinds of mental skills necessary to achieve and maintain excellence. Focusing on perspective, passion and preparation, *Human Potential* discusses such topics as staying rational and relaxed and managing personal and professional relationships. Botterill and Patrick encourage performers to goal-set, and outline the "5 D's" of successful goal-setting. These 5 D's are dream, develop a plan, form daily goals, dignity and managing the dynamics with those involved (p. 52-53). *Human Potential* discusses the "powers of the mind" and the role of emotion in human performance. Botterill and Patrick also outline strategies for effective performance preparation, stressing the importance of parking focusing, refocusing when necessary and being confident and assertive.

Finally, Orlick's *Embracing Your Potential* (1998) is a long awaited follow-up to *In Pursuit of Excellence* (1990). *Embracing Your Potential* explains how to achieve excellence, while still maintaining balance in both the personal and professional domains of one's life. Orlick states that life exists in two "zones", the green zone and the gold zone (p. ix). The gold zone is our life, "...at work and in performance domains..." while the green zone is the, "...rest of life" (p. ix). Growing in the green zone involves embracing human contact, nature, play, physical activity and sport, personal growth or accomplishment and sensual experiences (p. 5). Growing in the gold zone involves charting your path toward excellence by using positive visions, positive planning and positive action (p. 98). Orlick tells us that the key to achieving success in both the green and gold zones is to find and maintain a balance between them.

Critique of the Literature and Recommendations For Future Research

First, the question of how mental skills are acquired must be addressed by the literature. As previously discussed, many people talk about mental skills and excellence and seem to have a common understanding of what they are, but few have researched how these skills are acquired. That is, do performers who achieve excellence come to use mental skills through a process of self-teaching and experience? Or, are those performers who have achieved excellence those who have been systematically taught mental skills by an outside source? Therefore, one of the issues I addressed with the participants of this study is: a) whether mental skills and excellence are learned through an internal, personal process, b) whether they are they taught to them by someone else, or c) if they are obtained by some combination of the two. For example, do you use goal-setting? If you do goal-set, were you taught, and if you were not taught, how do you do it? I was interested in determining, in other words, if these established performers use mental skills (specifically, goal-setting), and whether and how these skills had been learned.

Second, there is a linear approach to mental skills training. For example, there is consensus in the literature that there are clear, definite steps to follow for the most effective goal-setting. This linearity often does not allow for individual differences among performers. Much of the focus of the literature has been on developing a "model", a system in which the performers are trained. The question becomes, does this systematic method meet the individual's needs and the peculiarities of peak performers? What works for one performer, in other words, may not work for the next. Perhaps the differences lie not in the individual

performers, but rather between groups of performers. For example, perhaps A + B + C is the best method to teach most athletes. However, it could be that A + C + B is the most effective way to teach violinists. More room for individual differences within the "systems" should be explored.

Third, most of the literature focuses on athletes with respect to excellence and mental training. As a researcher, I am curious to find out whether many of the same mental training techniques employed by athletes are also being employed by performing artists, either by self-teaching or by systematic teaching from someone or something else. Is goal-setting a component of excellence in the performing arts as well as sport, or is it something which is exclusive to athletes?

Although there has been a considerable amount of research into both goal-setting and excellence, there are still gaps in the literature. First, with respect to excellence, the literature seems to be very applied in nature. The lack of a theoretical foundation has created a large problem in that excellence is written about frequently, studied often, but do we really know what it is? Watson states that "The pursuit of excellence is widely honoured" (1993, p. 515) but how much do we really know about the essence of excellence? Excellence is a very commonly used term but each person's definition and usage of the word is different. In an extensive literature search ², the word excellence produced many citations. However, it is clear that excellence is talked about often, and appears to be understood, but is rarely defined and operationalized. There is a common sense understanding of excellence but no real consensus on its precise

²The following data bases were searched: Psychlit, Sportdiscus, Sociofile, Proquest, Humanities, ERIC, Social Sciences.

definition. Besides Orlick's work, little research has been conducted into the essence of excellence. Research needs to be done on what constitutes excellence. Thus, the focus of this thesis will concern: a) what the nature of excellence is, b) how it is achieved, and c) how it is defined, particularly by those who have been judged to have achieved it. Do people have to be taught mental skills in order to achieve excellence? Do people who achieve excellence come to possess the necessary skills through self-teaching or some other manner? Or, is it some combination of the two?

Secondly, the issue of gender and gender differences has been greatly overlooked by the literature. Gender is very rarely accounted for in mental training studies. Many researchers are, indeed, sensitive to gender issues (such as Orlick and Botterill), however, few have embarked on actual studies to determine if men and women use mental skills and perceive excellence differently and, if so, how? For example, do women set goals differently than men? Should the very idea of goal-setting be taught to men and women differently? How can we, as researchers and consultants, most effectively utilize the tool of goal-setting when dealing with women and when dealing with men? There is an underlying assumption in the literature that men and women respond to mental skills training in the same way. This may be true. However, it may **not** be true. More conclusive research is needed to determine these issues so that performers can benefit to the fullest extent from mental training.

With respect to excellence and gender, the literature is contradictory. Watson states that in a general sense, excellence and the pursuit of excellence should not put men in a position of dominance over women (1993). However, when

defining excellence in a particular sport, concentration on physical characteristics and abilities is inevitable. Therefore, "...one of the factors that determines whether an individual has what it takes is gender" (Watson, 1993, p. 516). Men and women are thought of as "excellent" in different activities. Often, there are more sports at which men are and can be considered "excellent". Thus, men are encouraged to pursue excellence in a disproportionate number of sports to women.

Third, with respect to both goal-setting and excellence, there are favoured areas of study stressed in the literature. That is, where performance and performers are concerned, there is an abundance of literature on goal-setting (e.g., how to do it, how not to do it) and excellence (e.g., profiles of athletes that have achieved excellence). However, where elite performance is not an issue, the literature is lacking. For example, very little literature exists with respect to goal-setting and physical exercise adherence (Willis & Campbell, 1992; Martin, 1984). If goal-setting can motivate athletes to stay committed, it seems reasonable to assume it could motivate exercisers to stay committed. However, there have been very few empirical studies conducted to examine the impact of a goal-setting program on exercisers. The issue may not be that goal-setting literature does not exist in other disciplines, but, rather, that it is simply called something else. For example, in business, goal-setting may be referred to as "financial planning".

The literature on both goal-setting and excellence is fairly extensive in the world of sport. Only recently are mental trainers beginning to see the potential to relate many of the principles most commonly used in sport to that of the

performing artist, for example. There is much room for exploration into the impact of mental training on excellent performance of the actor, dancer, singer, instrumentalist, and conductor. Given the similarities in performers in sport and the performing arts, it seems crucial to examine similarities and differences in performance preparation to understand how excellence is achieved.

Research Question

The literature indicates that goal-setting is a component of excellence. My research will address specifically how performers develop and use goal-setting to achieve excellence. I will be looking at how particular achievers, those who perform in sport and the performing arts, speak about goal-setting and excellence.

Chapter 2

Methodology

There are a variety of research methodologies available for exploratory investigations in relatively new areas of inquiry, among them ethnography (Bogdan & Bilken, 1982; Spindler, 1982; Spradley, 1979), ethnomethodology (Stanley & Wise, 1983, 1993; Stanley, 1990), phenomenology (Husserl, 1980; Ihde & Zaner, 1975) and grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Kirby & McKenna, 1989). While both ethnography and ethnomethodology tend to emphasize description (Babbie, 1998), and phenomenology gathers all perceived phenomenon (Husserl, 1980), grounded theory shows the most promise for this study because it is an inductive methodology. This allows for observations, empirical testing and the development of preliminary or substantive theory (Kirby & McKenna, 1989).

For the purposes of this study, I have selected grounded theory as the most appropriate approach. First, my own experience as both a figure skater and a singer was used to set the initial research questions and exploratory definitions. Through careful attention to the recording of field notes, which included both reflections and observations, I was able to pay attention to the patterns of information which emerged from the incoming data. Second, the most useful approach to gathering information about and from selected excellent performers is through observation and interactive interviewing. From these, I began with my own understandings, completed the observations and then proposed the common categories (themes) which are the very initial steps to creating new theory

(Babbie, 1998). More specifically, interactive interviewing techniques (Roberts, 1981; Kirby & McKenna, 1989) were used to uncover how performers achieve excellence and the relation of goal-setting and other skills to excellence. Excellent performers from sport and the performing arts were included in this research. These performers were not necessarily formally taught to goal-set. How they achieved success, if they did or did not goal-set, was of interest. These individuals were high-achievers and they were Canadian, and English speaking. They were performers to whom I had access and who were willing to participate. They had all completed a substantial portion of their careers so that a retrospective examination of their experiences was possible. They were knowledgeable and articulate individuals who felt that they had something to say about excellence and their achievement of it.

Six performers were interviewed as case studies. In order to locate research participants, I constructed a dream list of those performers who are well known and could possibly fit my criteria. I then used personal contacts in both the sport and performing arts worlds, to make initial contacts with some of those on the list. Twelve performers were contacted; four males and eight females. Six performers responded stating that they would like to participate. Those six became the case studies which form the basis of this thesis. The following is a profile of each performer interviewed.

1.) **Michelle Sawatzky:** (Interview Date: February 19, 1996) Sawatzky holds a Bachelor of Music from the University of Manitoba in piano and was also a member of Canada's National Women's Volleyball Team which competed in the

1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia. An excellent performer in both the sport and performing arts world, Sawatzky is a dynamic individual whose dedication to her many talents is inspiring and motivating.

2.) Henriette Schellenberg: (Interview Date: February 29, 1996) Heralded as one of the world's finest oratorio singers, soprano Henriette Schellenberg has performed with many prestigious organizations including the Boston, Toronto, Cleveland, Montreal and Atlanta Symphony Orchestras. She also has performed as a soloist "under the baton" of many of the world's finest conductors, including Helmuth Rilling, Charles Dutoit, Seiji Ozawa and Robert Shaw. She has also made several recordings with Shaw. Schellenberg continues to perform and is now a faculty member at the University of Manitoba where she teaches voice.

3.) Tanya Dubnicoff: (Interview Date: March 7, 1996) Winner of the 1991 and 1995 Pan American Games, the 1994 and 1998 Commonwealth Games, the 1993 World Cup Champion in cycling, a competitor in both the 1992 and 1996 Olympic Games, and several times over Canada's National Cycling Champion, Dubnicoff has had an illustrious career thus far. She continues to compete as a cyclist and is also a motivational speaker.

4.) Tracy Dahl: (Interview Date: September 10, 1996) A coloratura soprano who has performed with all of the major opera companies in Canada, Dahl is considered one of Canada's foremost musicians. She has performed with Placido Domingo and the San Francisco Opera, at the Metropolitan Opera and with all of the major opera companies in Canada and many in the US. In addition,

she has several recordings to her name, including *Glitter and Be Gay* with Mario Bernardi and the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra.

5.) Evelyn Hart: (Interview Date: April 24, 1997) Award winning ballerina, Evelyn Hart is one of Canada's most treasured artists. In 1980, Hart won a Gold Medal at the International Ballet Competition in Varna, Bulgaria where she was also awarded the very rare Certificate of Exceptional Artistic Achievement. One of the world's finest ballerinas, she is especially known for her interpretation of many of the classical roles including *Giselle*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*. She continues to perform with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and is a frequent guest artist with the finest ballet companies around the world. Hart was awarded the Officer of the Order of Canada in 1983 and was promoted to Companion, the highest rank, in 1994. She is the subject of a biography published in 1991 called *Evelyn Hart: An Intimate Portrait* and in 1992, a 50 minute film entitled *Moment of Light: The Dance of Evelyn Hart* debuted on national television.

6.) Colleen Miller: (Interview Date: July 23, 1997) Miller is a four-time World Champion rower who also competed in the double sculls event at the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia. Miller retired from rowing after the 1996 Olympics and is currently a motivational speaker who talks to businesses about the pursuit of excellence in sport and life.

Several landmark studies have previously been conducted using qualitative methodology (Orlick & Partington 1988; Hemery, 1986; Orlick, 1986) and it is the

method with which I am most comfortable and capable (Perry, 1995). I was interested in uncovering each performer's story as a unique entity and in-depth interviews are the most effective way to do this. The shortest interview was just under fifty minutes in duration and the longest was just over three hours. Each was in-person and tape recorded. Each interview was loosely structured around the guide (see Appendix A), leaving plenty of room for spontaneous conversation and shared information. The interview guide was constructed around "...my knowledge of previous research and my own experience" (Fusco, 1995, p.48). The questions were ordered for building rapport and for flow of interaction. In preparation, a single pilot interview had been conducted with a student colleague on January 24, 1996. This colleague was a former elite athlete and agreed to participate in an interview for my learning purposes only. This interview helped formulate how best to ask the questions and in what order. As well, it taught me important technological lessons: bring extra batteries and a plug for the tape recorder! The batteries for the tape recorder failed and I was forced to take detailed transcription notes in lieu of the desired method of tape recording. The interview also lasted longer than anticipated so it became apparent that ninety minutes would have to be allotted for the interviews instead of the original sixty. After this pilot interview, I also decided not to send participants a copy of the interview guide ahead of time. Instead, I decided to hand them their copy in the early minutes of the interview for them to review. In retrospect, this worked well with the interviewees and allowed for more spontaneous answers. From the pilot interview experience, it was also decided that each participant would not be

asked to submit a career chronology prior to the interview date. Rather than create work for these very busy performers, inclusion of a discussion of their career highlights as part of the interview itself was decided upon.

Each potential participant was initially contacted by letter in which I introduced myself and gave a brief overview of my study. Also enclosed in this initial contact was a form for them to indicate whether they wished to participate, and a self addressed, stamped envelope for their reply. Only affirmative responses were requested. Please see Appendix B (1 and 2) for a copy of this letter and participation form. Willing participants were then contacted by phone to set up interview times. These arrangements were confirmed immediately prior to the actual interview.

At the interview, each participant was given a letter of consent to sign. The letter of consent (see Appendix C) contained a description of the purpose of the research, myself as the researcher, the process of data gathering and ethics guarantees. Participants were guaranteed anonymity (if they wished it) and confidentiality of the interview transcripts, except for those portions used in the final thesis. Each participant was asked on tape if I had permission to use their names in the final document. All consented to this. Given that all participants are easily recognizable to the general public, it was fortunate that all agreed to waive anonymity and confidentiality. Using their names brings more credibility to my study. In addition, it may be viewed as more useful to other performers who might be helped by the study if actual names are used. The consent form also informed each performer that participation in the study was completely voluntary

and that they were free to withdraw their participation at any time without penalty.

At the beginning of each interview, each participant was asked if I had permission to tape record the proceedings. All consented. As well, each was shown the pause button on the recorder and was encouraged to use it whenever they wished to speak off the record. As well, they were told that if at any time they wished to discontinue the interview process, they were free to do so. As a back up practice for the interview process, I took short form notes in case I had to reconstruct the interview interaction and to keep myself on task for covering all of the principle questions of the interview guide. After completion of all of the interviews, each interview was transcribed verbatim. All transcriptions were completed by April of 1998:

During the analysis stage, two forms of data were examined: notes kept by myself (in the form of personal reflections, field notes, interview notes, and conceptual baggage) and interview transcriptions (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). Interview transcriptions were analyzed using the constant comparative method, identifying both common and uncommon themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Kirby & McKenna, 1989). Each transcription was read several times and was coded and analyzed on its own, as a case study, and then later in comparison to the others. Notes and key descriptive words/themes were recorded in the transcript margins. These descriptors were then grouped into tentative themes.

In the following chapter on the description of results, each interview is cited by the order in which it took place: Sawatzky is number one, Schellenberg number two, Dubnioff, three, Dahl, four, Hart, five and Miller, six. The notation I have

chosen is as follows: a quote appearing on page fifteen of Hart's transcript appears in the results chapter as (5-15). A quote appearing on page thirty of Sawatzky's transcript appears as (1-30).

As a final step, a copy of chapters three and four (results and discussion) was made available to each participant. This was done for two reasons. First, to give their approval, as to its authenticity, of what I have written about them. Secondly, to allow each performer to be active participants in the analytical portion of the research process. This also corrects any unintended misrepresentation and any included information they do not wish be used. Participants were given a time limit of three weeks in which to respond to the chapter drafts and were encouraged to do so by mail, phone, fax or email.

A discussion of the results, analysis and suggestions for further research concludes the project.

Chapter 3

Results

Excellence comes to those who commit themselves to go after their dreams, fine-tune their focus, and strengthen their mental game (Orlick, 1998, p. 96).

The following is a presentation of the results. It begins with a discussion of what each participant cited as being highlights in their careers. This provides more background information on the careers of these excellent performers. Also, it provides insight as to what kinds of career events the participants considered to be important. Understanding what they consider to be highlights in their careers is critical in understanding their thoughts on goal-setting and excellence. Following a discussion of career highlights is a discussion of goal-setting and then of excellence. Categories are presented loosely in the order in which they were asked in the interview, however, some re-structuring has been done in order to maintain flow. In this chapter, emphasis is placed on the interview transcripts in order to communicate as much of the participants' voices as possible.

Career Highlights

Each participant was asked to outline the achievements or highlights in their careers. All have a long history of being successful, sometimes in more than one field of endeavour. Sawatzky listed accomplishments in both her music and

volleyball careers. In music, she discussed being a member of a piano trio which won a provincial championship (1-3). In 1991 and 1992, she was selected to be a member of the Manitoba and National Youth Choirs, respectively (1-3). In 1993, that same National Youth Choir reconvened to perform at the World Symposium of Choirs in Vancouver (1-3). In piano, Sawatzky cited winning Provincials in the twentieth century music class as a major highlight for her (1-3). As a piano performance major at the University of Manitoba, she was runner up in the Lord Genser competition, which is a competition for all performance majors within the department. The conductor of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Bramwell Tovey was the judge (1-4). In 1993, she won the Young Artists' Series and went on a tour of Western Canada (1-4).

In volleyball, Sawatzky cited making the provincial team and being on a Canada Games team which won a bronze medal as highlights (1-4). While in university, she played on the Bison Women's Volleyball Team which won the CIAU National Championships three years in a row. Sawatzky herself was named the CIAU Player of the Year in 1991 and 1992 (1-4). She was also a first team all-Canadian for four years and was a two time finalist for the Manitoba Female Athlete of the Year award (1-4). In 1993, she was named the University of Manitoba Female Athlete of the Year before joining the Canadian National Women's Volleyball Team in May of that same year (1-4). Finally, Sawatzky discussed being an all-star at the 1994 Canada Cup, an international tournament held in Winnipeg (1-4).

Sawatzky was asked if there was a particular accomplishment, or

accomplishments, which were more significant to her than the others.

Yeah! Definitely being named player of the year for all of volleyball in Canada, that was, two times, that was a huge thing for me...because it's such a prestigious award, really, and it's for **all** of volleyball, it's for **all** of Canada, it's for every position on the court...it's just what that award is about. It's not like a regular all-star MVP, it's like for the whole year, you know? Some people can have outstanding matches and get awards for that, but the player of the year usually is someone who is instrumental to their...team winning and, you know, plays consistently that good all year (1-5).

In music, Sawatzky said that being selected to be in the National Youth Choir was a huge honour.

That National Youth Choir thing was amazing for me - only four singers from each province are chosen and only one soprano from each province and that was **me!**...it was a great, great experience to sing with...thirty or so of the best, some of the best choir singers...around (1-5).

Schellenberg said her highlights and accomplishments, first and foremost, have been singing for the first time with major orchestras (2-1). The first concerts with the Winnipeg, Toronto, Cleveland and Boston Symphony Orchestras were major accomplishments (1-1). Also, Schellenberg cited the first concerts with "big-name" conductors as highlights (1-1). First concerts with Robert Shaw, Seiji Ozawa, Charles Dutoit, Gunter Hebert, Andrew Davis, and Helmuth Rilling were, therefore, major accomplishments in her career (1-2).

Schellenberg also said that some of those accomplishments were more significant to her than others. She cited two performances with the Cleveland Orchestra as being particularly significant.

...I think I've only done two concerts with the Cleveland Orchestra and they were both...not with the main conductor of that orchestra

but with the chorus master. And that was, that was (pause) so exciting for me because of the sound of this wonderful orchestra. I just really, I will always remember that because of the beautiful music-making you can do with a fabulous orchestra which is, which was not only so exquisite in sound, but also, the people were so nice (2-2).

Another highlight which stands out in Schellenberg's mind happened right in Winnipeg when the world renowned choral conductor, Robert Shaw, was invited to conduct the Winnipeg Symphony and the Mennonite Festival Chorus in the mid 1980's. It was also Schellenberg's first concert as a soloist with Shaw as conductor.

That was the first one I sang with him and...the way he worked with the choir and the emotion that he brought to that work...it was just really quite, very moving and people, especially the people that were singing in this huge oratorio choir that had come from all over the country to sing with Robert Shaw, I mean, they still talk about that performance. That one was really a highlight for so many of us (2-3).

Finally, Schellenberg said that the performances she has done with a little-known female conductor every year for the past six years in Vermont have all been highlights.

...the conductor, who is a now well over eighty year old Swiss woman, Blanche Moese, and she does a Bach festival every year. Every year...those of us that can go back to do this Bach festival with her simply because we adore this lady. She's such a wise old woman who can make the music come alive in a way that I've seldom experienced with other conductors. She's not a good conductor, she's actually a violinist, but she can inspire like, I don't think, anybody else (2-3).

Dubnicoff cited the 1991 Pan Am Games as her first highlight. It was her first international competition and she won the gold medal (3-1). She was National Cycling Champion from 1991 to 1995 and came sixth in the 1992 Barcelona

Summer Olympic Games. In 1993, she was World Cup champion and also broke a world record in the standing 1200 metre (3-1). She won gold medals in both the Commonwealth Games in 1994 and the Pan Am Games in 1995. Our interview took place four months before the 1996 Olympics where she hoped to win a medal (3-1).

Dubnicoff said that competing in her first world championships was one of her greatest achievements (3-2). She also recalls the 1994 Commonwealth Games as a highlight.

Having the Commonwealth Games in 1994, the year after, was, I mean, the best because of, I mean, it was in Canada, I mean, there was like thousands of people cheering, my parents were there. It was really special (3-2).

Dahl's first highlight was the first opera she ever performed, *The Marriage of Figaro* which took place in Winnipeg (4-1). Due to a double-casting error, Dahl was able to sing the smallest part in the opera at an orchestra rehearsal (4-1).

...the first time I sang with that orchestra, I couldn't believe it. I was just so elated...it was just such a big deal to sing with an orchestra (4-1, 4-2).

