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## A View from the Inside: An In-Depth Look at a Female University Student's Experience with a Feel-Based Intervention to Enhance Self-Confidence and Self-Talk

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### **Abstract**

The primary goal of this investigation was to document, using the participatory paradigm, a female university student's experience with a feel-based intervention intended to enhance the quality of her academic experiences including her self-confidence and self-talk. In this unique qualitative case study, the student participated in a 15-week intervention that included multiple in-depth interviews and regular journaling, both of which prompted regular self-monitoring and self-reflection. A narrative account illustrates how the student learned to regulate the way she felt through the intervention, leading to increased self-awareness and self-control, as well as enhanced self-talk and self-confidence.

### **Keywords**

Intervention, Self-Regulation, Feel, Resonance, Self-confidence, Self-Talk, Self-Awareness, Journaling

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# **A View from the Inside: An In-Depth Look at a Female University Student's Experience with a Feel-Based Intervention to Enhance Self-Confidence and Self-Talk**

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## **Introduction**

This article presents the findings of a unique study in which the participatory paradigm (Creswell, 2007; Heron & Reason, 1997) was used to examine a female university student's 15-week experience as both researcher and participant in an intervention that sought to help her learn to regulate the way she felt. Specifically, the investigators were interested in mapping the influence of the intervention on self-awareness and self-control, particularly with respect to self-confidence and self-talk. The participatory worldview was chosen to conduct this study as it advocates change and empowerment to increase individuals' capacity to take greater control of decisions and actions which they themselves identify as important (Creswell; Maguire, 1996). Creswell advanced: "[Participatory] research should contain an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of participants, the institutions in which they live and work, or even the researchers' lives" (p. 21). Researchers are actively involved as participants in a participatory inquiry and become committed learners in the process rather than remain impartially detached, as seen in positivistic types of inquiries (Hall, 1992). As such, this case study involved two researchers who also served as participants, that is, one partook in the intervention and the other facilitated it. They documented shared lived experiences and change (Heron & Reason) throughout a feel-based intervention.

The intervention was guided by the Resonance Performance Model (RPM; Callary & Durand-Bush, 2008), a dynamic and interactive educational framework designed to help individuals regulate how they feel to optimize performance and well being. Resonance is depicted as a self-regulatory process facilitating ongoing learning through increased self-awareness and self-control (Simon & Durand-Bush, 2009). Individuals thus learn to identify and alter their inner states or responses to bring

themselves into line with preferred standards (Vohs & Baumeister, 2004; Zimmerman, 2000), particularly with respect to how they want to feel (Callary & Durand-Bush). Congruent with Vohs and Baumeister's observations, individuals experiencing resonance maintain harmony between their inner self and their social and physical environment (Simon & Durand-Bush).

Feel is at the core of the resonance process and is defined as a subjective multidimensional experience that is mediated by one's ability to perceive, to be aware of, or to be conscious of one's inner self and environment (Callary & Durand-Bush, 2008; Simon & Durand-Bush, 2009). In this context and in line with the participatory worldview (Creswell, 2007), felt experiences are generated by the individual, that is, they are not predetermined nor imposed. Feel can be experienced, for example, physically (e.g., I feel strong), cognitively (e.g., I feel confident), emotionally (e.g., I feel happy), socially (e.g., I feel connected to the group), and also spiritually (e.g., I feel at peace with myself; Callary & Durand-Bush). As such, this broader concept of feel may be differentiated from more traditional definitions of emotions and feelings (Hansen, 2005; Vallerand & Blanchard, 2000). Previous research has shown that felt experiences can change over time and across situations through increased awareness, learning, and self-regulation (Arcand, Durand-Bush, & Miall, 2007; Callary & Durand-Bush; Doell, Durand-Bush, & Newburg, 2006; Lussier-Ley & Durand-Bush, 2009; Simon & Durand-Bush).

*Table 1.* Components of the Resonance Performance Model (Simon & Durand-Bush, 2009, adapted from Newburg, Kimiecik, Durand-Bush, & Doell, 2002)

Component	Description
The Way You Want to Feel	Refers to the way individuals want to feel in important areas of life from different relevant perspectives (e.g., physically, emotionally, cognitively, socially, and spiritually).
Preparation	Refers to what allows individuals to feel the way they want while achieving their performance goals. It can include, but is not limited to, cognitive, physical, technical, tactical, emotional, social, or organizational means, strategies, or activities.
Obstacles	Obstacles are both internal (e.g., negative thought) and external (e.g., parental pressure) barriers that prevent individuals from feeling the way they want.
Revisit the Way You Want to Feel	Refers to what allows individuals to reconnect with the way they want to feel after facing an obstacle. It can include, but is not limited to, cognitive, physical, technical, tactical, emotional, social or organizational means, strategies, or activities.

The resonance process is summarized in the RPM, which comprises four components: (a) The Way You Want To Feel, (b) Preparation, (c) Obstacles, and (d) Revisit The Way You Want To Feel (see Table 1). Although the components are distinctively represented in the model, the process and experience of resonance is holistic, dynamic, and cyclical thus there is significant interaction between components (Newburg et al., 2002).

*The Way You Want To Feel* is the crux of the process of resonance. It is self-explanatory and represents the many ways individuals want to feel in their daily activities and life (Callary & Durand-Bush, 2008; Newburg et al., 2002). The meaning and relevance of an individual's different dimensions of felt experiences can evolve and change across time, situations, and contexts, which highlights the importance of ongoing self-observation, self-monitoring, and self-reflection in attempts to regulate these experiences (Arcand et al., 2007; Simon & Durand-Bush, 2009; Zimmerman, 2000). For instance, four medical students participating in a ten-week self-regulation intervention came to understand how physical, emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions of how they felt influenced each other and their overall felt experiences as a whole (Simon & Durand-Bush).

*Preparation* in the RPM targets what individuals do to feel the way they want while pursuing their goals or endeavors (Lussier-Ley & Durand-Bush, 2009; Newburg et al., 2002). Preparation strategies are highly personalized and can be, for example, cognitive (e.g., engage in positive self-talk), physical (e.g., exercise), emotional (e.g., cry), social (e.g., talk to a friend), and organizational (e.g., prioritize tasks) in nature (Callary & Durand-Bush, 2008; Doell et al., 2006). Research shows that the preparation component of the resonance process helps participants in various contexts to identify and apply effective strategies that allow them to not only connect with their desired feel but to also enhance their performance and well-being (Arcand et al., 2007; Callary & Durand-Bush; Simon & Durand-Bush, 2009). The *Obstacles* component of the RPM refers to what inhibits individuals to feel the way they want. Obstacles, often perceived as setbacks, can be internal (e.g., self-doubt, fear) or external (e.g., deadlines, parental pressure; Arcand et al.; Callary & Durand-Bush). The resonance process leads individuals to anticipate and accept life's inevitable obstacles rather than deny or avoid them. Recognizing how they initially or typically respond to obstacles (i.e., how they do not want to feel) and having a crucial reference point (e.g., clear and tangible desired way to feel) to which they can bring themselves allows individuals to more efficiently overcome obstacles in their daily life (Simon & Durand-Bush).

The fourth component of the RPM, that is, *Revisit the Way You Want To Feel*, stipulates that before engaging in more preparation to perform a certain task or to engage in a particular activity following an obstacle, individuals should reconnect with their intrinsic desires or motives for doing so by revisiting the way they want to feel. Firstly, this prevents them from getting caught in the obstacle-preparation loop in which they may eventually lose sight of what is important and meaningful to them, which can result in decreased motivation, enjoyment, and satisfaction (Newburg et al., 2002). Secondly, by reconnecting with their desired feel, individuals are able to re-energize themselves and refocus on important elements of their pursuits. As such, this part of the process involves identifying meaningful strategies that may be related to the current task situation or that may applied at a later time, often after a period of reflection (Callary & Durand-Bush,

2008; Doell et al., 2006). In essence, this component helps people channel their perspective toward aspired felt experiences instead of solely on desired outcomes, the latter of which could be harmful to one's motivation and self-view (Potmesil & Rydl, 1996).