Her next achievement was participating in the training program at the San Francisco Opera (4-2). At the end of this training program, there was a competition and Dahl won third prize. In 1987, she was invited back to San Francisco to sing in *Tales of Hoffman* with Placido Domingo (4-2). She said her Metropolitan Opera debut was "a big deal" to her because it was unscheduled (4-3). She filled in for someone who was ill in *Die Fledermaus*.

...once I got past my first entrance which is [where] I had to run

down a flight of stairs singing the cadenza - as soon as I got past that, [and] I realized I wasn't going to fall down the stairs, I was okay (4-4).

For Dahl, the "first" performances in various forms are the most memorable for her (4-6).

...because almost all of those were also attached to my first debut. My debut in San Francisco was on the eve of turning 25, I think, with Domingo...you just kind of go, 'Wow! That's a lot in an evening to think about...it'd probably be an Adrenalin kick and after all of those, I really felt like I'd been kicked, hit, beat up real good! (4-6)

For Hart, the first accomplishment in her career was "achieving the goal of becoming a professional dancer" (5-2). After that, the gold medal she achieved in Varna was a major highlight (5-2). Also, Hart believes that every new role performed is a highlight.

...I would also say that each and every classical role or main full length role, I think, is another highlight because I think that those roles are the culmination of everything that you are. They state that you are a ballerina, they state that you have achieved a certain level and they require incredible courage, incredible study - once you begin that study, it never stops (5-2, 5-3).

Hart believes that these goals achieved are the real highlights in one's careers (5-3).

..I mean, you could say, 'Okay, well, I danced at the Met or I danced at Paris Opera or I danced in...' but for me, those highlights are more for your resume and the highlights that I'm talking about are actual, I think, goals that you - well, I guess they are goals that you set out to do too, but these ones are something, a creation of your willpower...the others are invitations which are, where they are saying to you that we acknowledge your level - but the highlights, for me, are the ones that say to me, 'I studied and I accomplished. I've reached something that I dreamt of and desired and wanted to do' (5-3).

She likens the creation of each new role as a "birth" (5-4).

And so, to me, the actual highlight is the actual births, you know, and everything else that happens to you along the way are events, or perhaps, highlighted events but I really do think that those are not for me...because, you know, each [role] the first time you do it, is a miracle...I keep likening it to the birth of a child. You know, you love them all and of course. But each one of them has to be quite significant. Your first is your first with all the trials and tribulations and unknowns and fears and worries and, actually, innocence and whatever, I mean, dreams and desires. And the second one, once you've had that first, you always approach the second one with a certain sense of knowledge. But the second will be just as special, I think, for other reasons (5-4).

Hart's first full length ballet was *Nutcracker* (5-4). A corps de ballet member, she was singled out to dance a lead role (5-4).

...and then *Giselle* came along and it, perhaps, is very unique in the sense that it is my character. It is me to a T. And then along comes *Romeo and Juliet* and, of course, it's every girl's romantic dream. And it has a whole chance to explore acting as a real human being so your first *Romeo and Juliet* demands that you take everything that you've learned in *Nutcracker* and everything that you've learned in *Giselle* and pull it all together to a different point of view...then comes *Swan Lake*, which has it's absolute higher level of skill because it requires such, so much more of a pure technique but it still has a dramatic element in it and it has to be old-fashioned...and then you come to [Sleeping] *Beauty*, which is what I consider to be the master, the master of the ballets, in a sense, it is the jewel in the crown because it is when you come to understand what real dance is, it's transforming the physicality into pure music and you have no drama to cover you, no modern steps, no tricks, no flashy fuettes, no flashy grande jetes. You have to make the character breathe by the most simple and basic pure steps...And so, each ballet has something else that it demands of you and demands of your mind and your soul and your body... (5-4, 5-5).

Miller cited the four World Championships she won as being significant highlights in her career (6-1). In 1990, she won in a four at the World Championships in Tasmania (6-1). In 1993, she teamed up with Wendy Wiebe and they won the next three World Championships together (6-1).

I would say that the last three years with Wendy were the highlights and, as far as results, winning the World Championships and also, other races in between there (6-1).

For Miller, several races are etched in her mind as being more significant than others.

...definitely in 1990, that first win was exciting 'cause everything clicked and the team worked really well and we just didn't have a lot of years and were new at it and novices and so that was very exciting. And '93 was a great win because it was Wendy's first win and it was good. But, as well as other races in between like our semi-finals '95 - we barely eked into the finals of the regatta at the World Championships and that race was, you know, quite memorable because we barely made it and we pushed harder than we ever had and we worked really hard together...another race that sticks out in my mind was in '92. I was with another partner and we...just had the best race of our lives...it was a race where we beat everyone that we shouldn't have and it was 'cause we worked so well (6-2).

It is important to note that for each participant, what they considered to be a highlight in their career does not necessarily focus on the acquisition of a medal or tangible accomplishment. An event was special in their lives not just because of how they performed or where they placed, but for other reasons such as their family being present to witness it, or because it was their "first" in some way. For example, Dubnicoff cited the 1994 Commonwealth Games as a highlight not because she won the gold medal but because her family was there cheering her on and because of the added excitement of the event being in Canada. Dahl said that a highlight for her was the first opera in which she performed, not because she had a lead role but because a casting error allowed her to sing the smallest part in a rehearsal. She still recalls the thrill of singing with a full orchestra for the first time. These excellent performers, when asked to discuss the "important

events" in their careers were able to see past the "results" and to the "process" which went into the accomplishment. What constitutes an "accomplishment" can be a personal definition and may have little or no relevance to anyone but the performer him/herself.

Goal-Setting

Dream Goals

Except for Hart, all participants reported being involved in other activities and "falling into" their current fields. Sawatzky was pursuing a degree and career in piano performance when the opportunity to try out for the National Volleyball Team came about.

I think, without me knowing it, I really, really had set a goal to make the National Team but when everyone, at that time, when everyone was telling me I wouldn't make it, I almost didn't. The day before the National Team tryout, I wasn't gonna try out and I was gonna go gung-ho into music and I'd already talked to my piano teacher and we were going to go full time lessons the next year...But the day of...my coach from university just said, 'Why don't you go for the week tryout? Why don't you go? What does a week hurt'? (1-14)

Schellenberg was a pianist and was teaching music when she discovered singing.

I kind of fell into singing by accident when I was 20. I was always a pianist...I was accompanying a lot of singers...I thought these singers were having a lot of fun - more than me! I think it was the following year that I took a voice class in education (2-4, 2-5).

Dubnicoff was very athletic and had always been involved in many sports. She remembers racing bikes while growing up, but more for fun than as a serious endeavour.

I just rode my bike all the time and then I just, I was like 19 years old and someone said, 'I think you should try racing' and I phoned the association and I said, you know, 'Can I race?' And they were all excited (3-3).

Dahl had always been a singer and grew up singing in various youth choirs. Her focus, however, was on the Broadway style and she never considered a career in opera. In fact, she never considered a career in music at all and, instead, was headed toward a degree in Interior Design. Though accepted into the program, she declined it because, "...they told me I wouldn't be able to keep up with all my extra curricular activities" (4-7). One summer at the Banff Summer Music School, a teacher named Dodi Protero found Dahl's coloratura register.

She was a little coloratura and she thought I was a coloratura and she found it. She had me sing not looking at the piano and she found that whole register of my voice in 1980...I had these notes that nobody really knew how to help me get through because it was unexplored territory up until that point, pretty much, for Winnipeg teachers, I think (4-9).

Miller was a swimmer and started rowing in 1987.

I used to be a swimmer...and I picked it up at the U of M 'cause I quit the swim team there and I just did it for fun...on a whim, they were sending some people to try out for the national team so they said, you know, bring Colleen along and it worked so I was on the team for 8 years (6-2).

Hart, meanwhile, always knew she'd be a dancer from the time she was a young girl and saw Veronica Tennant dance *Giselle*. During the performance, she heard a patron seated in front of her make a comment about Tennant's dancing...

'Well, she's good but **Margot Fonteyn** is just, she's just amazing'. And that day I went 'Margot Fonteyn? Who is she? If she's one of the best in the world, I wanna be there'. Never forget it! And so my dream, that day in the theatre, I remember thinking to myself, '...I'm

gonna put Canada on the map. I'm gonna be a Canadian ballerina that people are gonna sit there and look and say you know, you have to go to Canada to see her' (5-9).

Obstacles

All of the participants reported having faced significant obstacles in their careers. Sawatzky, Dahl and Hart spoke about the importance of using obstacles as a motivation to succeed. Hart was told by the National Ballet of Canada that at age fourteen, she was too old to pursue dance as a career. She resolved to prove them wrong.

...I think I went through a lot of moments of great self-doubt because I had many, many, many, **many**, many things in my early career telling me that I didn't have it and I wouldn't make it or whatever...even if I was told by the National Ballet that I should pursue it as a hobby...even if I didn't achieve this or I couldn't achieve that or I didn't win this or I didn't win that or whatever, I think deep down inside, there was always something there, I mean, it was just the thing inside of me that **knew** that I could be... (5-9, 5-10).

Sawatzky, at five feet six inches tall, may be the Canadian National Women's Volleyball Team's shortest setter in its entire history. Throughout her volleyball career, she was continuously told that she was too short to play at the elite level. She describes attending the National Team tryouts:

...so many people always said, 'Well, you're not going to make it, you're not going to make it, you're not going to make it' ...once I got there and saw who else was there and how the volleyball was, then I thought, 'You know what? I can do this'. And then I set my goals as to, ' I **wanna** make this team and I'm **gonna** make this team and I'm gonna **stay** on this team!' (1-6, 1-7).

While in musical theatre, Dahl also fought her height. Barely five feet tall, she very early on found herself typecast in the comedic "character" roles as opposed

to the dramatically meaty leads. She spoke about a particular audition where she realized what she was up against if she decided to stay in musical theatre.

...I sang a character piece and I sang a ballad and when I finished my ballad, he said, 'Do you ever get to sing like that in a performance?' and I said, 'Ah, no, I usually do the character stuff'. And he said, 'Oh, what a shame that voice is in that body'...and I think that right off then I realized there are things that would be unrealistic...(4-25, 4-26).

Instead of allowing this setback to discourage her, however, Dahl decided to pursue opera more seriously, partly because there were less physical restrictions within this realm.

It's a cruel business, the musical theatre business, and I just didn't fit into that mold...if I'd stayed in musical theatre, I would either have had to have surgery to make myself smaller, up top in particular...can't do anything about the height...but I probably would have been doing Carlotta in the *Phantom of the Opera* until I was blue in the face (4-7).

Goal-setting As a Lifelong Skill

When asked if they set goals when they were young, the response was varied among the participants. Sawatzky and Dubnicoff said they did not really set goals until later in their careers. Dubnicoff said she remembers "wanting" things but doesn't recall ever setting goals to get what she wanted.

I remember wanting things. I mean lots. And if I wanna do that, I'll do it! Not like, 'okay, I'm going to set up these steps to get it' No steps. (3-4).

Schellenberg also says she didn't set goals when she was younger.

I don't remember setting goals. The goals were set for me. I've always worked better if that was the case. I find it very difficult to be self-motivated...so, the goals, the things that I was striving for, was always the next, either the exam, or the next, even now, the next performance (2-10).

When asked if she remembered setting goals as a youngster, Hart replied,

Oh yeah. Oh yeah, definitely. Definitely. I mean, rather silly ones, at times. Even things as small as my weight...I mean, as I say, silly as they were, they were all part of what it was that I thought that I needed to do to achieve what I needed to achieve (5-16).

Dahl says she doesn't remember setting goals when she was younger but, rather, that one thing just led to another. She said, "I know I had fun. I think it was fun. I don't think I ever thought it was something that I was going to do forever" (4-15).

Miller remembers setting goals early in her career but says they were more short term than long term.

I didn't actually have massive dreams of like being an athlete or being anything. I just wanted to be good at whatever I did and as far as goals, I would have the goal of trying to beat my sisters for the bus every morning or like just something like that...then I'd...started swimming so my goal was to, you know, work as hard as I could in that practice or study hard at school. So they were just really immediate goals (6-6).

Importance of Goal-Setting

All of the participants said they currently use goal-setting in their careers and consider it an important skill to utilize. Sawatzky first set a goal to make the National Team. Then she set a goal to stay on the National Team. Before the Olympics in 1996, her goal was to be a starter on the National Team.

I think it is very important to set goals, especially for me now in terms of starting on this team, let's say. I know I'll be on the team...but my goal is to be a starter on this team and that's important and I remind myself every morning before I go to practice that my goal is to start on this team (1-18).

Schellenberg says she recognizes the importance of setting goals now much

more so than she did in the early years of her career.

I think now as, now that I've become a parent and a teacher more, I think it's more obvious to me that it's important. And I think I'm probably a little better at it now than I used to be and I wish that all my students and my children would be really goal-oriented. And I think that (pause) I think that really successful people are probably very goal-oriented...I try to show my students and my children how to set goals and how to strive for them...looking back, wishing that I'd, yeah, I think had I set goals for myself, I would have spent a lot less time just sort of goofing around... (2-14, 2-15).

Dubnicoff sets rigorous goals for herself, although she prefers to think of them as "steps to excellence" than as goals.

...goal setting is sort of setting steps up to excellence...every day, we have a certain sort of set of goals that we - I gotta go work out, I gotta, I have to ride a bike for two hours, okay, and in that two hours, I have to do this and this and that...I have to train like this every day, setting those goals each, reaching them every time (3-6).

Shortly before our interview, Dahl made a change in management because she felt her goals were not being met.

...I just recently made a change in management and that was because I felt like my goals had stopped, that there was nowhere for them to go and it wasn't that **my** goals had stopped but...the machinery had stopped and if [I] was gonna keep going, I was gonna need to get somebody who was going to hopefully enable me to reattack those goals... (4-17, 4-18).

Hart also recognizes the importance of goal-setting and uses it on a daily basis.

Then there's also the goal of sitting there and saying, okay, I have in, on a day to day basis, I have, say, this pas de deux. Okay, my goal is I'd like to achieve that I learn the steps in two days. I'd like to, by three days from now, I'd like to have it so that I can run it. By four days from now, I wanna be able to run it [snaps fingers three times], you know, feeling this way...so there's always this build up. So, there's many, many, many different goals on many different

levels (5-17).

Miller says she always remembers setting goals as a rower.

And then when I did start rowing, yeah, I would have goals to try and better my score on the rowing drills or goals to be, you know, better technically on the water. Things like that...now I see the value of it a bit because of what I've been through. If I hadn't been through that, I may be like another person I know who is not that way... (6-7).

The Right Goals

When asked what kinds of goals they felt were good ones to set, responses were varied. Sawatzky stressed the importance of setting personal goals as opposed to those set in comparison to others.

I think an important thing is that some people do is they **only** set goals in comparison to other people and I think you sell yourself short sometimes then because you...if I could just do better than her, then I will...then I'll be good enough. And sometimes you're better than.. how much you can be better than her, you never will be because you're only going to try and be a little bit better than the next person. And maybe you could be **way** better (1-19, 1-20).

In addition to the possibility of not realizing your full potential, Sawatzky also described how focussing on someone else's performance can be detrimental to one's own.

You can definitely get distracted by, you know, 'What are they doing? What are they doing? What are they doing?' instead of 'What am I doing? What am I doing?' (1-20).

As part of the National Team, Sawatzky discussed the kinds of goals the team set and how they kept track of them.

Like if we're on one side and we're hitting, we have to get, you know, so many good hits before we're finished the drill or so many good passes. And we write it down on paper and someone's

keeping track...we're gonna set this goal or we're gonna meet this number and if we don't, we're gonna do it again. And if we don't meet that goal, we're gonna do it again (1-20).

Schellenberg and Dahl both stressed the importance of goal-setting in moderation. Dahl spoke about performers who are too goal-oriented and how they can lose their perspective.

Because when you ask them how they're doing, they'll give a list of where they're singing for the next three years. (I laughs) I **really, really, REALLY** don't care!!! (both laugh) I kind of asked you how you were and not **where** you're going. And I think that there was a time when I was very much a part of that which is a goal-setting thing... (4-31)

Schellenberg agrees that many performers fall into this pattern of thinking.

...I'd seen people who were very goal-oriented and I was aware of them and I think I made a lot of fun of them (both laugh), these 'one track mind' people who were always in the practice room and I still make fun of them, these **singer types** that are always **just** thinking about the career...I think there is such a thing as being **too** goal-oriented (2-15).

Schellenberg and Hart also spoke about the importance of setting goals in the absence of fear. Schellenberg finds it sad that many young performers are afraid to set a goal of having a performance career.

...I find nowadays, young people, young students are afraid to really go for a performing career and I would really like to discourage that kind of thing...a lot more people should strive for the performing arts because I think they have a lot to give and...it would be a shame if they would be afraid to aim for that...I think people should really go for the arts if they have any kind of inclination that way, and if they have some measure of success, then it means that they could (2-16).

Hart agreed that many young dancers are afraid to acknowledge their own talent and the fact that they could be great someday.

I look at young students coming up and sometimes I think I disarm them...what they really need is reassurance. I think I sometimes shock them because I know, I **know**. Everybody used to say, 'every girl's dream is become a ballerina'. But the difference is that some people really **know** they can...and even you, as yourself, are afraid to admit it, that you really have this talent (5-10).

Dahl and Hart also spoke about the importance of setting realistic goals. Dahl said, "I guess I call them realistic" when asked what are the best kinds of goals to set (4-22). She and Hart both spoke at length about the importance of having realistic goals going into a performance.

I think it's really important to make goals that you can attain...I used to have really unrealistic goals on any given night and I would come home every performance and think, 'Oohhh, that was so bad!!'...I would set goals, like I'd say, 'I want to sing that E natural, that high E natural, I want to hold it for six bars. I don't want to breathe in the middle of the D-E trill'...when I first set that goal, well, it was a stupid goal. I'd never done it in rehearsal!...it would be like saying, 'I'm going to break the world record,' but you've never broken it before so what makes you think under those circumstances you're gonna break that record...you haven't done it in rehearsal, why set yourself up to be disappointed at the end of the evening by saying you're gonna do it? (4-18)

Hart says there was a "distinct changeover" when she realized that her performance goals need not be any loftier than those she set for daily rehearsals (5-23).

...I all of a sudden went, 'Ah! Well, there's the key! Performance is rehearsal!' There is no difference between performance and rehearsal...when I rehearse it...that's what I'm doing; I'm dancing. So, then, why does it have to be any different on stage? Because if I do it, like, full and I do it to the best of my ability in the rehearsal, it should be good enough for the public. Why does it all of a sudden, once the lights go on, have to be ten steps better than what I've ever done before? And once I started to realize that, it changed, it opened up a whole different world for me (5-23, 5-24).

Both Hart and Miller stressed the importance of setting internal versus

external goals. Hart says it is critical to set goals that are within your control.

...what I realized is that if you are able to go on the stage and say to yourself, 'You know, what I really want to do is to be relaxed. And what I really want to do is to enjoy this performance,' instead of sitting there thinking, 'I want this performance to be perfect because there's...such and such critic out there,' or 'I want to impress so and so,' - not a good idea. It really doesn't happen. But if you go out, let's say, and you think, 'You know, today I want to work on seeing, thinking about relaxing my neck, seeing if I can accomplish that today,' or 'Today I wanna go out and I want to, I want to see if I can just manage to keep the panic down' (5-22, 5-23).

Miller says chasing an external goal, such as a gold medal, can cause you to lose out on the process of achieving it.

...there's goals along the way, task-oriented, and just doing the best that you can and improving yourself and then there is that goal of winning and they're equally important. And I guess because you see that, you do so much time and 99% of your training is, is just that and 1% racing. And because you know that gold medal is so fleeting, you can't weigh your whole life on that (6-11).

Goal-Setting: Preparation

The participants were asked how they prepared themselves for a particularly significant performance or goal in the past. While they all discussed setting goals, a common theme when discussing preparation was the importance of hard work.

Sawatzky said that one of her goals was to get into the National Youth Choir. I asked her how she prepared herself for the audition tape once she had established the goal.

I arranged to have some extra voice lessons and get a very, very good song for my voice and something that would show off what I wanted to do...I just got really serious about that audition tape...tried to find out what and where, what they would wanna hear..." (1-17).

With respect to volleyball, Sawatzky said that once she made the National Team, her goal was just to stay on the team for the year.

That's all I wanted to do. And before I knew it, I was starting in March. So, but I think how hard I worked just to stay on the team was harder than some people were working to be starters, you know? I'll just work hard. I'll just work harder than **anyone** else to be the best, you know? (1-14, 1-15)

Schellenberg says she's never been one to set long term goals and that most of what has happened to her in her career has "just happened".

I think my goals have always been the ones that are kind of just in front of me. I don't think I've ever been on a long term goal, shooting for goals. That's never been my way. Still isn't. No, I like, I prefer the smaller steps (2-14).

A pivotal point in Schellenberg's career came in 1984 when she was asked to sing Brahms' *German Requiem* in Winnipeg with one the world's most formidable conductors, Robert Shaw. Schellenberg downplays her efforts in this turn of events, inferring that she was simply lucky to be asked.

So then the Robert Shaw thing came up, again, through word of mouth because I was in Winnipeg...they knew that I was here, I was singing well, I was good enough not to, not to embarrass anyone...so they, both he [George Wiebe] and Bill Baerg thought they could suggest me to Robert Shaw without looking like fools...I mean, I had to send Robert Shaw a tape. He had to approve it, of course, and he said well, that was fine (2-12, 2-13).

Schellenberg has since performed on many recordings with Robert Shaw as conductor.

Dubnicoff cites the 1992 Olympics as a pivotal event for her. Placing sixth, she realized going into that year's World Championships that she could win. With winning as her goal, she took the necessary steps to ensure a solid training

program.

I felt that I needed more help...I needed more physiology background and stuff and I needed, you know, massage and I needed this and I needed that. Just things to help me. Nutrition counselling and stuff. So I went out and got it and I think that helped me...the plan was to get there. As far as I could and just start taking things day by day and get a program and work hard at it (3-5, 3-6).

Dahl recalls her first set of performances with the San Francisco Opera approximately twelve years ago as being a key in her career development, primarily because she would be singing opposite the renowned tenor, Placido Domingo. I asked her how she prepared for those performances.

Well, I'd already sung the part so a lot of the preparation had been done already...There was, in San Francisco, there was down at the wharf a fellow who used to do kind of robotic kind of movements and I used to go and sit and watch him because I was supposed to be this mechanical doll...[I'd also do] more singing lessons with my voice teacher to prepare and make sure that it was, you know, ready to go (4-15, 4-16).

Hart says every time a dancer learns a new role, goals must be set. I asked her what kinds of goals she set and what her preparation involved the first time she was to perform the role of *Giselle*.

...the first goal that you have to set is to be able to learn the steps. You have to learn the steps. Because when I first started working on it, the challenge was that. And then the next challenge would be being able to do the mad scene and often times, I remember in the past, that I was **very** nervous to do that scene...I was very nervous because I was so aware that that required such understanding and that if I didn't stay in it, if I didn't get into it, people wouldn't get it, and then I haven't brought them to where they need to be in order to get to the next part of the ballet. **Tremendous** responsibility. Terrifying...you set for yourself small goals (5-18).

Miller said that she and her rowing partner, Wendy Wiebe, set a lot of their

goals and did most of their preparation together.

...we would prepare in different ways, mentally - like what we ate and our technique on the water and our strength and our endurance - things like that. So as far as our preparation, we would always wanna be there on time, be coachable as well...we would wanna try and uncover every stone we could and try and be good in all those areas and not just rely on a few strengths. So that was a big part of our preparation was, you know, uncovering the weaknesses and doing the best that we could day in and day out (6-8).

In addition to discussing how they prepared for achieving a goal in the past, each participant was also asked to tell me how they would prepare for and what kinds of goals they would set to achieve a fictitious goal which I constructed for them during the interview. The participants were not aware of what goal I would present to them before the interview. If they had said they used goal-setting, I was interested to see how they would devise a strategy which incorporated goal-setting to achieve a goal.

I constructed a musical goal for Sawatzky. I asked her to imagine that it is the September after the 1996 Olympic Games (on which, she was presently focused) and the University of Manitoba School of Music asks her to play twenty minutes of music at a December alumnus concert. How would she go about preparing from the time she received the phone call until the day of the concert?

Practice! Practice! Practice! Oh boy! Well, first of all, I would certainly contact my piano teacher...I would just practice like crazy. I would. I don't know, even know how, what else to say...I would want to pick a great piece, you know, I'd probably pick a really hard one. I know I would! Something really flashy or something! Probably because I just want everybody to hear me play such a hard piece! Yeah, and I would just practice for hours, I think, every day. I'd just make sure I was ready to do it (1-24).

During the course of our interview, Schellenberg had expressed interest in

performing in a new Canadian oratorio by Victor Davies called *Revelation*. I asked her assume she had been asked to perform it in six months. How would she prepare?

...they would have asked for me because they were under a certain amount of budget restraints and I'm your, your middle-aged budget singer, this is true!...I would first say, 'Get me a score **NOW!!!**' because six months is...not a long time to learn a new work that's just been composed and isn't on recording and stuff like that. So, you have to kind of do all your own hackwork. And then I should simply, as soon as I got the score, I would just sit down at the piano on days, oh gosh, when I have some energy...(2-20, 2-21).

Schellenberg says the next step is made much easier because of her piano background. She said she would sit down at the piano and, "...start plunking it out" (2-21). This would enable her to learn the notes without having to seek out a vocal coach.

Then, if there's a recording available, I would get that recording and I would listen to it a few times because you need to know what kind of orchestration you're talking about...I have to really make sure that I know exactly what notes I have to sing. And then once I kind of know that part, then either I will put that recording on a tape recording or I will put the piano part on tape, which I can do myself. And then I will go away from the piano and I'll be using my tape recorder to, to get it going so that I can sing through it and sing through it at full voice in my living room. That's what I do. No big deal. Just work. It's hard work but it, I quite enjoy it (2-21).

The Olympics was Dubnicoff's passion in life at the time of our interview. Instead of constructing a goal for her, and in light of the fact that she was so focused on the Olympics, I asked her to simply tell me what she had done to get ready for the Olympics. She spoke about changing coaches and how much she trusted and believed in her new one.

I love the guy. He's my best friend...You know, it's almost to the point where I think it's too extreme. I can just see me on the line and I'll start laughing or something...but he's helped me a lot...we're doing more focussing exercises, asking me questions where I haven't thought, you know, what are you doing for this week? How do you set yourself up in between these and this and these two races, you know, start to meditate now and that's really important (3-13).

Dubnicoff had experienced a difficult period in her career prior to the time at which our interview took place. She had slipped in the world standings since her gold medal in 1993 and was on somewhat of a comeback before the Atlanta Olympics in 1996. I asked her what had gone wrong.

I wasn't concentrating. I wasn't focused. I wasn't mad enough, didn't want it enough and wasn't feeling confident in my power and my strength because of the training up to it...I just, I didn't care! I didn't care. I didn't have anyone to help me, I didn't know what I was gonna do and that was really frustrating. I got to the point where I was like, oh well, whatever. As long as I didn't get last, I came 7th instead of 8th, you know?...I just did not want to be there (3-13, 3-14).

I asked Dahl how she would prepare if the San Francisco Opera called and asked her to sing a role she had never sung before in one year's time.

I'd get a score. I'd do all the markings. I'd do all the translating. I'd take it to a really good German coach, and there are a couple around, take it to my voice teacher, listen to a lot of different recordings of different kinds of voices, get an idea of the range of tempos that a conductor can throw at you...you'll get a conductor that takes it like a turtle and you'll get one that will go really fast - [you] practice it at both ends of the spectrum so you can do it at any kind of way they might come up with (4-30).

Hart had expressed an interest in dancing at the Met again (she had done so some years before) early in our interview. I asked her how she would prepare if she was asked to dance there in six months time.

Mostly mental. I would prepare physically for it, but mostly mental in the sense that I would do everything I can to bring it down to perspective; that it would be just another performance. In other words, it would be another chance to get on the stage to learn what I have to learn. And I would...look at it and I would say to myself...this is not going to make or break my career but that I'm gonna go and I **really** want to **enjoy** it (5-40).

She went on to describe the kinds of internal, as opposed to external, goals she would set for the performance.

...this is not something I have to prove to anybody. That I want to go and I want to be as calm and relaxed as possible because I know then that I will dance the way that I would like to dance instead of going and saying, 'Oh, I have to...I hope I make the pirouettes,' I wanna go and say, I would go and say, 'Well, you know, I know that I'm capable of dancing the pirouettes so now I have to do everything in my power to make sure that I'm as relaxed and as calm about it as I can be so that when I get there, then I can just (gestures)', right? Not to sit there and say, 'Oh, I **have** to do these pirouettes,' but, 'I **want** to do pirouettes for **me** so why don't you go out there and do them as well as I can do them?' And, you know, if they don't happen, nnyeh (shrugs). You know, it really doesn't matter because if I'm not invited back, it doesn't matter because I will have done what I have to do. So, it's a win-win situation. Even if I'm really bad, who cares?! You just walk away saying, 'I danced at the Met!' (5-40)

At the time of our interview, Miller had retired. She had indicated at some point during the interview that she might consider returning to rowing. I asked her how she would prepare to return to rowing full time in one year's time.

Well, I train every day and I still work out every day so I know I would be ready if I had to go back. But it's something where I don't think I will go back 'til I know that it's right or it's in my heart to go back, and that may never happen...I would just have to probably stop or slow down what everything else I was doing and just get back into the rowing mode of training daily and going back to what I said earlier about working on my weaknesses and probably even have more perspective and more maturity going back at it another time (6-15, 6-16).

Preparation: Satisfying and Less Satisfying Performances

Each participant was asked to describe their preparation for both a highly satisfying and less than satisfying performance. Were their goals different? What did they think made the difference?

Sawatzky says she can recall poor performances, by her standards, in both piano and volleyball. For her, the difference was lack of focus.

...there were times when I would go into a competition where maybe my volleyball schedule had gotten really busy just before that or something and I hadn't been able to put as much time into the piano as I had wanted to, or the day of, even...maybe I was just running around, sort of, with my head cut off doing a whole bunch of other things and that was usually the difference (1-26).

Sawatzky went on to discuss how difficulties she was facing on the university volleyball team affected her performance.

...certain thing in the team weren't going as well and things weren't sort of, flowing as well, you know? And that took my focus away from just practicing volleyball and just playing volleyball...some personal things that were going on, really, you know, preoccupying my mind and so then I wasn't as focused and that made my performance not as good (1-26).

Schellenberg recalls both a satisfying and a not as satisfying performance and says the key to a good performance, for her, is relaxation.

I think the most successful performances for me were the ones where my level of anxiety was low, probably because it wasn't, it wasn't a terribly high paying job and it wasn't a terribly high degree, where I felt the expectations of excellence weren't as high on me and, therefore, I could just sort of come and be myself and do it as good as I could and not worry too much about that that wasn't perfect! Obviously, everybody knows that when you feel that way, you do a lot better because you're not, your muscles are not working against themselves...if you're tense, you're just not going to do a great job (2-22).

Schellenberg went on to describe both a satisfying and less satisfying performance. The less satisfying one was a performance of a Bach cantata (which she had never performed before) with a very well known conductor.

It was a Bach cantata and I found that the hall, I had to work really hard in the hall and yet, the work that we were doing, the Bach cantata, I couldn't do it loud because it was too fast and some of the phrases were too long. I couldn't really - you couldn't **wail** on it because the music wouldn't allow. And so I had the feeling a) that I wasn't doing it, I wasn't reaching the people so I had to just forget about it and sing to the top, the front third of the hall. And I kept having the feeling from the conductor that what I was doing wasn't enough. He wanted a lot more bubbly, sparking personality, which I am not. And so, I was feeling totally inadequate on all counts. Death! Very bad. I hated that! (2-23).

For a peak performance, Schellenberg recalled a recent concert in Winnipeg which was a fundraiser for a church choir.

It was a really kind of low budget kind of-thing that the choir was doing a fundraiser for themselves and they sang a *Creation*, a work I know really well - I know it backwards and forwards. I was singing it with another baritone that I really enjoy working with and we both, we were both feeling comfortable enough in this setting, which was very non-threatening, to make up some ornamentation on the spot. And that, for myself, that one felt really good and so I guess I would say that that one felt very successful for myself (2-23).

Schellenberg says that the preparation for the two was basically the same, but that the difference was that in the less satisfying performance, she allowed herself to be influenced by outside forces instead of staying within her own performance.

...the preparation for say both, both these two concerts were the same, really. I was prepared. I knew the stuff. But I think I let myself be influenced, also, a lot by what's coming back at me from the conductor, the audience and if I don't, if I'm not getting positive feedback from at least one area there, then I really let the whole thing get me down and I - while it was happening, I was yelling at

myself because I'd tell myself I should be strong enough to overcome that. And yet, I wasn't. And I'm not. The same thing would happen again, I'm sure, if you played that trick on me (2-23).

Dubnicoff says the difference between a satisfying and less satisfying performance is purely mental.

I'd say mental. Like, there's certain feedback you get from your body and it's not clicking - mind/body are one. It's unbelievable. And that's something I had to learn that, you know, if the body isn't feeling right, the mind's gotta get the body to feel right so you have to do certain things that hey! Kick your ass! Let's go! Little things like that (3-16).

Dahl says staying focused in the performance is the key to making it a successful one.

And I think that that's what happened on both those occasions that I got [so] much into the performance of what I was doing **physically**, that I lost control of what it was I had to do **technically** (4-37).

Dahl also says she has learned to set realistic goals for a performance to help ensure it is a successful one. She described a recital in which she performed that was programmed unwisely.

They wanted arias on this recital and I won't do them any more in recital because if you've sung arias with an orchestra, to go back and sing them with a piano is extremely dicey and by the time I...started the second aria in the second half, I'd already been singing for 45 minutes; in an opera you've never sung 45 minutes straight by the time you sing an aria. There are breaks. So, it was unrealistic to put those things in that program...I just, I over-programmed myself. It was way too much...way too much. Now, I was mortified 'cause all the top notes, I could not get them, could not get into them at all. It was just not there...it was horrible. It was the worst I felt I had done and they invited me back! I did another recital. [They] thought it was great! I sang like a pig!! Like a **pig!!** (4-38).

In summary, Dahl says her pitfall,

...tends to be that I over-exert myself physically (some people say, 'then you're not in good enough physical shape') but somehow that extra Adrenalin kicks [in and] pushes me over the edge and then I lose control and something goes wrong... (4-39).

Hart says it is difficult to say what kind of factors precipitate a satisfying performance because the variables are forever changing. A long piece of the text is included here as an example of the integration of factors in such preparation.

Well, you know, the thing is is that I think what happens is that when you start to get more confident about a role, that it's when you've done it more and more times and you start to come into a routine, and ah, so you, you discover yourself going through these emotions which is, certainly, that, the, when you've had a successful performance, you think, 'Okay, this is what works for me'. So, for example, I'll come in and do class early in the day and then I'll do a certain amount of rehearsal and then I'll rest and then I'll go and I'll have something to eat and then I'll go to the theatre and then I'll set up my makeup, very quietly and calmly, and then I'll do the warmup and then I'll go on stage...and you hope that that works. But I find that in general, the preparation, you can sometimes duplicate but there's no telling because so much of it has to do with all these other physical factors. So you can do everything that you possibly can, but some days, like for example, you're just in a giddy mood and you're laughing like crazy (L chuckles) and you're just really having a good time and usually that's when you have the best performance is when you really are in a good mood and you're kind of looking forward to the performance and then your shoes are, are feeling good, your shoes are right, and you're in good spirits and you've got good physical health, that's when the performance comes out. And sometimes you can, you're feeling absolutely miserable and can be in tears before the performance and be in absolute pain and it could still turn out really well. So, I don't think that there's anything that you could say that you can duplicate but I do know that when the performances have really come out is really when you're in a kind of state of mind of allowing something to happen and not trying to make it happen which is when you're in a good mood and you really want to dance or when you're in a really bad mood and you don't care what happens. Not that you don't care but that certainly, you've given up. Like you're so upset you just say, 'Okay, I'll go out and see what happens'. So, it's much in the same manner, it's when you start sitting there and you start worrying about what's going to happen.

And often times that's difficult because if you've done a really good performance, you want to come back and you want to duplicate it. **Big mistake!** (L laughs) But you can't help it. That's inevitably what you're gonna think, you know. So, you just have to deal with that as best you can. That's why they always say second nights are much better than opening nights (5-41, 5-42).

Miller says preparation before a race and her confidence level going in have made all the difference for her. Being prepared and confident allowed her and Wiebe to be focused during the successful races.

...[if] anywhere in that race we started to think about the finish line and the gold medal and we would be losing it 'cause we'd just miss a stroke or miss a, you know, a big step in the race and you're gonna, someone will be ahead of you. So you really focus on the task at hand and when we didn't and we were all caught up in the finish line, we wouldn't be thinking about what we were doing at that point and we'd often, you know, had a really bad race because of that. And that is pretty much a guaranteed formula almost every time... (6-18).

In addition, Miller stressed the importance of being held accountable for one's goals. To do this, she sometimes wrote her goals down, or told other people what they were.

...it does help, though, when I write them down. Definitely. It does make a difference 'cause then I can...writing them down just does some...like writing it, taking that pen and writing it down, somehow it's, you're accountable. And sometimes I tell people what my goal is. So I write it out and be as specific as I can (6-13).

Goal-Setting: Taught?

Each participant told me that they do use goal-setting in their lives and careers. I asked each of them if they were taught to goal-set or if they had developed their own systems through their experience as a performer.

Sawatzky identified her primary goal in life as working harder than anybody

else she knows.

I'll just work hard. I'll just work harder than **anyone** else to be the best, you know? And that's my goal. I guess that's always my goal. Maybe that's my goal. Maybe that's what I do! Maybe that's the goal I set: to be the best in what I'm doing (1-15).

Once she had identified this goal, I asked her if anyone had taught her to goal-set or if she had adopted her own methods along the way.

I think my Mom and Dad really instilled a lot of that in me, you know? And, I mean, people joke about Mennonites and their work ethic but I **am** a Mennonite and I think that's a little bit true. It's from my background...I think I learned a lot about goal-setting from...Ken Bentley, from my coach at U of M, you know, who sort of never settled for anything less than the best (1-21).

Schellenberg does not remember anyone, including teachers, suggesting goal-setting. "Never. I don't remember anybody saying, 'Well...do you have a long range plan?' (2-17). She said she recognizes the importance of it now that she is an older and more experienced performer and wishes she had used it more in her early career.

You figure there probably could have been a straighter road to where I've gone without all this meandering around because I came into performing very late...I think there isn't probably enough goal-setting in the arts. People are still too afraid of it (2-17, 2-18).

Dubnicoff said that her methods of goal-setting, although influenced by coaches, is very much her own model. She thinks of goal-setting as "planning" more than anything. I asked her if someone taught her to goal-set.

Not really. I mean, you obviously say okay, well, I wanna do well. Okay, so, you know, certain parts of your timed trial, okay, I'll sit down and I'll draw a circle of a track and here's the finish line, here's the start line, this is me doing here, now I'll do it on paper and I'll say okay, this turn would be 80%, 90%, 100%, okay, here and I'll do this on paper and I'll go over it outside - that's more of a motivation

thing...well, maybe I just don't even recognize it as goal-setting. I just recognize it as participating and competing in my sport. It's not like, what do you do to goal-set? Well, do I goal-set? I don't know if I goal-set...I don't think I'm the norm when it comes to goal-setting. I don't know if it's a good thing or a bad thing but I think it's sort of, not developed my own system, but I do things in my own way...(3-8, 3-9).

Dahl says her goal-setting methods have come from her experience as a performer.

I think it probably just kind of evolved along the way and it may been through lessons of watching other people who look constantly miserable **because** they had unreasonable goals or whether somebody along the way said, 'Your goal is unreasonable'...when I was doing musical theatre, I think part of that goal-setting happened then because I realized pretty darn quickly that I had no control over how people perceived me...(4-25).

Hart said that while no one taught her specifically "how-to" goal-set, someone did influence the kinds of goals she was setting for herself.

I think what somebody taught me was how not to make such, such stiff goals and not to be so difficult on myself. But that came more through the process of therapy and coming to accept myself and coming to realize that I was an okay person and that if I did fail, it wasn't going to mean that I was going to be abandoned by the whole world and that I still would have, even if it's only one or two, I would have one or two good friends. And when you start to make conscious all of those subconscious fears that are relayed and projected onto your, onto your being which is being, hampering and getting in the way of achieving excellence in your career, then you're able to work on the right elements. It's like, you've got a pain in your leg and it hurts here and you ice it here [points to another area of leg]. It may be that that's not the place you have to put the ice. You have to put it up here (5-28).

Miller said she received some training in goal-setting as part of the National Rowing Team, however, much of what she learned was self-initiated.

Yeah, there [was] some instruction - not a lot - no psychology, really, on the National Team...no psychologist, nothing unless you

searched it out yourself...there really was no instruction in the psychology realm (6-12).

Goals: Then and Now

Each participant was asked if the kinds of goals they set and how they set them has changed over the course of their careers. If so, how is their goal-setting different?

Sawatzky said that her experience as an elite volleyball player helped her hone her goal-setting skills.

I think 'cause in my first year of university, I didn't (pause) have **any** idea what I was capable of doing...'cause I didn't think that I would make it nearly this far...I didn't think it was possible, really. And I think when you're older, you've just have seen more volleyball stuff. [You've seen] what's more possible and you've been through more goal-setting and either achieving it or not...I think I just feel better about setting goals now. You know, I feel more knowledgeable on that end (1-25).

Sawatzky went on to discuss how experience has taught her where her limitations are and how crucial this is in setting attainable goals.

If I'm gonna set a goal to be a starter on the team or something, I don't know if I'll necessarily achieve it, but I have more of a feel that I should be able to achieve it, you know? So I think I set goals much more, in my mind, much more maybe specifically and more with a real purpose instead of just going, 'Okay, I'm gonna go for it,' you know? 'I'm gonna go for it and I'm gonna be...I'm gonna be the best, ah, whatever,' you know...now it's a little more specific, I think (1-25, 1-26).

Schellenberg says that while her goals used to be directed toward her performing career, today they relate more to her family and her teaching.

I have a, my goal (sighs) now, as far as singing goes, is to stay home because I have a strong feeling that my family priority is a higher one than my artistic priority. I think I've done that, you know, been there, done that, kind of thing. I'm looking at all the, at all the

angles and I think it's time for me to just to, to back off from the singing and to stay home more and to get back more, back into the teaching, which is where I was before. ...I fully intend to teach, to teach voice as long as I can, yeah. And to be there for my family. Those are my two main goals and that's what I'm working towards very specifically... (2-18).

On the contrary, Dubnicoff says her goals haven't changed over the course of her career, but how she prepares for events has.

No, 'cause it's always been events or competitions so there's always the same events. Just the approach to the event, how I approach, is changing. I'm preparing for it more. I have more of a plan, you know, okay before, 24 hours, 48 hours before the race, I like to do this...I feel I need that. Then you're ready for the race...I'm planning more, I think, thinking more mature and not being afraid of anything, you know? (3-15)

Dahl says her goals now include her husband which means that she must always be mindful of how her goals affect another person. "Anything that I set has consequences and it always did but now it involves another person" (4-31). Also, she feels her goals have become more realistic, partly through watching others' mistakes.

I think they are different. I think they're more realistic [and] more inclusive...I changed management and that's part of my setting new goals or re-establishing goals and saying 'I really think that I'm in a place now where I could be further along than I am'...I think that they have probably become more realistic the older I've gotten by seeing other people around me and realizing what it takes to be where some people are and deciding whether that's what I want. Do I want a publicity agent who is going to keep me so busy just so that we can sell biggies? (4-31, 4-37).

Dahl said renowned tenor Placido Domingo taught her a valuable lesson in setting realistic goals.

...for example, one of the performances with Hoffman with Domingo...he had flown back after his father had passed away and

he rewrote notes...he knew that the public wanted to see him...that they had got tickets to see him and so he felt an obligation to sing. He set realistic goals. I've never been more impressed with him than I was that night - that he went out and did less than what was his best because he knew that they wanted to hear it and that it would still mean something to them. [Regarding] his own goals, he had to have had lowered his level of what was reasonable for him to accomplish for that role and said, 'Ok, under these circumstances, this is where I'm going to be at tonight. I'm gonna go out there and I'm gonna do the best I can under these circumstances'...That's integrity (4-32, 4-33).

Dahl's humility about her talents have also influenced her goals.

In general, and somewhere along the line, I think what I kind of realized [was] that yes, I belonged where I was but I didn't have a lot of education to support where I was. I was fairly insecure about it and so I kind of stepped back and just kind of listened a lot more, I think, [resisted] spewing out, 'Well, I'm going **here** next! Oh, I sang with **them!**' (4-32)

Hart says she sets very different goals now, mostly because she is at a very different stage in her career.

...what's grateful about the place that I am now is that I have the great thing of saying to myself that this is a bonus, that this is not going to make or break my career but that I'm gonna go and I **really** want to **enjoy** it. Yeah. That this is not something that I have to do to prove anything to anybody. That I want to go and I want to be as calm and relaxed as possible because I know then that I will dance the way that I would like to dance... (5-39. 5-40).

For anyone who has seen Hart's biographical film *Moment of Light*, this is a very different outlook than that which was presented in the film. I asked her to tell me about this apparent change in philosophy. Was it, in fact, different?

Oh, totally...but see, when I did *Moment of Light*, that was in the days where...[there was] the chance of creating a certain kind of career in those next six years...[there were] experiences I had not experienced and still a feeling that I had to prove to myself in that experience...I wouldn't be going with the same goal because I know

that the years are behind me now (5-40, 5-41).

Miller says the kinds of goals she set as a rower were more technique oriented, geared at improving weaknesses.

...I just knew that it's not always talent, but people who work hard that will get where they want to go so I see that as really important. And even for myself now, I see, you know, I have the talent to speak but I see that it does take a lot of work and I know that. I think I know from my goal-setting that if you do a lot of work and you put in the time, it's really rewarding once you get there. And so, I'd like still having those kinds of goals that are within a lot of reach (6-17).

Miller says the goal-setting she used as a rower is relevant to her life now.

My own conscience tells me when I'm not doing it right or something like that so I think there's many, many ways to do it, many ways to check them off. And then also, sometimes a long term goal, a dream that I might have...I look at it and break it down and go, 'Where are the steps that I need to do to get there? What are the things I need to chance right now? What are the things I need to look at two months from now?' You know, I might not need to make a decision or address a certain situation now but in two months, I will and I'll have to do something then to, you know, make that dream happen (6-13).

In summary, all participants except for Hart reported "falling into" their careers. They had all faced significant obstacles in their careers and used these obstacles as a motivation to succeed. They recognized that goal-setting is a lifelong skill and an important one to utilize in the pursuit of excellence. They stressed the importance of setting the right kinds of goals. When discussing preparation, the participants recognized that goal-setting can be an important tool. While each participant acknowledged they may have been influenced to set goals, they all had adopted their own methods and styles of doing so. They also said that their goals and how they set them has changed over the course of their careers.

Excellence

The Essence of Excellence

Each participant was asked what their understanding of excellence was and how they would define it.

To Sawatzky, excellence is being the best at what one does.

First thing that comes to my head is to be at the top of your class. To be at the top of your field is excellence. Excellence is striving to be better than anybody else at what you do. Being the best at what you do, to me is excellence and being willing to do that. I mean, I don't think anyone who comes about something easily, I don't know if excellence pertains to someone like that (1-12).

Sawatzky went on to discuss what it takes to become excellent.

...there's a lot of people that are good at a lot of things but they haven't gone that extra mile to be excellent at things...[Excellent people are] willing to work hard and willing to, you know, give up a lot more than other people...If I hadn't put in, like, three extra mornings by myself, with my coach **every** week, **every** year, I would never be on the National Team now (1-13).

For Schellenberg, excellence is "what we're all working toward" (2-7).

It's a complete package of that combination of knowing and being able to do the craft and taking it a lot further than that. So, it has to have both the technical perfection and then lots more in the whole package when you see it or hear it. So that it's, so that a piece of music becomes something that you, moves you as a...listener in some way...I think that can only happen when there is such a beautiful combination or a melding or a fusing together of a well worked out technique and then that artistic bit (2-8).

When describing an excellent person, Schellenberg says perfection is by no means the yardstick.

...when I think of excellence and what I want to do, then I mean what I just said. And yet, when I think of people that have achieved excellence, I think of people like that eighty year old lady who, whose work is by no means perfect (2-9).

Dubnicoff 's definition of excellence focused more on winning than on striving.

I think it's almost having a successful career and being happy with it and like, finishing your career with all of the goals you've sort of set out to accomplish. Like, for example, if I won only one gold medal this year, I mean, I would have to say that my career has been pretty excellent. You know? As far as, I've won every major games: Pan Am Games, Commonwealth Games, World Championships...if you win a gold medal at the Olympics, you can't get any better than that. You've done it...a world championship's there every year but the Olympics is excellent (3-3).

For Dahl, excellence is relative to each individual's realm of experience.

Excellence in an ideal world would be achieving your highest goal, and without compromise anywhere along the way. However, the ideal world does not exist so excellence then becomes people who do, who achieve great things in whatever situation they are [in] and it's relative to who they are and where they've come from. So, I can see excellence in a mother who raises kids and gets them through problems or difficult times and then, at the same time, you can see excellence in someone like Domingo, where you go, "Well, that's excellence" (4-10).

Dahl went on to say that those who have truly achieved excellence have done so with a sense of balance in their lives.

...there's got to be some kind of balance and so there are people like one of my role models in this business [who] is a woman by the name of Judy Forrst...and I consider her career to be excellent, her life to be excellent. She has an incredible balance. She could have had a much bigger career than she did but she wanted to be with her family. It was important to her that there were times that she was at home and [so] she'd say no [to engagements] or she wasn't gone as long...Everything about her life seems well-rounded...I don't necessarily think that [excellence is] just achievement oriented. I think that it's also got to do with how your life unfolds and how you live out your life (4-10).

Dahl says how you live your life, not just what you do within it, determines excellence.

...without naming any names, there are many people who are, who have achieved musical excellence but at a lot of cost of professional integrity or they've turned into quite nasty, difficult people to work with or they get away with things that normal people wouldn't get away with...I don't think excellence is a license to do whatever you want to do and lots of people do think that that's what it is and that's a misuse of excellence (4-11).

Hart says excellence is often present when you are least aware of that it is there.

I think excellence to me is embodying the sense that when you see something or hear something or read something or watch something, that whatever it is that you're seeing...how can I say?...you aren't aware of how it came to be and in the sense that it, in one sense, it's worked so well that you...how do you say?...you're able to trust that work. It's not like you sit there and go, 'Wow! Isn't that incredible?!' but it's the fact that you don't even have to think about the fact that it's incredible because you're so busy dealing with something else past it (5-12).

She went on to say that, for example, when you read a really excellent novel, you do not proclaim, "Wasn't that well written?" (5-12). You simply revel in the excellence of the story. Or, one can use belief in God as another example.

...if you believe in God, you don't have to say, 'I believe in God' because you **know**. So, if you say the statement, 'I believe in God,' it's like already casting a shadow of doubt. And so, what I think excellence is, is to the point where when you go, you're not seeing it and [going], 'Wow!' You're not having to reassure yourself that it's good. From the first minute that you come in touch with it, you **know**. It reaches something very deep inside of you that you just look at it and go (silence)...because there's nothing to catch you up, nothing you can kind of compare, nothing that puts you into a realm of gauging (5-12).

Excellence, to Hart, is not comparable.

I think excellence is **not comparable**. Excellence is unique. Excellence comes out of the human being in the form of, as I say, something unique. I mean, Einstein when he created his theory of relativity, I mean, that is about as excellent as you can get and you look at it: that is unique. It takes you to a realm of looking at things in a way that you never thought of before. So, it's kind of - excellence, to me, is outside the realm and yet it's not threatening. It truly is not threatening in the sense that it's not something that you look at and go, 'Wow. That is so weird! That is just really weird!' But it is something that is recognizable even though you never really knew [it]...So I think excellence is elevation. You know? I think that would be a good way to describe excellence: the elevation of the spirit (5-12).

So, if excellence is elevation of the spirit, what constitutes an excellent person?

Hart agrees with Dahl - that an excellent person has a balance of many excellent qualities. As an example, Hart described a dancer who may have a balance of many different good qualities,

...she has good taste, good posture, she has it all combined together, all the ingredients. Maybe not one thing in great amounts but she has everything put together. And that's what, to me, is excellence. Whereas, you might have somebody else who's got like **fabulous** this, but tacky, tacky, tacky taste! Tacky! Tacky! Tacky! Tacky! Well, they will be a star, but whether you can say they're excellent...because it's not a combination of everything (5-15).

Hart also spoke about a difference between excellent and excellence.

...I think it's also in the eye of the beholder. Because I think, often times, there is a, there'll be a lot of people that will go and see somebody who just does the move and if it's an impressive move, like here, like you see a rhythmic gymnast splitting her legs like [demonstrates], most people will go, '**WOW!!!**' [applauding] 'That is **excellent!** That is excellent, excellent, excellent!'...it's *excellent* but is it *excellence*? But then you, you'll have somebody else who has something that you're, you're captivated by. You kind of can smell the perfume in it and what you see, you accept their flaws because there's something about them that just makes your heart melt. The one that you're going, 'Oh fabulous! Excellent! Excellent!'

[applauding], you will forget in about twenty minutes. But what that other one has, even in her flawed way, you probably will have that in your brain for three or four months afterward. Every once in a while, that little vision will come out. And I think that person has achieved excellence (5-16).

In addition, an artist must bring uniqueness to their artform and must push it forward in some way in order to be considered excellent.

Some dancers that achieve success are great personalities but as far as their, how do you say, commitment to the artform, what they bring to the artform, they're not taking the artform further ahead...there's a big difference between the 'artist' and the 'star' (5-14).

For Miller, excellence equates with consistency.

The first word that pops into my mind, actually, is consistency. Some people can pull off a win or a good performance every once in a while - the luck of the draw or whatever. But excellence to me means consistency when you're under the gun consistently, daily in training giving your best, consistent year after year and I think that's excellence right there (6-4).

Also, Miller says that excellence comes from experiencing success and failure and learning from those experiences.

...I think as far as excellence, it's something that, you know, it comes from a lot of failures, actually. So, and that can only happen if you give your best day in and day out where you will see that you can fail so then you can see what it takes to be better, to be excellent (6-5).

To sum up, Miller says that excellence is,

...having a goal in your life, and goal or goals, and sticking to them. I mean to, being able to see whether when you can change them and why you have to change them and also, having that perspective (6-5).

Excellence and Success

Is there a difference between excellence and success?

Sawatzky says there is a clear difference between excellence and success and between excellent people and successful people.

Oh, to me there are a lot of successful people who are good at things, **good** at a lot of things but there are those who are, have achieved **excellence** in what they do. Oh, what's the difference there? It's like something you can just see when someone walks in a room, you know, something - it's just some people, no matter what they do, almost, no matter what they're tackling, what job they're tackling, they just achieve that...there are a lot of people that are good at a lot of things but they haven't gone that extra mile to be excellent at things (1-12).

Schellenberg says there is a difference between excellence and success, although, many times, one finds them paralleling each other.

Well, that depends on whose standards you're going by and for myself (pause), it's been pretty much the same, or at least, a parallel kind of thing. I mean, I have reached a certain level of success and I have reached a certain level of excellence. And when you look at my bankbook, it's about the same thing. Kind of, well, not too bad! (2-9)

When asked if success was more of an external phenomenon and excellence was more of an internal definition, Schellenberg agreed. "I think that's the way I feel about it" (2-9).

For Dubnicoff, the line between excellence and success was a bit more hazy.

I'd have to say I'm a pretty successful cyclist now. I mean, I, you know, top of the world. Fair to say I've reached excellence (3-3).

In fact, she often used the words excellence and success interchangeably.

"[Excellence is] almost having a successful career and being happy with it...my career has been pretty excellent...I've won every major games..." (3-3).

For Dahl, there is a difference between excellence and success.

I guess, for me, success is what a person has done and where they

are and excellence is who is the person who did what they did no matter where they are on the Richter scale of success (4-11).

As an example of a person who achieved success without excellence, Dahl cited Ben Johnson.

Ben Johnson achieved success but at great cost and he still doesn't acknowledge that it cost him anything...he can't see that what he did was unfair or wrong to achieve his goal, to be successful (4-11).

Hart agreed that there is a difference between excellence and success.

Oh! Huge difference! Huge difference...excellence can **bring** success but excellence also can be in such a way that it doesn't necessarily bring success because it may mean breaking the rules, it may be stepping outside of convention and it may be the fact that in order to achieve success, you have to give up a lot of things. For example, if I were to just say, is that if people are looking for dancers with high, high legs and [if] you are a different kind of dancer, you might be excellent and you might touch millions of people, but the critics may not know what to do with you. And so, you will not be as successful as the person with the [gestures] high legs. Or you may be an excellent, excellent skater but you may not be able to deal with the nerves of, say, competition so nobody gets to know who you are because you don't have an element in your personality that wants to compete - because your talent is different (5-13).

Miller says that for her, there is no difference between excellence and success.

None. No, not in my eyes because I don't term success. I think the world might but I see someone is successful even if they haven't become number one or haven't achieved, maybe made a million dollars or something like that. I think success may be more results oriented but I would like to see them similar - I see them more similar (6-5).

I asked Miller if she thought you could be excellent without being successful or the other way around. "You can be successful...you can be an excellent person but not be successful in what you do. You may not reach your goal..." (6-6).

Personal Excellence

After defining and discussing excellence, each participant was asked whether they consider themselves to be excellent.

Sawatzky said she considers herself excellent.

I think, yes, I guess. I think that to be in an elite sport or [to be] an elite performer in music or something, I think to a certain extent, you **have** to think of yourself in that way. You have to think that you're worth it, or that you are good enough to do that, you know? And then that, in itself, is half the battle of being excellent: if you think that you can be, you know? 'Cause if you never think that you can be, then you're always afraid to actually be it. But it's hard to say that, you know, because it's hard to say that, like, 'Oh yeah, I'm an excellent piano player,' right? And then the next time you play for the person you told you were excellent, well, you better **be** excellent, you know?! And you're not always gonna be! But I think at times, yeah, I think I've achieved excellence... (1-27, 1-28)

Schellenberg had a difficult time answering this question but after a lengthy pause, she said, giggling,

I guess within an area...that's hard to answer. I mean for me, for me, I'm excellent, I guess. From what I am capable of. I think, you know, given that some days are gonna be better than others, I think, yeah...I think I couldn't have been doing this that long if I didn't think so. And that's actually, that's one of the reasons I'm quitting now is because very often, I feel that what I'm doing is not excellent and I can't stand that. And that's why I will, that's why I'm backing off even though I'm getting a lot of feedback from people who, who tell me, 'Oh don't be silly'...but that's not enough...(2-24).

Dubnicoff's answer was not surprising, given how she had already defined excellence and success. When asked if she considered herself someone who's achieved excellence, she answered,

No. I haven't won it all yet. I can't say I've been the best or...I've won the world championships but I'm not...I haven't, no. I've been successful, yes! I've been very successful! I've won lots of races. But I haven't won the big one...Even if I get a silver medal at the

Olympics, I don't know if...I think I'll be very happy. Very, very happy. But somebody beat me. You know? And I can't have any doubt in my mind that I could have done anything better to win that gold. So, it's gonna have to be okay, I won the silver medal...I'll be truly happy if I say, 'I won the silver medal and man, she was faster than me'. That's the **only** way I'll feel successful. But it won't be excellence in any way (3-17).

Dahl, after several seconds of thought, said she considers herself excellent, even though she is so aware of her own faults and shortcomings.

[I] think of myself of as being excellent and I guess, I don't know whether, I mean this is a weird thing to say because other people would probably have said yes, but I think it would be hard to perceive of myself as being excellent because I'm so **keenly** aware of my faults and my own shortcomings. Either as a person or as a performer or as a musician and, I mean, there is rarely an occasion of a performance where I would say I'm really satisfied with that. That was truly satisfying. Couldn't be better. And that is funny because it doesn't necessarily match with what I said earlier about excellence. But I think it would be hard to perceive of oneself as being excellent when you know so much about yourself (4-40).

She went on to say that even though other people may consider her excellent, it might be dangerous for her to think such a thing about herself.

I wouldn't be surprised if other people thought that and said, 'Oh, Tracy Dahl epitomizes excellence in coloratura repertoire'. But I, myself, can keep listening to myself on my own disc - it sounds like I've got this terrible...it's all somewhere in the back of my nose...I mean I listen to my cd's and I hear so many things that are wrong...I don't think it's something (pause) that one maybe **should** feel about oneself. I think it's dangerous, not just from an egotistical point of view but from an I've got to get better kind of point of view 'cause if you think you're excellent, where is there to go? (4-41)

For Hart, the ongoing process of being an artist prevents her from thinking of herself as being excellent.

I think working for excellence is a constant process. So, I don't think it's something that you can define so that people can look and

say, 'We consider you excellent. We consider you one of excellence'. But I don't think...a gold medal, yeah, I mean you can look at, say, people who have won an Olympic gold medal or Varna, certainly, you would think of them as excellent because that's what everybody else said that, 'We think, we accept your level'. But at that point, I still looked at them and thought, 'Yeah, but this and this and this and this and this and this and this' and that was in comparison to other people (5-43).

I pointed out to Hart that it was ironic that she could see excellence in other people but not necessarily in herself.

Yes, because you know why? It's because I'm not in this person's brain and I don't know what she wants to achieve. I only look at what she has achieved and that, for me, is enough. Now, if I was in her shoes, I'd probably be thinking that I don't think it's enough, even when someone looks at me, I think, 'But that could be better and that could be better and this could be better and that could be better' (5-43).

Miller said she considers herself excellent.

Yeah, I do. I think I see it more in, I see it in the results, but I think it's more how I went about getting those results too that is successful. 'Cause it's not just overcoming something in a set or in a race; it's just daily doing stuff that, where you can either be a failure, whether it's personality trips or how you go about your business or you can be successful and I think that, I think I have been (6-21).

Goal-Setting and Excellence

Each participant was asked if they thought there was a relationship between mental skills, specifically goal-setting, and excellence.

Sawatzky said there was no doubt in her mind about the relationship between goal-setting and excellence.

Yeah, there's definitely a relationship, like, between even a goal like just going for it or working hard is **exactly**, exactly relevant to where I've gone. Especially, especially, I think, in volleyball, you know, with the height difference and all that stuff, you know? That's what

I've had to do. I've had to set a goal, work at it and get there...at least when I first started on teams, you know, never was really looked at and said, 'Ooooh, yeah, yeah, we really want her on the team (1-29).

Schellenberg said that she hopes she can influence her students to goal-set because she feels it is a key to achieving excellence.

...I wish that they would be, because we're talking about setting goals, I wish that they could really be very goal oriented because that's the only way you're gonna really work hard and achieve the technical excellence that you need to be able to do it beautifully and freely... (2-26).

Dubnicoff agrees that there is a link between goal-setting and excellence.

Oh, absolutely. The ultimate thing is to achieve what you've planned for, right?...Yeah, there is a relationship between (3-19).

For Dahl, being an "artist" poses an interesting twist on the relationship between goal-setting and excellence.

I think it's important to be mentally sound in the performing arts but...that's a tough one because you can think of the examples of the people who have somehow achieved this greatness who don't necessarily - I think there are people who - oh man, this is a tough one - because I would immediately say no. My initial reaction is no because to be a good artist, you have to be sensitive. To be a good communicator, to truly touch someone's soul, you can't just be focused. It's not just task oriented, it's also [about] what can you communicate? (4-45).

Hart believes there is a definite link between goal-setting, and particularly, in setting personal goals, and excellence.

Oh yeah. I mean definitely...well, I'll explain it in terms of when I was in Munich and I was at the barre and the teacher was giving a class and there's a tremendous amount of pressure in ballet to do exactly what the teacher says. And I finally went up to her and said, 'Please do not take offense to this because I know that everybody does when I change the exercise but I need much more work. And it is not a comment on your ability to teach. I recognize this is what

the majority of the class needs, but I need more and if I do what you ask me to do, my, I will, I will not be satisfied and I will not be able to do my best work in my rehearsal'...it's because I recognize that if I do not go beyond, if I - how do you say - if I skip this step where I do not force myself to do this, I will not achieve a certain level for myself. Somebody else might be able to achieve a certain level and do a certain thing who are doing much less work than me, but I will not. And so what it really comes down to is what you will accept from yourself and...that's the ultimate point is that you have to set your own goals and say, well, yeah, you do two pirouettes and you do it fairly well but I think you could do it better but if you don't want to do it better then it's none of my business. The point is this is how I want to do it. And I may not be able to do eight pirouettes like you but I want to do it my **best** as compared to like you. And I don't care whether or not I do eight pirouettes. What I want is to finish it properly so that requires a different kind of work. So, you have to look at it and you have to look at everybody else around you and realize that their goals are different from yours (5-43, 5-44).

Miller agrees that there is a relationship between goal-setting and excellence.

Yeah, definitely. Definitely. Because I think you can, you can fall on success by not - I mean, you can fall on scratching scratch and win and win a million dollars and maybe someone, not I, but maybe someone else may call you successful. But I think when you set out those goals, you have to be accountable to things by being accountable through that as long as you get the goals and you don't just break them down but you actually do it and you make the choice to do it. You can have those goals but if you don't [make the] daily choices, you won't be excellent or successful in what you're doing. I think as writing them down and having them specific in whatever, it's also the choices that you make daily (6-19).

Keys to Excellence

Throughout the interviews, several themes emerged regarding the keys to achieving excellence. Many of the participants spoke about the importance of having balance in one's life, the importance of taking risks, sacrificing and working hard, loving what you do, knowing yourself, believing in yourself, turning negatives into positives and dealing with obstacles, dealing with fear, and that

one must look at excellence as a life-long process.

Balance

Sawatzky had a better balance in her life at the time of the interview but reflected on her university years when her life simply revolved around music and volleyball. She said that a lot of people encouraged her to give up one or the other.

...when I think back to that, I mean, I didn't do anything else, you know? Like, nothing else. Like, I didn't (pause) **live** really. (laughs) That's a final thought! I didn't, really. I was out of my home so early and in bed so late and always had date book full from morning to night, every minute...but I was doing what I loved. And the thing with the volleyball/music thing was that was a release, you know? Even though I was very busy with music, because I had done volleyball, well, music was something different. So it was almost like a (pause) relaxing. Well, it wasn't relaxing but it was just a change so it, somehow it rests you or something. It's like a change of pace...it keeps your mind challenged...but I don't, sometimes I look back and to that and I just go, 'Oh, I don't know if I could do it again,' you know? I mean, I could if I wanted something bad enough, I would do it...Yeah, people will, you know, ask, 'Well, how did you do it?' Well, that's how! Ha! That's all I did! (1-35).

Schellenberg also spoke about the importance of balance and said she often laughed at people who were too focused on their careers.

...I still make fun of them, these singer types who are always **just** thinking about the career. It is so, it is to make you gag (2-15).

Dahl spoke about balance when she spoke about Judith Forrst, an opera singer from Vancouver, whom Dahl considers excellent. One of the reasons she considers her excellent is the fact that Forrst has been able to maintain a balance between her personal and professional lives (4-10). Dahl says Forrst has, "an incredible balance" (4-10).

Dahl said that as a performer, it is important to realize that your entire self-worth should not be dependant upon your career.

I think it's important in whatever way, shape or form people choose to get to this place, I think it's important to realize that you as a person are not wrapped up in what you do. It's what you do. You are not defined by it. You are not credited by it. If something goes wrong and you lose your voice, you'd still be a full person (4-49).

She also spoke about balance later in the interview when she offered advice to up and coming performers.

...what I would suggest to people who sing [is] yes, there are things [that] you can do and you should do. Avail yourself of those opportunities. Make the best of them, not at the cost of being taken advantage of [by] anybody or any situation but I think that there's a reasonable amount that you can do [to] take control. And then [it's important] to have that good balance in whatever way you get there...of somehow balancing that out and realizing that yes, this is what I'm working on, this is what I am doing, this is not who I am. And [if] I fall on the double Axel - my life isn't over...there's focus and there's cost and it has to be weighed out. (4-49).

Hart also spoke about the importance of balance when she described what kind of a dancer she would consider excellent. To her, balance is "having everything put together" (5-15).

And that's what I think is a culmination of what we, as human beings, understand is that our goal in life, or our thing in life is to find that balance. Absolute balance of all things...everything, every characteristic that you have, that you realize that the experience is to be balanced, to seek to find it. When that balance comes, then something comes through you because there's an honest acceptance of yourself and, therefore, acceptance of everybody else...a true artist is really someone that has all this balance and so, therefore, they don't really seek a certain kind of unbalanced success. Their success, to them, is whether or not they realize their goals, their own personal goals. And usually, your own personal goals are to achieve something that you envision, their own experience, their own dreams which, I think, is far more expansive than fitting into a mold that you think other people will like

(5-15).

Miller says her experience as a rower has taught her the importance of being balanced.

I'm still really aware of keeping everything balanced and keeping other areas of my life going so that it's not the be all and end all 'cause it's boring. Rowing training is boring a lot of the time...it helped because my boyfriend was on the team too, so that really helps and you just make sure you, you know, you go for dinner and you go out on weekends or you get away from the sight or you, you know, get away when you can or just read or write letters or just totally get the mind away from it and I think that is rest in itself - it's having the mental breaks every once in a while (6-16).

Miller said that having a balanced outlook has helped her keep her life and her career in perspective.

...that kind of keeps it in perspective and then I'm not gonna go over the deep end if it [a gold medal] doesn't happen. So I think it's really important to see its importance 'cause you have to see it as important or you won't go for it, you won't give your best - but that it's not the be and end all (6-11).

Miller also said that her experience in sport has taught her balance skills that she will take with her in other areas of her life.

It's like, yeah, I mean, I've been higher than I think anybody in the world can be and I have been, you know, so low at times, I feel, I think it makes you tough and it makes you respectful and keeps things in perspective in your life and I think that I will always have that to take to other areas of my life (6-21).

Taking Risks

Sawatzky, Schellenberg, Dahl, Hart and Miller all spoke about the importance of taking risks as a key to achieving excellence.

Sawatzky says taking risks has been extremely important to her in her life and in her career.

...a huge element in my life has been risk taking. 'Cause you have to try for stuff and you have to risk losing and you have to risk being cut and you have to risk (pause) screwing up, you know? You're on stage, you're playing a piano piece, you're gonna memorize a half hour sonata? Well, you gotta risk forgetting part of it. You gotta risk that because if you never go up there without your music, you'll never do it (1-10).

Sawatzky also took risks in volleyball. The head coach of the National Volleyball Team told her she would not make the team. She was faced with a dilemma: end her career as a highly successful university player, or try out for the National Team and risk being cut. She decided to take the chance and try out because, "...if I never took the chance of being cut, I mean, I may never have made it" (1-10). She also spoke about the importance of taking risks when she offers her advice to young achievers.

...the main thing I think I mentioned before, about the risk thing. Like, don't be afraid to take risks and go for what you want to do (1-36).

Many people told Schellenberg that she should not aim to be a singer and take the risk of pursuing a performing career. She was told it was a difficult life.

People are so, so, so eager to be practical and I find it all around me. And even, even when I started with the voice lessons many years ago, I remember specifically being told, 'Don't aim to be a singer. Just sort of go and, you know, aim to be, if you're gonna go to Germany, don't go with that in mind'. And I didn't. I had no problem with that advice! (both laugh) It's right up my alley! (more laughter)...what they said was a singer's life is very difficult...there are lots of reasons why people should not become a singer, there really are...I think all those things, well, yes, yes, they are there but most of those things could be overcome. They can be, I know they can (2-16, 2-17).

Dahl also feels that one of the keys to her success is that she has been willing to take risks.

...you kinda have to put yourself on the line. You have to say, 'These are my goods. I'm gonna try and sell them'. It sounds so commercial and cheap but it's, I think that [it's] important to take the risks when the opportunities are there (4-28).

Dahl, herself, had to take some risks early in her career, especially in 1984.

...that was part of me having faith and saying, 'Ok, I wanna go out and try this and it means I'm gonna have to take some risks,' and that particular year, fall of '84, my parents must have thought I'd lost my mind. But I think you also have to be willing to go somewhere...it just turned out that Houston Grand Opera and San Francisco were both auditioning in San Francisco one week, so I said, 'Great. I'm going to San Francisco. Bye!' and stayed in San Francisco for a week...I was twenty-one! (4-28, 4-29).

Hart spoke about taking risks, not only in one's career, but also in each specific performance.

And what happens is you're having to deal with a whole set of elements that all of a sudden, there's this pressure, subconscious, that they're watching you and there's this element of you want it to be perfect for them and this element of fear that it might not be. And it's the unknown. It's the unknown and yet every day that you rehearse it, it's unknown but it's okay because nobody's watching...No risk. Rehearsal has no risk whereas a performance is 100%...you have to have enough confidence to go on stage and say, 'Even if I fall, they will still appreciate what I'm doing'...same thing with being a doctor. One thing if you're working on a cadaver but it's another thing when you're working on a human being. Now, it's not life and death but it feels the same to you because in one sense, it **is** life or death. I mean, it's your livelihood...an artist is putting their life on the line - it's putting your views on the line...it's like, even today, the disappointment in one of my friends that came up and basically criticized an idea that I had for a certain project. I mean, I sit back and I say, 'Well, she has the right not to agree with me,' but it still hurts. And that's where you're at risk - you're basically vulnerable (5-24, 5-25).

Taking risks has also been important to Miller.

...we're all going to fall flat on our face and we're all gonna make mistakes but whatever! Who cares? Just keep going...that was a big thing for myself too because I was never the strongest on the

team. I was never the fastest single sculler but I was, like, just went to the edge all the time and I always could be trusted...[but] it's risky and it's not. In reality, it's only sport, you know, and it's not like I'm risking, I'm not giving my life savings and I'd better pull it off...(6-22).

Sacrifice/Hard Work

Four participants cited sacrifice and hard work as being keys to achieving excellence.

Sawatzky discussed hard work and sacrifice as being a key to her achievements more than any other participant. She resolved very early in life to work harder than anyone else in her sight in order to be the best that she could be. I asked her what she thinks has enabled her, at five feet six inches tall, to be a member of Canada's National Volleyball Team.

I think it's just absolutely (pause) a desire to be better than anyone else or just work harder, not necessarily be better, 'cause you're not going to be better than everyone else. You know, at my height, I won't be a better blocker than somebody else. I know that. But there are other things that I can be better at, you know? And it's just my burning desire to work hard and to not be able to see anyone else working harder than me...It's like in the weight room too, if I'm not as strong as somebody, if I'm smaller, I'll just work harder on weights and I'll lift more than they do. I can lift as much as anybody, I mean, even if you're small, weight's all relative to your body weight... (1-7, 1-8).

Sawatzky says music has always come fairly naturally to her, but she did not rest on her laurels once she reached university.

I knew that I could be the best performer at the School of Music because I knew I was the only one in those practice rooms till midnight or one in the morning. I knew I was! (1-10).

Hard work was also a theme when Sawatzky discussed excellence. She believes hard work to be a key to achieving excellence.

I don't think anyone who comes about something easily - I don't know if excellence pertains to someone like that...if you've worked and worked and worked at it and you achieve it...that, to me, is [excellence] (1-12).

Sawatzky said that she had seen many more talented volleyball players than she come and go during her volleyball career.

...[they] have just been passed along the way by other volleyball players and they wouldn't have had to be but they weren't willing to sort of put that extra time in, you know? They were good at volleyball, but they never achieved excellence...the extra time thing, I mean, that's been huge for me in volleyball. If I hadn't put in, like, three extra mornings by myself, with my coach, **every** week, **every** year, I would never be on the National Team now. I just couldn't have done it...[excellent people] are willing to work hard and willing to give up a lot more than other people (1-13).

Hard work also came up when Sawatzky was discussing goal-setting.

...my goal is to be a starter on this team and that's important and I remind myself every morning before I go to practice that my goal is to start on this team. But I still go back to, you know, my goal that is to do more than the other setter would do. I have to do more than she does. I have to. It's like an obsession. I have to do more than she would do because I have to be in the gym for longer hours than she is and I have to serve harder and dig more because she's way taller than I am so I can't block more than she [does] (1-18)

Where does Sawatzky's work ethic come from? She says it comes, by example, from her parents and from her Mennonite background.

I mean, people joke about Mennonites and their work ethic but I **am** a Mennonite and I think that's a little bit true...my Mom worked in her house with her Mom and on a farm and she was the oldest girl so she took care of all the kids, she cooked, she cleaned, she worked outside, she worked **hard**....my self-confidence and positive attitude, I've learnt from my father, for sure (1-21).

Sawatzky says the best advice she could give an up and coming performer is to work hard.

...that's the biggest thing I would say is to put in more time, try harder - you try as hard as you can every single minute and just go for it and not be afraid to go for it (1-37).

Dubnicoff had an excellent analogy for describing how hard work can help one achieve excellence.

...think of hard work as velcro. Okay? The harder work you do, the more velcro you have in your body. Okay? Alright? And when it comes down to the final stages of preparation, like, for example, say you had this big base, an aerobic base, okay, and the more aerobic base you have, the more velcro you have. So, when you're doing power work or speed/endurance work, the better it'll stick to you. Okay? So, it's good to have. And [with] all the hard work, you get more velcro and then anything you throw at it, your body can absorb it better. And then when you're racing, I kinda, 'ask and you shall receive' okay? If I'm in a race in a crucial situation [and] I have to dig deep, ask and I shall receive. Okay, I wanna go faster - and you can go faster. That's when you put it into your third gear or fourth gear and get into overdrive and kick it and you have it because you have all this velcro and everything stuck to it (3-10, 3-11).

Dubnicoff says she has to sacrifice many things on a daily basis in order to train well.

...I just get frustrated sometimes because I can't do all of the things that I wanna do because I think, 'ah, I gotta train today'. Yes, I do have to train today. You know? And then, like, so many busy things and I feel that my time is limited and sometimes quality time's put in here or put in there. But that's the sacrifices we have to make (3-19).

Dubnicoff said she would tell young people that hard work and sacrifice are two of the most important keys to achieving excellence.

It's not gonna happen in one day. And I think the most important thing is to make the best of every day. Like, from now, I have, what, 130 days till the Olympics? So, each one of those days has to be, I have to do the most in that one day that I can...you have to do something. You know, sometimes you say, 'Oh, I can't do this. Don't do anything'. Then you're like, 'Oh, I gotta go'. Usually, I end

up going anyway and doing something (3-24).

Hart acknowledges that she is one of the hardest working dancers in the business. However, she does not understand how people can **not** work hard.

...a lot of people are frightened sometimes by my life and by the commitment and by what people would say dedication. I think I'm far less dedicated than I used to be - I used to be a maniac! And when I first started, when I was, like, six or seven, I used to just work endlessly, hours, really beating myself into the ground...somebody just said to me the other day, you know, 'But, Evy, there's not very many people who have your intensity about work'. And I just don't understand that because to me, that's just the way you work: you might as well do or you don't...there's no in between...this is getting us back to the whole thing about excellence is that I don't understand - if you're going to do something, why not do it really well? Why do it half? I've never been able to understand anybody who can accept less than what their best is (5-7).

Hart says a willingness to work hard can be the difference between achieving excellence and success.

...the interesting thing is you also see people who want the success, who want the excellence, but they are so - they don't want to work for it! They're just not willing, they're just not willing to motivate themselves either. They're somehow - they're here (hand gestures) and they know they want to be there (hand gestures) but they don't wanna do the work. And I think that's also part of intelligence is recognizing that **that's** what you have to do. **W. O .R .K.** in capital letters and non-stop work (5-17, 5-18).

Hart says she's often had to struggle with various partners who have not had the same work ethic as she does.

...they start to work differently because they realize that if they put that extra work in, they get the results. But it's because they've never really gotten to that point...Rex [Harrington, her partner from the National Ballet of Canada] said, 'You know, it's because when I work with her, I do things that I never, ever thought were possible'. No one ever pushed him. He saw it. And there's so many times

when I'm working with *Paul* [name changed in the interest of privacy] and I look at him and I get so exasperated. It's like, 'Excuse me! But why am I hearing all of the reasons why we **cannot** do it? Why are we not focussing on how **can** we do it?' He doesn't get it. He just does not...they're afraid to put the effort in, right, because if it's slow, it's that much harder for the partner. And - yes? **And??? And??? Is that not what we're here for? Okay, so it's more difficult. And???...but to not even try it because it's more difficult? What kind of reason is that? (5-45).**

She goes on to say that putting this extra effort in is exactly what may elevate you toward excellence.

That is the difference of what creates a higher level and a lower level: just basic mentality. It's the basic creativity, the basic vision, the basic lack of fear to put the work in and the effort to make it happen which will come right back to excellence and how you work. It's just - there is no shortcut...if you want something higher, you have to give up a lot and you have to work for it. There's no shortcut. You're not gonna be handed it. You're just not. Not without work. No matter how talented you are, because eventually, your talent, no matter how good it is, will only go so far (5-45).

Miller also believes that hard work and sacrifice are keys to achieving excellence.

...I just knew that it's not always talent, but people [who] work hard that will get where they want to go. So I see that as really important. And even for myself now, I see, you know, I have the talent to speak but I see that it does take a lot of work and I know that. I think I know from my goal-setting that if you do a lot of work and you put in the time, it's really rewarding once you get there (6-17).

Loving What You Do

Sawatzky, Schellenberg, and Hart all spoke about the importance of loving what you do as a key to achieving excellence.

For Sawatzky, a love of performing is what drives her both in sport and the

performing arts. She recalled doing operettas and musical theatre in highschool and how much she relished the thrill of performing.

...just the feeling of being on that stage and finishing and everyone applauding like, 'Wooo!', like that's just AAAHHH!!! you know? And that is something I could - you know, I mean, I thought, I'll never be able to live without this, you know? And I still don't live without it 'cause with volleyball, I mean, everyone claps for you and cheers and yells, you know, and loves what you do... (1-16).

Sawatzky said that it is important for young people to find something that they love to do as a career path. "And just to find something that you love and if you love it, then just do it as hard as you can..." (1-36).

Schellenberg says a love of singing is what drew her from the piano.

I loved singing. I've always sung in church choirs and things like that...I started lessons with her and it went boom! And it was **so** much easier than practicing the piano. My gosh! Then I could sort of understand, I started to understand how people could actually spend hours practicing. Before that, it was just such a struggle...[singing] was not work. It was **fun!** (2-6).

For Hart, a love of dance is what motivates her on a daily basis. She says she often reminds herself

...how I feel about dancing is [I do it] every day because I love to dance. And if I think to myself and if I remind myself how much I have enjoyed the rehearsal and how much I love to dance, how much I love this ballet, how much I love this music, no matter how nervous I am, how afraid I am, I come to the stage (5-24).

Hart says it is important for performers to "...remind yourself every day that this is what you want to do and this is really what you love to do... (5-49). In addition, one must determine why they are pursuing a career in the arts.

But you have to have an honesty toward yourself. You have to sit there and say, 'Am I doing this for my heart, because my heart dictates it? Or am I doing it for what I want to get out of it, or for

what I want to prove to my parents? Am I doing this for me or am I doing this for my parents? Am I doing this for my teacher? Am I doing this because I want to be a star? I want attention? Or am I doing this because I can?'...if your soul doesn't demand it, get out. Right now. And find the thing that your soul does demand because that's when you will achieve excellence; when your soul demands it and you have enough courage to choose that for your soul (5-51).

Self-Knowledge

Sawatzky, Dubnicoff, Dahl and Hart identified self-knowledge as a key to achieving excellence. They maintain that it is important to know one's strengths and weaknesses intimately in order to continue to strive for excellence.

Sawatzky said that age and experience has brought her a self-knowledge which has helped her set appropriate goals. Now that she knows what she is capable of, she can reach even higher than she thought possible (1-26).

Dubnicoff says sport psychologist Cal Botterill has helped her know herself, which, in turn, has made her a more successful athlete. She says doing a self-analysis survey with him each year helps her understand where she is at, mentally. She claims this test helps her tremendously.

Oh, I would say so. Any feedback you get...you say, 'Yeah, I do have higher confidence. That's great,' you know and , 'Oh, this is something I have to work on,'... (3-23)

Dahl says that she has a hard time thinking of herself as excellent because she is so aware of her own faults and limitations.

I think it would be hard to perceive of myself as being excellent because I'm so **keenly** aware of my faults and my own shortcomings...I listen to my CD's and I hear so many things that are wrong...that CD was made so many years ago now, that I go, oh my gosh! Let me do it again! It would be so different now, it would be such a different sound now and I don't think [excellence is] something that one maybe **should** feel about oneself. I think it's

dangerous...(4-40).

When offering advice to young performers, Dahl said it is important to be aware of one's weaknesses.

...I think it's important to have a good sense of what your strengths are and to remind yourself of those when your weaknesses are calling by going, 'HELLO!!! Remember me??!!!' so that you can really kind of not necessarily defeat any negative thought, but I think it's important to have somewhere to go to get rid of that kind of detrimental thinking (4-49).

Hart believes that talented people always know themselves inside out. For her, this is key.

...I think the greatest, or one of the biggest things about talent is the talented people always know what they can't do. And they're more, they're so acutely aware of what they're not doing and what they can't do. Whereas the other people have no idea they're not doing maximum; that they're only aware of what they **do** do, they're not aware of what they're **not** doing and this is a big, huge difference... (5-8).

Knowing herself and her shortcomings has also posed a problem for Hart at times.

...the terrible thing is for **me**, where if I'm bad, I'm **so**, aware, **SO** aware and I'm **SO** convinced that everybody can see it... (5-20).

Hart also spoke about self-knowledge when she offered advice to young performers.

...try to recognize what your strengths are because we know that you know what your weaknesses are...I think the most important thing is to not betray yourself. That if you are constantly in touch with your heart, this is the most key because no matter where you are along the way, you will recognize at one point, wherever your talent cuts off, you will be content because you will have been true to yourself (5-50).

Self Belief

Sawatzky was continually told as a youngster that she would never be a successful volleyball player because of her height. She claims that a belief in herself greatly helped to motivate her beyond any doubts.

I was very confident in myself...I was blessed with a self-confident nature so that, you know, them saying that to me wouldn't knock me down far enough that I would give up...I don't know if it's just my character or that I just sort of said, 'You know what? Well, **great**, then. If you think I'm not gonna make it then there's no pressure on me to make it...so I'll just go and give 'er and then we'll **see** if you can cut me...you've never seen me play, you don't know that I would make it. Yeah, I'm 5'6" but (pause) so **what?!'** (1-7).

Sawatzky believes a steadfast belief in herself and her abilities has been key in being able to achieve what she has achieved.

I think that confidence in my preparation and in that just (pause) let me believe in myself...it was important for me to be confident in my abilities (1-11).

Sawatzky also believes that one almost has to think of oneself as excellent in order to reach excellence.

I think that to be where I am or people in an elite sport or an elite performer in music or something, I think, to a certain extent, you **have** to think of yourself in that way. You have to think that you're worth it or that you are good enough to do that, you know? And then that, in itself, is half the battle of being excellent; if you think that you can be. 'Cause if you never think that you can be, then you're always afraid to actually **be** it (1-28).

Finally, Sawatzky offered this piece of advice to young performers:

...what I often say to young, young kids is just to be determined at what you're doing and be dedicated to it and think and believe that you can do it. That's the thing, isn't it, I think (1-36).

Dubnicoff said that when she stopped believing in herself was when she fell

into a huge career slump.

...I wasn't concentrating, I wasn't focused, I wasn't mad enough, didn't want it enough and...wasn't feeling confident in my power and my strength because of the training up to it...I just, I didn't care! I didn't care. I didn't have anyone to help me...it got to the point where I was like, oh well, whatever...it [her mind] shut off. It shut off. Totally...I didn't train for it, I didn't care. As long as I didn't get last, I came 7th instead of 8th, you know? I just did not want to be there (3-14).

Dubnicoff says when she is feeling confident in herself is when she races the best.

...you know what's funny is that people come up, 'So, what happened in '95?' Well, I don't know what happened. I don't remember. I just kinda whoosh! Think of the good times...mind/body are one. It's unbelievable. I that's something I had to learn that, you know, if the body isn't feeling right, the mind's gotta get the body to feel right so you have to do certain things that hey! Come on! Kick your ass! Let's go! Little things like that...you don't feel fast, you don't feel strong, you don't feel this, you don't feel that and a lot of it could be just negativity...but you can see it [determination] in your eyes, you know? That's just something, I mean, I haven't seen that for a while but it'll come (3-11, 3-15, 3-16).

Dahl said it is important for a singer to believe in him/herself in spite of outside forces like the audience or conductors.

...I was putting a lot of stock in what other people perceived of my success or my excellence and the conductor looking up at me. I realized how much weight I had put in him smiling at me and encouraging me and [in] that last performance, when I didn't have as good a performance, he didn't clap when I finished the aria. He didn't look at me. How mortified I felt and [I realized] that I was giving him way too much control (4-21).

Dahl also said she has come to a place in her career where, through self knowledge, she feels she knows what she is capable of achieving.

...now I feel like it's not that unrealistic, as I said to my manager,

'You know, I think I could sing in those European festivals. I think I should be in Salzburg to sing'. I just don't know whether those opportunities are going to come my way, but I believe that I'm capable of handling it (4-37).

Hart did not believe in her talent at one time. She spoke about her mentor, Henny Jurriens, and how his absolute belief in her talent confounded her.

...it's still, I mean, it's hard, difficult to say the words, but he would say, 'You have,' he would say to me, 'To me, you have genius talent' and I would hear that, you hear it and you kind of go, 'Not possible!' Because I remember going to see the film *Amadeus* and I was just so upset when I left because I was thinking maybe I'm just a Salieri. I mean it was - I thought, 'I am not a Mozart. I am Salieri through and through. I am mortal. I am frustrated. There is no way that I can be this genius' (5-31).

Through experience, she now recognizes the importance of believing in herself and says she would tell young dancers to,

Hone your sense of courage and to, when the deepest, darkest days are is that, I think this is the biggest thing, is to say to yourself, no matter what I feel, no matter how discouraged I am, I have to have this sense of belief...you're responsible for your own happiness...and you are responsible for how far you go because nobody can say you cannot. You just have to believe you can. Yes, someone might say to you, 'No, you're not going to make a professional dancer. You don't have the body, you don't have the goods, blaahh...' but to a certain degree, you can decide how much you fight for it and how much you're gonna bend your body to your will (5-50).

Miller says that becoming a successful rower has enabled her to believe in her abilities in other areas of her life.

...I know that if for some reason it does not happen or I choose to take another path, I know that I can choose something and work hard at it and then I can find an area that I like and I can be successful at it. So whether it's rowing or anything else...it's almost like I've done this before, I know I can do it again. I know I can bring it back... (6-21).

Turning Negatives Into Positives: Dealing with Obstacles

All of the participants discussed having to confront and deal with obstacles and how to use those obstacles as motivation.

Sawatzky has had to overcome many obstacles as a volleyball player; most importantly, her height. Many times throughout the course of our interview, she discussed how she faced those obstacles and used them as motivation. It seemed that no matter what negative situation presented her, she was able to turn that negative into a positive. People told her,

'You don't really have a chance, but here's your tryout'. But anyone could go in pretty lighthearted, pretty easygoing about it and say, 'Hey! You know what? You've just given me the way in because there's no pressure on me to make it because I'm not supposed to make it'. And then, boom, I had no pressure... (1-7).

She said she feels a tremendous sense of satisfaction that she has made it in volleyball because everyone said she couldn't.

Yeah, and that was a good feeling. You know, 'Yeah, look at me now!' you know? I got cut three times from two midget provincial teams and the juvenile team. They cut me three years in a row: '85, '86 and '87 and then in '87 they were desperate to have me because two setters got cut on a team and boy, did that feel good, you know? And now I'm on the National Team. Sometimes, it's funny because two coaches that cut me those three times, they look at me and they shake their head, eh? and we kinda have a little private thing going, eh, it's like, 'Yeah, look at me now'... (1-16).

As a player on the National Team, Sawatzky was able to turn their negative experiences into positive ones.

...sometimes, I'd, we'd look at our team in my first year - I'm like, 'Well, there's three of us first years here and, you know, two second years. We're never gonna win,' and we didn't win our first year but we set the goal and we were devastated when we didn't because we worked so hard to get it and we didn't get it. But the next year,

we did and I think that's huge because we knew already how to work towards it. Yeah, fine, we didn't win it the year before but that hurt more so we wanted even more the next year. And then we started winning... (1-22).

As a university student, heavily involved in both music and volleyball, Sawatzky faced a huge obstacle: lack of time. The odds were against her to succeed in either field. People told her she should focus on one or the other.

A lot of people told me to do that too...there's not even enough hours in a day. You're going to upset people, you're not going to be able to go to rehearsals and you're not going to be able to make it... (1-33).

Somehow, she managed to succeed in both. She says she offers the following advice to young volleyball players:

...if they don't have the height, then everything else they do has to be better and just their attitude has to be so, you know, they have to possess something different then. You know? You have to find something else that you're strong at then...be it leadership, be it talking on the court, be it trying harder than anybody else, be it putting in more time... (1-37).

Schellenberg says an obstacle for her has been her discomfort with being in front of an audience.

...it's been a bit of a struggle and I think I'll always struggle with the whole performing aspect of it because I really am more comfortable behind a piano, behind a barrier, than I am in front of, naked, in front of a crowd. I will never lose that. And I see, I look at other singers often that have that singer personality and I think, 'Yeah, it's much easier for them,' some things are much easier. I've had to work terribly hard on trying to be expressive because it's not in my nature (2-5).

Schellenberg says that there are many obstacles which appear before a singer.

...the singer's life, a singer's life is very difficult. It's very hard to make your money as an artist, enough money to live on. You're rubbing shoulders with all kinds of creeps...it involves a lot of

travelling, it's hard on the family. There are a lot of reasons why people should not become a singer, there really are...but most of these things could be overcome (2-17).

When Dubnicoff spoke about her mentor, Colleen Miller, she identified Miller's ability to overcome obstacles as one of the reasons she admired her.

...[she's] kind of corny and you would never think that this person could be so focused to win three world championships in a row. And to conquer all odds through national sport organizations, competing through amazing amounts of pain... (3-11).

Dubnicoff also says that during a competition, you must be able to turn negatives into positives in order to stay focused.

And, you know what's really funny is that I'm pretty easy going. Oh, okay, things are delayed? Well, okay, really, it's the same for everyone. So, I don't really - but sometimes you get frustrated like it's raining and raining and raining and raining and raining and you've got warm-up and then you're ready to go, okay, and it rains again-and you, I mean, you get frustrated. But, it's the same for everybody (3-24).

Dahl, like Sawatzky, has had to fight her physical stature as a tremendous obstacle. She recalled auditioning for the San Francisco Opera in 1986.

I had just sung the role in Wolf Trap, Virginia and...they flew me to San Francisco to audition for this Olympia and I knew it was Domingo [who] was gonna be in it and I was mortified because at the end of my audition, the general director of the company asked my pianist to stand beside me so he could see how short I was. I was mortified. I cried for two days. I cried for two days 'cause I thought I'd gotten away from that. I thought, what difference does it make? I'm a mechanical doll! What difference does it make if Domingo is towering over me? And I was really surprised when they gave me the job 'cause I really thought I had not gotten it because of my height (4-15).

Realizing her height and body structure would likely prohibit her from performing certain roles, she changed her goals from musical theatre to opera.

...singing Maria in *West Side Story* was not a realistic goal, not for me. Even though it's perfect for me, vocally, it would never happen so then [my goals] changed. They changed to things that were actually realistic (4-26).

Hart began seriously dancing very late at fourteen years of age. Many people, including the National Ballet of Canada, told her that this late start would prohibit her from becoming a professional dancer. I remarked to her how interesting it was that both Karen Kain and herself had been told by the National Ballet that they would not make it as professional dancers.

Yes. Sometimes that's a catalyst too...that's why I would say to a young dancer, when you have obstacles and when you have fears, don't be afraid of those obstacles. Accept them and, actually, relish them because they are the things that will help you. But that's why I say never stop looking up there because if you concern yourself with only the obstacles, then you get so discouraged, you can't move on. You know? So at one point, you have to look at it and say, 'Yeah, but you know what? The greatest...artists had troubles and had difficulties and it was an uphill road'...Mount Everest is not easy to climb and if you remember that, you know, sometimes you're going to slip, lose your footing and slip down and as long as you don't fall off the mountain, you're fine (5-51).

Miller faced an enormous obstacle when she and partner Wendy Wiebe arrived at the 1996 Summer Olympic Games. Wiebe developed the flu shortly before their first event. Miller says they simply had to deal with this obstacle and face it as best they could.

Oh, I didn't even care who was sick or whatever. It was just shitty...whoever it was, it doesn't matter. Just rotten timing and, you know, you just never think it's gonna happen to you. And so, I mean, I've never blamed her and it'll never even cross my mind to think of blaming her or whatever 'cause it was out of our control...you just deal with it (6-12).

Dealing With Fear

Performers often have to contend with fear. How they deal with fear was identified by the participants as a key to achieving excellence.

Sawatzky says that not being afraid to try has been a key to her success. She said that she thinks her life has gone a certain way because she's "not been afraid to..." try things, be it in music or in sport (1-7). Even trying out for the National Volleyball Team was a risk for her, but she swallowed her fear and did it anyway because she was determined to fulfil her goals (1-10).

Schellenberg says that a lot of young performers are really afraid to go for a performing career, for many reasons, and that as a teacher, she tries to discourage that (2-16). She says that

I would really like to discourage that kind of thing...I think a lot more people should strive for the performing arts because I think they have a lot to give and it would be a shame if they would be afraid to aim for that (2-16).

For Dubnicoff, fear is an essential component of success. However, she claims it is important to acknowledge that fear and deal with it in order to overcome it.

Fear is a big factor and everyone's scared, it's just, you have to be scared **before**. I mean it's, you know the shirts, 'no fear'? That's a crock of shit! That's a crock of shit. Everyone's - you're not fearing, get outta there! You're not ready to be in there, you know?! I mean, it's a dog fight, you know? Fear is fear (3-15).

Dahl says fear often prevents a performer from taking the necessary risks in order to achieve excellence.

I think there are people who haven't achieved success because, and whether it's because they fear it, if I enter this and I don't win,

then I've really lost. But if you don't go in, you probably won't go on, you know? You kind of have to put yourself on the line (4-28).

Dahl also spoke about fear when she discussed how to overcome a bad performance. After one particularly disappointing performance of *Glitter and Be Gay*,

...I just thought I'll never be able to sing it again. I can relate to the people who go, 'Oh, I'm not doing that sonovaroutine again!'...but you can't, not in a career where your life is based on repeating roles...you'd better get over it or you're gonna have to drop the role (4-38).

Hart has dealt with fear, in one form or another, for most of her career. She says she has experienced fear in the first performance of each full length ballet.

...the first performance of any full length ballet, you will **never** forget because that's like a dream come true. And there's all those implications of what you carry from your childhood, your dream to achieve that when you first step out on the stage there's not only this great fear of failure because, of course, if you fail, your dream's popped, your bubble's been burst (5-5).

Hart also discussed fear when offering her advice to young performers. She says a "lack of fear" and a "sense of courage" is essential in creating a path to excellence (5-49).

Excellence is a Life-long Process

Sawatzky, Dahl and Hart all stressed that achieving excellence is a life-long process of striving and not something which happens overnight.

When Sawatzky defined excellence, she said that excellence is "...striving to be better than anybody else at what you do" and that excellence never comes easily but, rather, through much hard work (1-12). She also said that it is difficult

to think of oneself as excellent because you "...can always see yourself still getting so much better" (1-29).

Dahl said that it is important to continually strive to better yourself.

If you strive for excellence, then it's always something you can be, you can always set your goals and you can - it can be an ongoing process and there is no end...run the race like you want to win and you want to finish...it's not necessarily that you ever will cross that finish line. The process of perfection [and] the process of will is [an] all-continuing process - it will never stop...excellence changes and evolves and I think it can and it should in each person's life as they go along in their career. If it's just pertaining to their career or it's pertaining to both things, then Lord knows, you're gonna be striving for a long time to come (4-41).

As a dancer, Hart says that she is constantly striving to meld together technical and artistic excellence.

...the problem is that it will never be all together because whenever you come to understand something technically, there'll be another technical challenge to master and as soon as you understand something emotionally, there'll be something else...it's always. It's nonstop (5-20).

Hart says achieving excellence is a life-long process that evolves and changes.

...it's like defining and refining something. But the more you know, the more you don't know. But the more you don't know, the more that you work to know...Okay! Say, a baker, a baker and they make their first cake and it's round and it's high and the icing on the side. By the time they've studied it, it comes up absolutely, I mean, about 15 tiers high and every little detail is perfect and right...It's been a long and gradual process. Do you know what I mean? That all of a sudden, the details become so clear and so refined (5-21).

Hart also says that it is important to recognize that achieving excellence is a journey and each journey is as unique as we are.

I think that's really the key issue is to sit there and recognize your own uniqueness and that your journey is your journey and to recognize this: that everybody is going to have to stop dancing at

some point. And so even if somebody is the greatest ballerina in the world, and you are only a corps du ballet, at one point when you both stop dancing, it's not going to matter one hoot. But what is going to matter is how much you enjoyed your experience being a dancer. And **that** is the key. Enjoying the journey and recognizing that you can enjoy your career just as much as that ballerina can. Even though, when you say that to people, they don't understand that...you're responsible for your happiness and you are responsible for how far you go because nobody can say you cannot. You just have to believe you can (5-50).

Mentors

Each participant was asked if they had a mentor during their careers.

Sawatzky said her mentor was a fellow volleyball player in university named Val DeRocco. DeRocco had been on the National Team for many years and had played in Europe and at thirty-two, was the veteran on the Sawatzky's university team. DeRocco was also a setter and Sawatzky says she learned valuable volleyball skills from her.

...she was so good and yet she was just, you know, really natural and just had played a long time and had seen a lot of volleyball...[she was] so positive to all her teammates. And I just wanted to **be** her...a ton of things that I learned from watching her my first year, I could never do in my first year. It's stuff that I remember that she did that I'm starting to do now (1-23).

Sawatzky was as inspired by DeRocco's attitude as she was of her volleyball skills.

And just how she interacted with people, how she was on the court, her competitive attitude...like, she just wasn't going to be beaten no matter **what!** Like she was just gonna do **everything** possible not to get beaten, you know? And she had lots of fun doing that, you know?...she loved what she was doing because she was good at it. She was **excellent** at it, you know, and she worked very hard (1-23).

Schellenberg cited two of her voice teachers as her mentors. Her first voice teacher was a mentor and a role model to her. Schellenberg says she was a "wonderful singer" (2-18). Later, when Schellenberg moved to Germany to study, her teacher there became her mentor.

...my teacher there was really the guru that we all sat at his feet for four years!...I think he brought the most important thing to me was the confidence that I could actually get up and do this which was very, which felt so unnatural to me, this whole performing thing. The voice and the technique, that is one thing and it's only part of singing. The other part is actually facing those people and doing it then. And he really made me and the other people that were working with him, made us feel like we were just the cat's meow (2-19).

This belief that he instilled in Schellenberg was critical in her development.

We were not quite ready for the Met, but maybe next year. And he would say that and we would laugh - but some part of us would believe it (2-19).

Dubnicoff said that fellow participant Colleen Miller was one of her mentors.

Because she's been successful and she's just a really, really unique person as well as an athlete and you see her on the outside...you would never think that this person could be so focused to win three world championships in a row. And to conquer all odds through national sport organizations, you know, competing through amazing amounts of pain, you would never think that...it's that focused side that I really admire - that she can bear down and do it...it's just her desire and her will and determination just to keep going (3-12).

Dahl cited fellow opera singer Judith Forrst as one of her mentors. Forrst's balance is what inspires Dahl the most.

I just think she's amazing and I have from the first time I met her. She's a great lady because of the way she can mix both worlds, the world of her professional role with her fans - I think that's something fabulous (4-27).

Hart had an incredible mentor in Henny Jurriens. Jurriens was a former dance

partner of Hart's who later became the Artistic Director of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. In 1989, Jurriens and his wife were killed in a car crash. Jurriens taught Hart many important lessons.

...I had wonderful teachers before...and they helped me tremendously...but Henny was what I call the most, perhaps, holistic one. He recognized that as an artist, in order to achieve excellence, in order to bring out the creativity, you had to deal with the person as a total human being, not just as a machine that was gonna do this element, you know? That you had to deal with the fact that that person, when they came in, were feeling insecure or feeling tired or feeling unhappy or feeling ugly. You had to deal with that before you could even begin to work (5-28).

Jurriens' belief in Hart's talent was both eye-opening and inspiring to her.

...he was one person...who recognized the power of believing in someone and letting them know that even if he didn't understand their goals, or he didn't understand where you're going, didn't understand your vision, he'd walk beside you and he'd support you and he'd say, 'Yeah, go for it!' And when we were working, he'd say it, 'Oh, wow!' and there's tremendous power in that. Tremendous power in the fact that having someone recognize what you're trying to do. Not just recognizing what you are doing, but recognizing that you are trying to accomplish more than what you are achieving (5-29).

This encouragement that Jurriens gave to Hart was invaluable to her development.

...if you have someone who's willing to dream with you even though he has no idea what you're talking about but looks at you and trusts you and says, 'Yeah, go for it. I really don't know what it is you're going to do, what you're going to accomplish but I know and I trust you that what it will be will be more than what you're doing'...even the simplest little thing, sometimes it's the simplest little thing that you're not even aware that you're doing but he recognizes it and mirrors it (5-29).

Jurriens always looked at the process of excellence as opposed to the end result.

I never felt, even if I danced less than I ever did before, I never felt

that there was one instant that it wasn't the perfect, wasn't finding something beyond what I'd done before and recognizing when I'd worked on something, recognizing that I'd achieved. You'd be surprised how many coaches and teachers don't recognize the daily progression...it's almost worse for a very talented person because they have this vision and goal that nobody else can see and everybody looks at them and it's like, 'What are you talking about? It's great!' ...to be able to have somebody that looks at you and says, 'Oh yeah. I - yeah. You can do better than that. I **know** you can'. You might be a little depressed at one point, a little disheartened but in a way, it's reassuring because you always know that they know that you can perform your absolute best (5-30).

Before Jurriens, Hart felt terribly misunderstood. He helped her understand how unique her talent is and how that uniqueness affects her relationships with other dancers.

He made me realize that my frustration was, at my partner, was the fact that they were getting frustrated with me. I didn't even, I couldn't even begin to conceive that. I kinda thought I was an anomaly, that I couldn't understand, couldn't understand why they couldn't hear the music. I used to think, 'Are they stupid?' because I just figured, for me it's so natural...he would say, 'To me, you have genius talent' and I would hear that, you hear it and you kind of go - not possible!...I remember once at one point in time that I was just so devastated, he just got so exasperated, '**EVY! YOU ARE UNIQUE!**' like it was like he wanted to pound it into my head because I **kept** wanting to compare myself to other people and I kept wanting to be on the same playing field as all the other dancers and it's so difficult to accept that you have a place (5-31).

Hart says that the lessons Jurriens taught her live on within her today.

...perhaps he was the link that will take me to the point of accepting myself to the point where I'm able to continue to pass it on...(5-32).

Miller claimed she doesn't really have any mentors.

No. No. Not one. I mean, I would look at different people that I thought were really good. I'd look at maybe people on the National Rowing Team that were really good trainers and had a really good attitude and worked hard and that would motivate me...(6-14).

Miller says her very first coach did inspire her.

...he got us up in the morning - he'd call if you weren't there and he was always really positive and lots of fun and he wasn't the best technical coach but he was really good as far as motivation, so he made it really fun. And I think that one coach sticks out in my mind more than anything, maybe, for that reason (6-14).

Being Female

Each participant was asked what, if anything, being a female has meant in their lives and careers.

Sawatzky said that as a volleyball player, it was often hard to measure up to the press hype and coverage of male dominated sports.

...at university or wherever, is there's always a men's team...with the Continental Cup coming up and it being such a big hype thing and that **we**, you know, have such a good chance of going to the Olympics and **we** might go to the Olympics...there's the Jets and the Bombers and whatever and **we** are doing this (1-31).

At the time of our interview, the National Women's Volleyball Team was enjoying considerable press coverage due to their impending Olympic berth. Sawatzky said it was gratifying to be receiving the attention after the years of work the team had put in to get to that point.

...it's nice to see, as a female, to, you know, to get press and to get some attention as a team and as myself, or whatever, in the city because it's, we're all women and we're all, you know, doing the sport and doing well at it (1-31).

She also discussed how humorous she found it when spectators commented to her on how well the women played the game.

...I like when people come to watch us...people will come up to me and go, 'Boy! The girls on your team, they hit so hard!' You know? And it's like, 'Yeah, they do,' you know? Harder than a lot of guys

do, that's right. I mean it's, you know, it's funny, it's just nice to hear people sort of say that...'Wow, that's as exciting as the men's game, or more. We like watching women better. And like you still have hard hits, you have rallies,' and that's kind of neat to hear (1-31).

Schellenberg says appearance can be very important in the world of music.

Often, the "attractive" female singers garner far more attention.

...the physical appearance is very important and as some of us get older an a little bit heavier, it has happened to me that the conductor was so busy paying attention to the gorgeous mezzo who looked like a million bucks and it sounds so silly, and yet - oh, excuse me, that happens a lot...when it gets to the point where they're just fawning all over them and everybody else is chopped liver, I really have a problem with that (2-25).

Dubnicoff said that it is often frustrating that male cyclists make far more money than their female counterparts, however, she thinks she understands why this is so.

...you don't make as much money, no matter what you do, you don't make as much money [as men]...[female] sports aren't less important but they're just not, I mean, unless it's the ones where there's a lot of t and a, but in our sport, I mean, we're big strong women. And, I mean, that's not perceived as the beauty of sport - well, through some men's eyes. So, I don't think we're looked on entirely as some beauty queen or whatever. I think the men's racing is just a little more popular 'cause they're bigger and stronger and - I don't mind. I do what I do not because of who watches it or, you know, how much you make...some races, they try and have equal prize money but usually, the men go a long with the sport, like in road racing, men, they go a further distance. There's just usually more men in the pack so yeah, give 'em more money. But like in tennis, it should be equal (3-21).

Dahl says experience, not necessarily gender, is what separates performers in the world of opera.

...I think if there's a person who had achieved star status who's in that A-level of singers...they're gonna get, doesn't matter if they're male or female, they're gonna get top billing (4-42).

I asked Dahl if she felt the males in the opera productions received more attention.

Yes, but I think that's...first of all, tenors are your best gauge...and then you get to your sopranos. I'd hate to be a baritone and try to be [famous]. God! That'd be hard! There are famous baritones but they aren't household names...I think there is something about - it could be something about the male voice that gets people going. But, for example, in one of the cities that I sang (so I don't say who the person is), they sang Nessun Dorma, the big, famous tenor aria. Well, it doesn't matter who sings it. The aria is so well known now that they sing it and it gets a huge response just because they know it. It's got nothing to do with how they sang it...I mean, he [the tenor] certainly is the domineering, dominating force in the opera world (4-44).

Hart says men are often "lazy and spoiled" in the dance world because there are less of them and they're more in demand than female dancers (5-46).

...they can get away with that because there are less of them. And so the better ones, even if they're not anywhere near your level, still get paid as much - three times as much - as you because they're necessary product. It's a basic lesson in marketing. It's marketing. Supply and demand...and sometimes, in order for me to do my work, I have to do ten times more work for my partner. I have to pull them along in order to be able to accomplish my work, which is terribly frustrating...but, ultimately, the point is that it's not going to take away from my artistry when my own level is higher. They might hold me back as far as my partnering or whatever, but they can't hold me back as far as being creative (5-46).

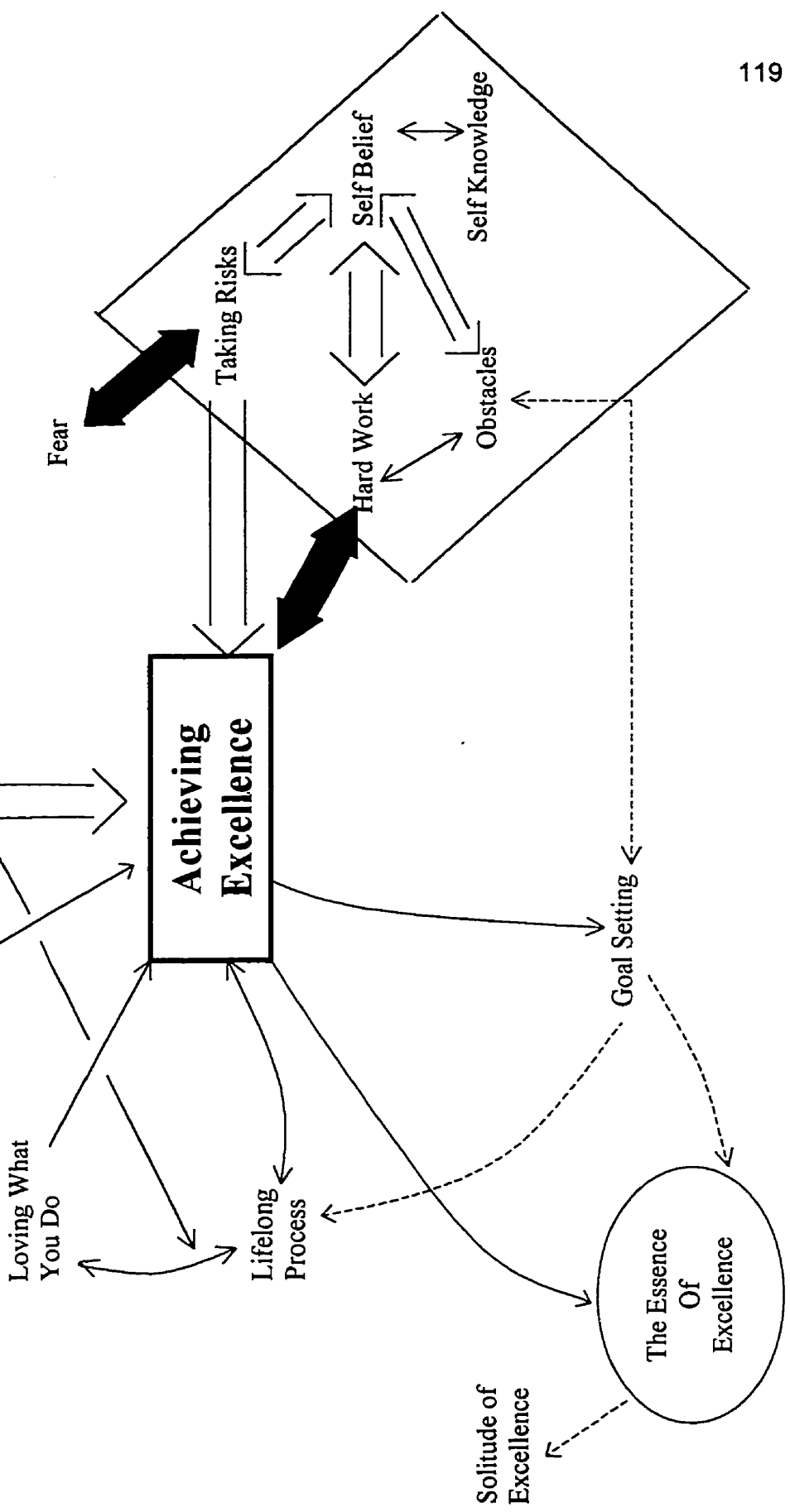
Miller says she has not really encountered any issues as a female athlete.

No, there isn't a media problem, there isn't an abuse problem, harassment problem...I think the only thing sometimes is this perceptions of male coaches and female relationships...communication - I found that to be a big thing...but you just work through it (6-20).

DIAGRAM A

Keys to Achieving Excellence

Maintaining Excellence



Chapter 4

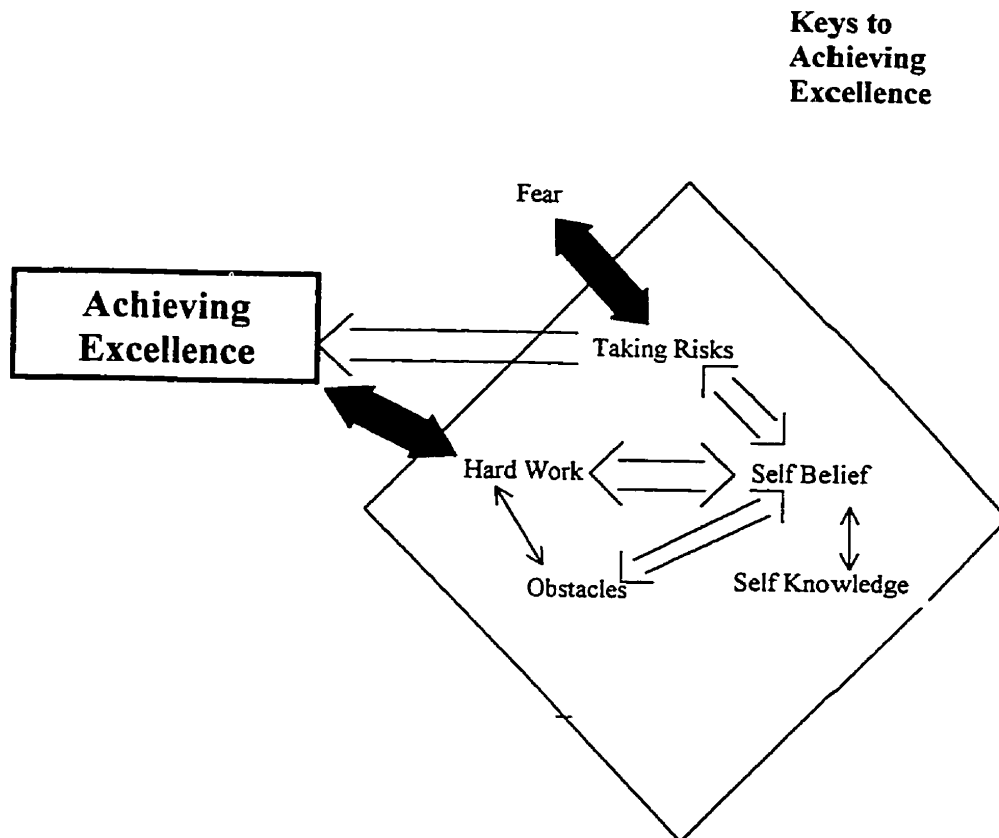
Discussion

When examining the results, it became clear that excellence was at the centre of the discussion. Every topic discussed by the participants was done so in relation to the achievement of excellence. In order to more fully understand all of the themes which emerged from the results, and their relation to one another, a diagram was utilized (See Diagram A). Achieving excellence was placed in the centre and the headings from the excellence section of chapter three were plotted in a circular fashion. When doing so, consideration was given to whether the theme was directly related to the achievement of excellence, or whether it was more related to the maintaining of excellence. The keys to achieving excellence emerged as skills the performers used to **achieve** excellence. The other components of excellence, for example, having a balanced life and goal-setting, were thought to be more related to the **maintaining** of excellence once it has already been achieved.

When examining the diagram, the achievement of excellence is at the centre. Achieving excellence is what all participants were striving to accomplish (see Diagram A). How a person achieves excellence and how they maintain it form the satellites around the achievement of excellence. These skills can be broken down and explained in terms of the actual achievement of excellence (the keys to achieving excellence) and the maintaining of excellence. We will first examine the keys to achieving excellence.

Keys to Achieving Excellence

Five keys to excellence form the diamond representing the necessary skills to achieve excellence.



They are taking risks, self belief, self knowledge, dealing with obstacles and hard work. Henceforth, I shall refer to the grouping of these skills as the "diamond of excellence".

In the diagram, double lined, one directional arrows represent a strong co-relation between that skill and the element at which it is pointing. Two directional, double lined arrows represent a strong, **reciprocal** relationship between those two elements.

Taking risks is seen as having a strong co-relation to the achievement of

excellence. That is, whether or not one takes risks is strongly related to whether or not one will achieve excellence. Miller said, "We're all going to fall flat on our face and we're all gonna make mistakes but whatever! Who cares?" (6-22). Taking risks also has a reciprocal relationship with another key to achieving excellence: self-belief. In order to take risks, one must believe in oneself and one's abilities. You must believe in yourself enough to put yourself on the line when the outcome is not assured. Hart said that no matter what people tell you, you must believe in yourself enough to take risks because, "...you can decide how much you fight for it" (5-50). This belief in oneself and a willingness to take risks can lead to the achievement of excellence. It would be hard, in fact, to imagine someone who has achieved excellence who does not believe in him/herself and his/her abilities. Achieving excellence can be a difficult road and you may hear many times from many different people that you are not good enough to succeed. It is critical that a performer believes in him/herself in order to truly achieve all that he/she is capable.

Taking risks and self-belief are also reciprocally related to dealing with obstacles. Dealing with obstacles and overcoming them increases one's self-belief. When one succeeds against all odds, one comes to trust and believe in oneself. For example, the fact that Sawatzky was able to overcome the obstacles surrounding her height in volleyball made her believe in herself even more. She derives pleasure from being able to say, "Yeah, look at me now..." to all of those people who said she would never make it as a volleyball player (1-16). When these performers believed in themselves, when they had confidence

in themselves, they were more likely to take the necessary risks to achieve excellence.

There is also a reciprocal relationship between self-belief and self-knowledge. How can you believe in yourself if you do not **know** yourself and your capabilities? Hart stated that extremely talented people always know themselves and their capabilities inside out. As a result, they are able to strive for things just outside or, maybe, **way** outside of their limits. She said, "...the other people have no idea they're not doing the maximum; that they're only aware of what they **do** do, they're not aware of what they're **not** doing..." (5-8). In order to achieve excellence, you must constantly be striving to improve. In order to strive to be better, you must first know where you are - you must know yourself.

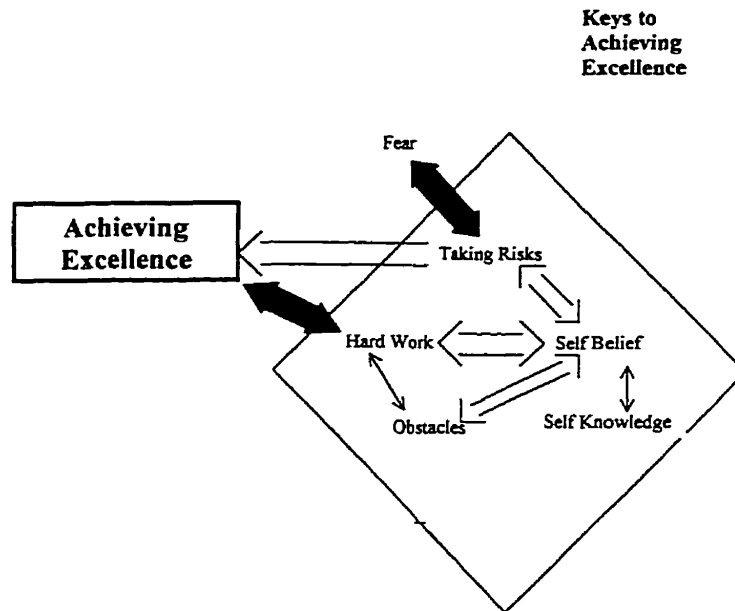
Related to self-belief, taking risks, self-knowledge and directly related to achieving excellence is hard work. Hard work is at the centre of all of these keys to achieving excellence. There is no substitute for hard work and all of the participants acknowledged that excellence cannot be achieved without it. Hart says that hard work is "...the difference of what creates a higher level and a lower level..." (5-45). Sawatzky said that the difference between excellent and mediocre people is that excellent people are willing "...to work hard and willing to give up a lot more than other people" (1-13).

When you work hard, you are better armed to overcome obstacles. As Dubnicoff said, hard work is the velcro with which you need to arm yourself to achieve great things (3-10, 3-11). When one overcomes obstacles, one

increases one's self-knowledge and self-belief which, in turn, increases the likelihood that you will take the necessary risks to achieve excellence.

Fear

Sitting just outside the diamond of excellence is the element of fear.



Fear is not within the diamond because while it is ever-present in a performer's life, it is not a skill, perse, which they can learn to utilize in order to achieve excellence, such as believing in oneself. They can, however, learn to acknowledge it, manage it and use it as a motivator. If a performer learns to deal with fear, they are more likely to take risks and begin the chain within the diamond. Dealing with fear, then, does not necessarily lead directly to the achievement of excellence, however, it can lead to the elements within the diamond of excellence which, in turn, can lead to excellence.

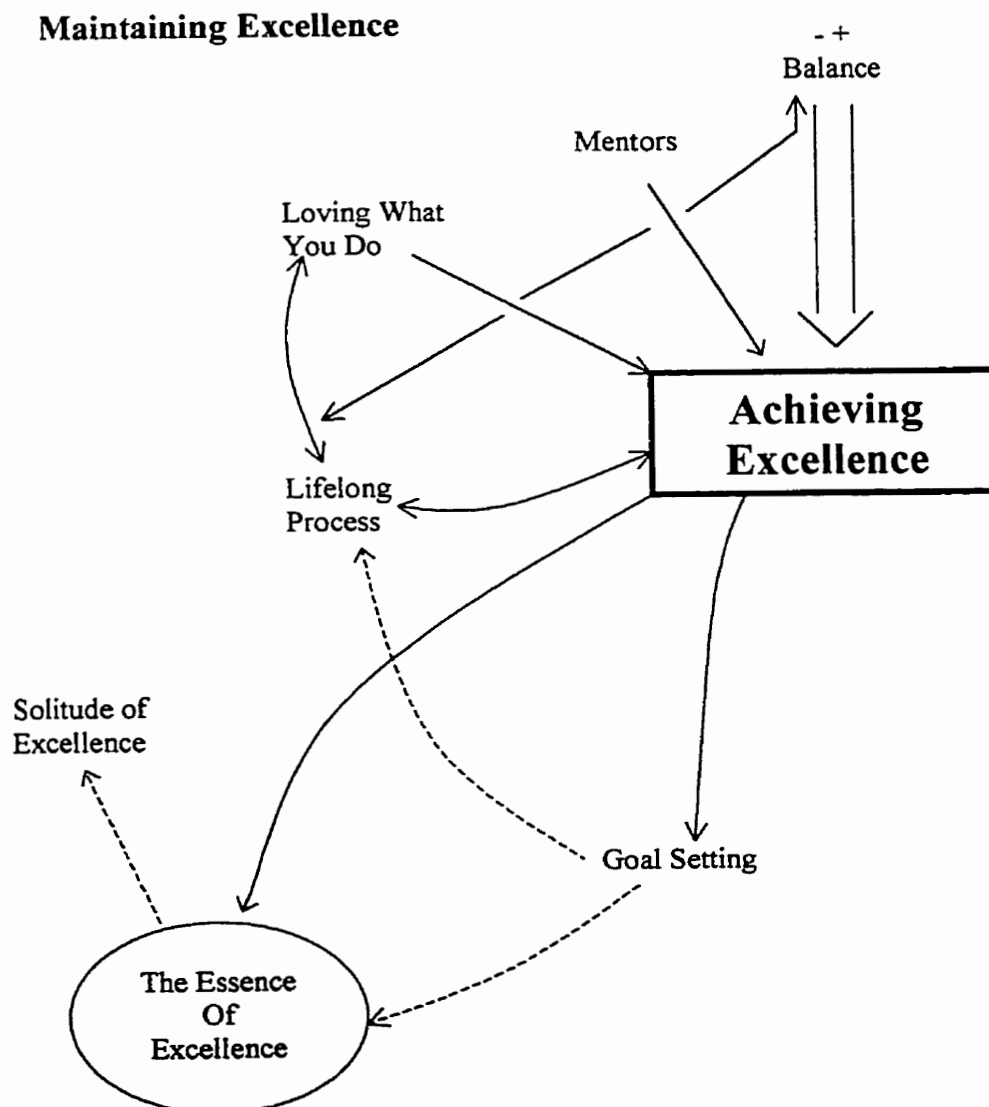
Dubnicoff claims that saying you should not have fear is "a crock of shit" (3-15). Fear is a natural human emotion, a response, if you will, to a given situation.

Most performers will experience fear at some point. How one deals with that fear is critical to the level of one's achievement. Five of the six performers interviewed said that fear is a very real presence in their lives and stressed the importance of handling fear in the correct way. Sawatzky swallowed her fear many times throughout her volleyball career just to try out for certain teams, particularly for the National Team (1-10). As a musician, she said it was important, for example, to not be afraid to perform without the music in front of you. If you do not swallow that fear and stand up on stage without the music, you will always be afraid to try (1-10). Schellenberg experienced fear as a teacher and as a performer. She said many people are afraid to aim for a performing career because they are afraid of failing. As a teacher, she discourages that fear in her students (2-16). Dubnicoff says fear is a reality, for her, as a cyclist. However, she says it is important to acknowledge that fear **before** the event and deal with it. If you do not deal with the fear **before** the event, it could distract you to the point of having a poor performance (3-15). Fear can be crippling to a performer. Dahl agreed with Schellenberg and said that many people are afraid to go for a performing career, afraid to enter certain events, even, for fear that they may fail (4-28). Also, she herself has experienced the fear of having a poor performance of a particular piece or role and then having to overcome the fear to perform it again (4-38). She says, "...you'd better get over it or you're gonna have to drop the role" (4-38). Hart spoke about the fear of opening nights and of first performances of full length ballets. She said that one must have a "lack of

fear" and a "sense of courage" in order to achieve excellence (5-49).

Maintaining Excellence

If the right side of Diagram A represents the keys to achieving excellence, then the left side represents how excellence is maintained. These factors contribute to how one goes about achieving excellence, how one thinks about oneself, and how one sustains the achievement of excellence. Factors such as maintaining a balanced life, the influence of mentors, and mental skills such as goal-setting are included in the maintaining of excellence side of Diagram A.



Balance

Five of the six participants identified balance as a key to maintaining excellence. They stressed the importance of having a life outside of their careers. They spoke about having other interests besides their careers as a stress release, as a way to "turn off" from the intensity of their daily lives. In life, balance can be thought of as a scale between the demands of performance potential and of human potential (Orlick, 1998). Performance potential refers to your professional self and human potential refers to the non-professional domains of your life.

Human potential<-----**Balance**----->Performance potential

We must strive toward maintaining this balance so that the scale does not become tipped, for very long at least, in either direction.

Sawatzky reminisced about her university days and criticized herself somewhat for "not living" during that time (1-35). While she seemed to think it was the only way she could have succeeded in both music and volleyball, she conceded that she was not sure she could do it again. "...I don't know that I would ever want to do that again... (1-35). However, in the next sentence, she went on to say that, "...I would do it again if I were back there, I would do it again" (1-35) because she believed it was the only way it could be done. Elite performers, it seems, are continually walking a tightrope between the absolute demands of achieving excellence and the knowledge that balance is critical in **maintaining** excellence. As previously discussed, elite performers also know

that there is no substitute for hard work. People who have achieved excellence seem to be able to balance hard work with "having a life". Perhaps the achievers who do this are the ones who are able to **maintain** excellence, while the ones who do not have this balance may **achieve** excellence but may not be able to **maintain** it.

Hart believes that she has a better balance in her life today, saying that she "...used to be a maniac!" (5-7). Other people still consider her to have an obsessive work ethic, however, to Hart, it is simply the way things are done. She cannot understand people who do something half way, without their 100% commitment (5-7). To Hart, then, balance seems to be more of an internal definition. That is, she recognizes its importance and strives to achieve it - but does so by her own standards. She believes that a true artist is a balanced artist, one who recognizes the importance of combining all of the essential elements of being a good performer and a good human being (5-15).

When Dahl cited the person in the opera world which she admires the most, she named Judith Forrst and quickly said that the primary reason for this was because of Forrst's "incredible balance" (4-10). For Dahl, balance means equally handling the demands of one's career and one's family life (4-10). Both are important to her and she strives to achieve excellence within both areas. Interestingly, Dahl also spoke about the importance of maintaining a different kind of balance; a balance between your self-worth and your career. She emphasized the importance of not defining yourself by your career achievements. She said,

"...it's important to realize that you as a person are not wrapped up in what you do" (4-49). This relates to Orlick's green and gold zones in *Embracing Your Potential* which are described in chapter one of this thesis (1998). Green without gold doesn't let us reach our individual performance potentials. Gold without green doesn't let us reach our human potential. We need both (Orlick, p. ix). Dahl went on to say that it is important to recognize that, "...yes, this is what I'm working on, this is what I'm doing, this is not who I am" (4-49). This balance between the performer and the person is necessary when you are on the path to achieving excellence.

Balance was also important to Miller who said that it is important to have interests outside of rowing in order to stay focused (6-16). She said "mental breaks" are essential to being able to train at an optimal level. Schellenberg agreed and said that performers who just think about their careers are "laughable" (2-15). Like Dahl, she strived to maintain a balance between her family and her career and said that her goals had changed now that her children were older. She had recently cut back on her performing because she felt she was needed at home more (2-18).

Balance is critical to achieving and maintaining excellence and excellent people recognize this and strive to attain it.

Mentors

Beside balance in Diagram A lies the significance of mentors. All of the participants identified having a mentor or mentors as important in their career development. The reasons for this importance varied among participants. The

common theme, however, was that having a mentor affected how the participants thought about themselves, either by example or by inspiration.

Sawatzky's mentor, fellow teammate Val DeRocco, was a mentor by example. Sawatzky tried to emulate all of DeRocco's positive qualities. It was important for Sawatzky, as a young volleyball player, to be able to look up to the more senior DeRocco and see the kind of player and person she wanted to become. DeRocco's influence, in other words, was about more than just her volleyball skills. She taught Sawatzky about how to be an excellent **person**, not just an excellent volleyball player.

Schellenberg's mentor made her and the other singers in Germany feel like "...we were just the cat's meow" (2-19). She said that he made them feel that they were not quite ready for the Metropolitan Opera but were very, very close to that point. Even though they would laugh at such a far-fetched notion, "...some part of us would believe it" (2-19). It is critical in an excellent person's development that they have someone who believes in their abilities even when they themselves may doubt them.

For the same reason, Henny Jurriens was instrumental in Evelyn Hart's development. Jurriens believed in Hart even though he, perhaps, did not always understand her vision. He recognized all that she was trying to achieve, not just what she was achieving at the moment (5-29). She says that having someone stand beside you and mirror your efforts and accomplishments back to you is extremely important. "...if you have someone who's willing to dream with you

even though he has no idea what you're talking about...[there's] tremendous power in that" (5-29). In addition, Hart said that Jurriens' understanding of excellence as a **process** and not as a **result** motivated her. She says, "You'd be surprised how many coaches and teachers don't recognize the daily progression..." (5-30).

Miller said that she did not really ever have a mentor, as such, but that a particular coach did inspire her. Her first rowing coach, although he wasn't the best technical coach, made rowing fun and was very motivational. She said that "...that one coach sticks out in my mind more than anything, maybe, for that reason (6-14).

For much the same reason as Sawatzky, Dubnicoff cited Colleen Miller as one of her mentors. Dubnicoff found Miller's example inspiring, because of her ability to triumph against all odds, her determination and her unique personality (3-12). Miller encompassed all of the qualities that Dubnicoff was trying to achieve and for this reason, she looked to Miller for inspiration.

Dahl also cited a colleague as her mentor: opera singer, Judith Forrst. Having a balanced life between career and family is very important to Dahl and she recognizes Forrst as someone who has managed to uphold this balance, despite the lures of a much bigger career. Like Sawatzky and Dubnicoff, Dahl admired Forrst for all of the qualities she possesses and strives to embody them herself (4-27).

Though the reasons were varied, all participants said that there was someone

in their lives who had influenced them or initiated their own motivation to be excellent. For some it was the mentor's belief in them which was important. For others, being able to look to another for example was key. In any case, there is a link between having a mentor and achieving and maintaining excellence.

Loving What You Do

Excellence is not a nine o'clock to five o'clock job. The performers in this study indicate that to achieve and maintain excellence requires an incredible amount of persistence and perseverance. Is it possible to produce such dedication about something for which you feel no passion? Can you achieve excellence at something which you do not absolutely love to do?

For Sawatzky, Schellenberg and Hart, loving what you do is critical to achieving and maintaining excellence. Sawatzky said that from a very young age, she knew that she would have to have the thrill of performing in her life. Whether playing a piano recital or a volleyball game, she craves the adrenalin rush performing for a crowd provides (1-16). She was able to put in an inordinate amount of hours while in university at both piano and volleyball because she loved what she was doing and believed it was the best way for her to succeed at both. Sawatzky said that it is important to "...find something that you love and if you love it, then just do it as hard as you can..." (1-36). Loving what you do enables you to work hard at it which increases your likelihood of achieving excellence.

Schellenberg could have ended up a pianist. Instead, she found singing and because she loved it so much, she shifted her focus from the piano to voice (2-6).

Piano was hard work for her and she had to push herself to practice. Singing "...was not work. It was fun!" (2-6). Because it was fun, she could finally understand how people could spend hours and hours practicing. She loved singing and it became her passion in life. Her love of singing enabled her to spend the time and work as hard as she needed to work to become an excellent singer.

Hart says that the reason she works hard every day is because "...I love to dance" (5-24). She says that when she is having a bad day and feels unmotivated, she reminds herself that she dances because she loves it. If she is feeling particularly nervous before a performance, she reminds herself of how much she loves to dance and how much she loves the music and this brings her to the stage ready to perform (5-24).

We all have times where we feel like quitting that which we are trying to achieve. A love of what he/she is doing seems to be a significant factor in what keeps an excellent person on the path toward excellence. Loving what they do becomes a motivator when all else fails. It becomes their bottom line, if you will. When they ask themselves, "Why am I doing this? I don't feel like working today", the answer comes back, "I am doing this because I love to do it and can't imagine doing anything else". There is tremendous power in that. It is one thing to be spending hours and hours doing something you could not care less about. It is quite another to be pursuing your passion in life. When you are pursuing your passion, you look at it not as a quick-fix but as a life-long process; something which, as Hart says, your soul demands (5-51).

Excellence as a Life-long Process

For the performers in this study, excellence was not something which happens overnight. When you've worked as hard as you possibly can, when you've taken risks, overcome obstacles, believed in and learned about yourself, only then can excellence begin to be achieved. When you have accomplished one goal, there is always another awaiting you. Excellent performers recognize that excellence is a life-long journey. Excellence can be a fleeting accomplishment to those who do not understand that it requires constant and continual work in order to be achieved and maintained.

Dahl says that the achievement of excellence can be "...an ongoing process and there is no end" (4-41). She believes that excellence can and should change and evolve along with the individual's development. In other words, excellence should be thought of not as an end result but as a continual process. It is up to each performer to set their sights on the next object or objects of their striving.

Hart says that the problem with being an artist is that you can and should never be completely satisfied with what you have achieved because there is always more to uncover (5-20). Once you understand something technically, for example, you find some other technical challenge to overcome. Just when you think you've brought all you can to a role emotionally, you find another emotional layer to uncover (5-21). Because of this, no matter how many times you have performed a role and well you have done so, there is always something higher, something better for which to strive. You can always challenge yourself, you can

always find areas to improve. This becomes a life-long process. The key, Hart says, is to be able to enjoy this life-long process and to think of it not as drudgery but as a gift. Each day that you are doing what you love to do is a gift and each time you uncover something new for which you can strive to achieve, it is a gift. Hart says that if you compare two dancers, one an extremely successful prima and another a corps de ballet member, when they have both finished dancing what they have achieved will not matter in the grand scheme of things. She says, "...what is going to matter is how much you enjoyed your experience being a dancer. And **that** is the key" (5-50).

During this life-long process of achieving and maintaining excellence, it is critical that you love what you are doing and that you maintain a sense of balance between your passion and other areas of your life. If you are truly a person of excellence, you will be striving for your entire existence so you had better equip yourself with the necessary tools with which to continue the journey.

The Essence of Excellence

When combining all of the participants' definitions and discussions of excellence, excellence was found to encompass many things. To achieve excellence, you must continually strive to better yourself. This continual striving must be a life-long process, not simply for tomorrow's accomplishment. Indeed, the word "strive" is critical in describing the achieving and maintaining of excellence. Those who do not strive toward excellence may never achieve it. Once you have achieved excellence, you must continue to strive **beyond** it or

you will not be able to maintain excellence. Excellence does not necessarily equate with perfection because excellence transcends results. Excellence reaches beyond results and touches you on a deeper level. When you are in the presence of excellence, you know. It reaches past that which is tangible and touches your soul. Excellence is not comparable, it is unique. What may be excellent to one person might not be to another. Furthermore, what constitutes excellence within each of us is unique. That is, just because others may see us as excellent does not mean that we see **ourselves** as excellent. Even though someone else may see us as having achieved excellence, they are not in our hearts and minds to know that which we are still capable of achieving. Only the performer him/herself can truly know the extent of their potential. Therefore, many people who are seen by others as having achieved excellence do not believe this of themselves. They are still striving beyond that which they have achieved; beyond that which others can observe. One does not need to be a "star" to have achieved excellence. Fame does not equate with excellence. We encounter excellent people in all walks of life. One can be an excellent mother, an excellent community theatre actor or an excellent teacher. One can also be an excellent athlete, an excellent musician or an excellent dancer.

Excellent people are always striving to be better, not in comparison to others, but in comparison to themselves. They are acutely aware of their strengths and weaknesses and are always striving to improve. Excellent people are willing to work hard, perhaps harder than anyone else. They are willing to sacrifice and overcome incredible obstacles to achieve their goals. Excellent people are

focused on their goals and yet are able to maintain a balance with other areas of their lives. Excellent people love what they do and are passionate about it. They repeatedly put themselves on the line and take the necessary risks to make their dreams a reality. Excellent people are well rounded. They do not possess only one excellent quality in excess, but may possess many excellent qualities in moderation. Excellent people are consistent in what they achieve. Anyone can perform at their best one day. Excellent people strive to perform at their best **every** day. Being an excellent person does not give you license to treat others poorly. Excellent people have integrity, both personally and professionally.

Even though many excellent people have mentors and others who have influenced their lives, the pursuit of excellence is largely a solitary endeavour. One can have support on the periphery, however, it is you and only you who can realize your dreams. If you are a singer pursuing excellence, you can have the best teachers, the most supportive family, however, nothing can substitute the hours you must spend in your studio, alone, working on your craft. As a dancer, you are responsible for attending class, for demanding the best that your body can give. As an athlete, even if you play a team sport, there are things you must do on your own to elevate yourself toward excellence. Each individual is responsible for their own destiny.

Mental Skills: Goal-Setting

All of the participants agreed that it is important to possess mental strength in order to achieve and maintain excellence. Along with having a balanced life, loving what you do, taking risks, dealing with obstacles and fear, believing in and

knowing yourself and working hard, goal-setting was seen as being a very important key to achieving and maintaining excellence. Goal-setting was seen as a "first step" to achieving excellence. Identifying a goal or goals is the first step to creating your own path to excellence. Schellenberg said that setting goals is "...the only way you're gonna really work hard and achieve the technical excellence you need..." (2-19). Hart said that you need to always be aware of and in tune with your own goals, even if your focus on them somehow offends others (5-43, 5-44). It is important to recognize that your goals should be unique and should be set with you and you alone in mind. Hart said, "...you have to look at everybody else around you and realize that their goals are different from yours (5-44).

Goal-setting can be a tool which can also be utilized to maintain excellence. Once you have achieved excellence, where do you go? How do you motivate yourself to continue improving? As a person of excellence, one should continually strive to be better because excellence is a life-long process. Goal-setting can be a useful tool to motivate a performer throughout this life-long process. Indeed, the word "strive" implies goal-setting by definition. When one strives for something, one has a goal of what one wants to achieve in mind. If you strive to make the National Women's Volleyball Team, that becomes your goal. Once you have made the team, you may strive to be a starter and that becomes your goal. If you become a starter, you may strive to improve certain skills and these become your goals. Each time you strive toward something, you set a goal, even though you may not express this out loud. We have already

identified that excellent performers continually strive throughout a life-long process. Because of this, many excellent performers set goals, although they may not realize that this is what they are doing. Dubnicoff is an example of a performer who uses goal-setting but did not recognize this until our interview. She said, "Well, maybe I just don't even recognize it as goal-setting. I just recognize it as participating and competing in my sport" (3-9). When I pointed out to her that I identified what she had described as goal-setting, she said, "Is it?" and seemed quite amazed by this (3-9). To her, they were things that she "took for granted" that she does in order to be successful in her sport (3-10).

In conclusion, there are many skills which the participants discussed as being important to achieve excellence. These skills are taking risks, believing in yourself, knowing yourself and overcoming obstacles. It is also important to recognize the importance of hard work in the pursuit of excellence. One must also deal with fear in order to achieve excellence. Once excellence has been achieved, there are many things which influence how you maintain and continue to strive for excellence. Having balance, mentors and a love of what you do are critical in the maintaining of excellence. It is important to recognize that excellence is a life-long process and not something which happens overnight. As well, goal-setting can be a useful tool in both the achievement and maintaining of excellence.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

This thesis addressed the issue of goal-setting as a component of excellence. My research addressed specifically how performers develop and use goal-setting to achieve excellence. How particular achievers, those who perform in sport and the performing arts, speak about goal-setting and excellence was discussed.

Interactive interviewing techniques (Roberts, 1981; Kirby & McKenna, 1989) were used to uncover how performers achieve excellence and the relation of goal-setting and other skills to excellence. Excellent performers from sport and the performing arts were included in this research. These performers were not necessarily formally taught to goal-set. How they achieved success, if they did or did not goal-set, was of interest. These individuals were high-achievers and they were Canadian, and English speaking. They were performers to whom I had access and who were willing to participate. They had all completed a substantial portion of their careers so that a retrospective examination of their experiences was possible. They were knowledgeable and articulate individuals who felt that they had something to say about excellence and their achievement of it. Six performers were interviewed as case studies.

All participants except for Hart reported "falling into" their careers. They had all faced significant obstacles in their careers and used these obstacles as a motivation to succeed. They recognized that goal-setting is a lifelong skill and an important one to utilize in the pursuit of excellence. They stressed the

importance of setting the right kinds of goals. When discussing preparation, the participants recognized that goal-setting can be an important tool. While each participant acknowledged they may have been influenced to set goals, they all had adopted their own methods and styles of doing so. They also said that their goals and how they set them has changed over the course of their careers.

There are many skills which the participants discussed as being important to achieve excellence. These skills are taking risks, believing in yourself, knowing yourself and overcoming obstacles. It is also important to recognize the importance of hard work in the pursuit of excellence. One must also deal with fear in order to achieve excellence. Once excellence has been achieved, there are many things which influence how you maintain and continue to strive for excellence. Having balance, mentors and a love of what you do are critical in the maintaining of excellence. It is important to recognize that excellence is a life-long process and not something which happens overnight. Goal-setting can be a useful tool in both the achievement and maintaining of excellence.

Recommendations

(1) More research needs to be done with respect to the application of mental skills in the performing arts. To date, the sport psychological research has been focused primarily on sport performance. Clearly, there needs to be broader definition of performance, one which includes the performing arts. There are obvious similarities between the "mentallics" or mental components of sport and the performing arts. These similarities, as well as the differences, need further investigation.

(2) Excellence needs to be examined across a wider spectrum. Much of the literature on excellence is focused in sport, however, its relevance stretches far beyond sport. For example, what the participants in this study had to say about excellence can be understood and operationalized by a large number of people in all walks of life. However, we often think of excellence as pertaining only to those who "perform" in some way, either in sport, the performing arts or business. This should not be the case.

(3) More research needs to be conducted specifically in dance. As echoed by Evelyn Hart, dancers are a unique breed of performers. They are supreme athletes in the physical sense of the word. However, they are much more than athletes; they are artists. This unusual combination of artistry and athleticism makes them very unique performers. I believe that the rest of the performing world can learn a great deal from the mental and physical fortitude of dancers.

(4) Currently, sport psychology is widely embraced by and taught in the sporting world. The same cannot be said for the performing arts. Those in a position to teach performers should be aware of the benefits of mental skills such as goal-setting and should be encouraging their students to utilize them. A less marginalized approach to the teaching of mental skills needs to be implemented so that its benefits can be felt by performers of all kinds. As well, an introductory sport psychology course should be mandatory in many performing arts programs at the university level, such as music, drama and arts education. However, it may not occur to a violin major, for example, to sign up for a sport psychology course in the physical education or psychology department. Perhaps, then, a

sport psychology course could be designed and tailored to meet the specific needs of performing artists.

(5) More qualitative research needs to be conducted in the area of mental skills and performance psychology. Only when we begin to listen to performer's voices can we begin to fully understand their needs and help them overcome the obstacles facing them. There is no substitute for quality, verbal exchange between participant and researcher.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

Thank you for participating in my master's thesis entitled "An Interpretation of the Essence of Goal-Setting and Excellence Among Top Athletes and Performing Artists". I'm interested today in finding out some of your thoughts on goals and excellence and I thank you for agreeing to share your experiences with me. You are assured of confidentiality and anonymity, if you wish it. Do I have your permission to tape record this interview? I will show you the pause button on the recorder and I encourage you to use it any time you wish to speak off the record. Also, if you wish to discontinue the interview at any time, you are free to do so without penalty. Do you have any questions so far?

1. Can you tell me about some of the major achievements/highlights in your career as an _____? (athlete, etc)
2. Are some of these achievements/highlights more significant to you than others? Why?/Can you explain?
3. Looking back, did you ever think you could or would achieve what you have achieved? Why?/Can you explain?
4. What is your understanding of excellence? How would you define excellence? Do you think there is a difference between excellence and success? Why?/Can you explain?
5. Do you remember setting goals when you were younger? What did you want to be or what did you want to accomplish? What sort of goals did you set? What about for a specific achievement we talked about earlier like _____, can you tell me if and how you set goals to achieve this?
6. What is your understanding of goal-setting? Do you take goal-setting seriously in your life?
7. In sport, we talk about setting goals in stages (dream, long term, short term etc) and that there are "good goals" and "bad goals". Do these concepts apply to how you set goals?
8. If you use goal-setting, did anyone teach you how to do it or have you just adopted your own methods and systems? If someone did teach you, who was that? What did they teach you? If no one taught you, how do you do it? What works for you? Could you outline for me how you do it?
9. Did you have a mentor or "role model" in your career?

10. (for those who say they do not goal set) Given that you do not goal set, what do you think has been the most important ingredient or key to your success? Why?/Can you explain?.
11. (At this point, I will construct a goal for the participant, depending on whether they are an athlete or a performing artist, and have them suggest, on the spot, how they would prepare to achieve it.)
12. Over the course of your career, why did you choose the goals you did? Do you think the kinds of goals you set now are different from those you may have set early on in your career? Why?/How?/Can you explain?
13. Describe preparation (goals?) for both a successful/less satisfying performance. What made the difference?
14. Do you think of yourself as excellent?
15. Is there a relationship, for you, between goal-setting and achievement/excellence? How so, or not so?
16. What has being a male/female, if anything, meant to you as an athlete/performer?
17. Where do you, an excellent achiever, go from here? What goals do you have (short term, long term) for the future and how will you ensure that you achieve them?
18. As someone who has already achieved excellence, what advice would you give to a young _____ coming up in the ranks? What is the most important skill they should possess?

Thank you very much for this interview. After I have finished all of the interviews for my study, I will be writing chapter four and five, the "analysis" and "discussion" chapters. I will make a copy of these chapters for you before I submit the thesis so that you can read them and verify the accuracy of what I have said about you. If, at that point, you feel I have misrepresented you at all or if I have included something that you do not wish be included, please communicate this to me and I will do my best to ensure that it's changed to your satisfaction. It is anticipated that this will be done before June of 1996.

Appendix B-1

Lianne Perry
[Researcher address]

[Participant name and address]

[Date]

Dear [Participant]:

I am a graduate student at the University of Manitoba in the Faculty of Physical Education. Currently, I am in the process of completing my master's thesis, which is entitled "An Interpretation of the Essence of Goal-Setting and Excellence Among Top Athletes and Performing Artists". For this qualitative research project, approximately six top performers in their fields will be interviewed for their thoughts on the importance of goals, excellence, achievement, and "what it takes" to be successful. Because I consider you to be a performer who has not only achieved excellence, but as one who sets the standard for others in your field, I am inviting you to become a participant in this study.

As a participant, you would be asked to consent to an interview, which would last approximately 60-90 minutes. You would be guaranteed confidentiality of the interview transcript, except for those parts used in the final thesis. If you wish it, anonymity would also be guaranteed. A copy of the interview guide could be made available to you prior to the interview. A second interview may be requested by either you, the participant, or myself, the researcher. Before publication and thesis defense, a copy of the "Results" and "Discussion" chapters would be made available to you so that you could verify the authenticity of what has been said about you. At this time, you would be encouraged to provide the researcher with comments and/or any corrections you would like to see made. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you would be free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

As performer myself, I am very anxious to speak with you about your experiences as a []. If you wish to participate in this study, please complete the enclosed "Consent to Participate" form, and either mail it in the enclosed envelope or fax it back to me. Once received, I will make contact with you to set up a convenient interview time and place.

I thank you for your time in reading this letter and I salute you in your pursuit of excellence!

Sincerely,

Lianne Perry, B.A.

Appendix B-2**Consent to Participate**

I, _____ (please print) consent to participate in the study entitled "An Interpretation of the Essence of Goal-Setting and Excellence Among Top Athletes and Performing Artists". I understand that participation in this study is completely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

In the future, I may be contacted at the following address and phone number:

Signature: _____

Date: _____



THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

FACULTY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION STUDIES

Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada R3T 2N2

Statement of Informed Consent

Thesis research by Lianne Perry

Thesis Advisor - Dr. S. Drewe

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore goal-setting and excellence through the subjective interpretations of top athletes and performing artists.

Participants's Consent

I hereby acknowledge that I have been informed as to the purpose of this research and I agree to participate in the study which is titled "An Interpretation of the Essence of Goal-Setting and Excellence Among Top Athletes and Performing Artists", conducted by Lianne Perry (University of Manitoba, Winnipeg) for her M.Sc. thesis.

I understand that my account will be tape-recorded in an interview, with the researcher, lasting approximately 60 minutes. The option to refuse to be tape-recorded is also available. I understand that the text of the tape-recording will be transcribed to print for analysis and the tape-recording will be erased when the research is completed.

I understand that, as a participant in the study, I am a volunteer and that I may refuse to answer any or all questions without penalty, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. If I choose to withdraw from the study, I also have the option to withdraw the information I have provided.

I understand that a second interview and further contact may be requested by both myself and the researcher. Also, I shall be given an opportunity to ask questions at any time during the study and after my participation is complete. I may contact the researcher by phoning (204) 775-7993 or by fax (204) 775-1924.

I understand that any information I provide in the course of this interview will be strictly confidential. I do, however, give my consent to allow the researcher to reveal my identity in the final report. I understand that the option to have my identity concealed is also available.

I understand that a copy of the interview transcript will be made available to me, before the final report is printed, so that I can verify its authenticity.

Having read and understood the nature of this research and my participation in it, my signature below signifies my willingness to participate.

Michelle Swartz
Participant's signature

Feb. 19/96
Date

Lianne Perry
Researcher's signature

Feb 19/96
Date



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Thesis Advisor - Dr. S. Drewe

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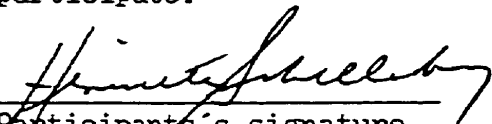
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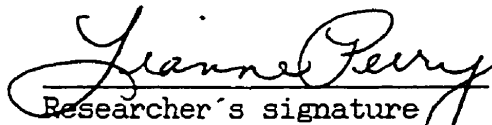
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Participant's signature

Feb 29 1996
Date


Researcher's signature

Feb. 29, 1996.
Date



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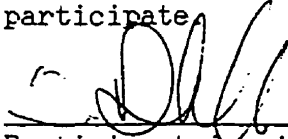
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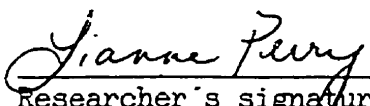
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Participant's signature

March 7/96
Date



Researcher's signature

March 7/96.
Date



Statement of Informed Consent

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Liane Dahl
Participant's signature

Sept 10, 1996
Date

Lianne Perry
Researcher's signature

Sept 10, 1996
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Participant's signature

April 24 97
Date

Lianne Perry
Researcher's signature

April 24 97
Date



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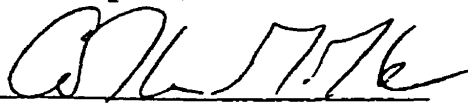
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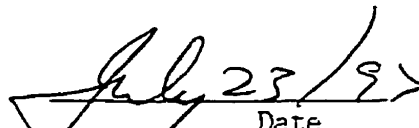
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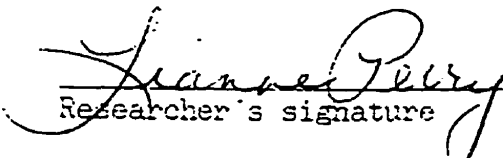
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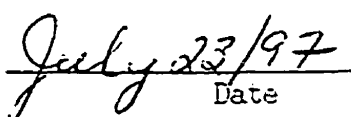
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