In sum, as demonstrated in several case studies involving over 50 participants, the resonance process depicted in the RPM is unique to each individual and as such, is best nurtured through a person-centered intervention (Arcand et al., 2007; Callary & Durand-Bush, 2008; Doell et al., 2006; Lussier-Ley & Durand-Bush, 2009). Thus far, researchers have studied resonance by facilitating feel-based interventions mainly with athletes and coaches in various sport and physical activity contexts. Results have indicated that by developing and applying their resonance process, participants improved the quality of their personal and athletic experiences. Given these promising albeit limited findings, it would appear to be worthy and important to empirically examine this type of self-regulation intervention in other contexts such as education. Simon and Durand-Bush's (2009) study is the only one conducted in an educational context and it was specific to medicine.

Hence, the current study aimed to document an undergraduate psychology student's subjective experience with a feel-based intervention. This study held particular interest in understanding the influence of resonance on the student's self-confidence and self-talk. The focus of the inquiry was on this student's felt and lived experiences through the intervention as guided by a participating facilitator (Creswell, 2007).

It appears that little attention has been devoted to lived experiences in the discipline of academia, wherein performance is usually emphasized. Schiefele (1991) noted that the promotion of achievement motivation in students encourages them to mainly work for high performance results. This prevalent perspective ignores students' educational experience in terms of intrinsic interests and engagement in acquiring knowledge, which does not allow for an in-depth and accurate understanding of students' academic endeavors. However, as Jackson and Roberts (1992) noted, the level of functioning or achievement through performance does not necessarily reflect the quality of experience in terms of meaning or enjoyment. Studying emotions, or more broadly students' felt experiences, is important as these have been shown to influence students' level of functioning (Gentner, 2004), commitment, and energy (Jones & Uphill, 2004).

Turner, Husman, and Schallert (2002) reported that some scholars in education have shed light on emotional experiences that accompany the learning process. However, research in this area is limited. For instance, studies have focused on too few emotions experienced by students and have concentrated little attention on positive subjective states (Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002). Pekrun and colleagues argue that interventions seeking to improve students' well-being and performance should acknowledge an array of emotions to offer a better portrayal of students' experiences. It is timely that the research on resonance focuses on multiple ways individuals can feel and on broader subjective experiences (Newburg et al., 2002). However, little is known about the implications of resonance in education, a field that, until recently, has been generally outcome or performance-oriented (Ryan & Patrick, 2001; Schiefele, 1991). It is important for students to become self-aware and acknowledge how their educational experiences can change and enhance the way they perceive their learning, their abilities, and themselves (Pavlovich, 2007; Woodward, 1998). It is plausible that research

involving interventions designed to optimize felt experiences may help us better understand how students can enhance their educational experiences. As will become evident from the literature, two important aspects of students' experiences that would be worthwhile to consider in this endeavour are students' self-confidence and their self-talk.

In view of this, one of the specific aims of the current case study was to shed more light on the participating student's self-confidence and self-talk. Previous research revealed links between resonance and self-confidence in that by reflecting on and learning to regulate their felt experiences, participants augmented their beliefs in their capabilities (Arcand et al., 2007; Doell et al., 2006; Simon & Durand-Bush, 2009). Self-confidence stems from evaluations of how people feel about their skills and about themselves (Sander & Sanders, 2006; Shrauger & Schohn, 1995). It is a valued construct in education and has been studied extensively. Notably, research demonstrates that students' expectations of success on academic tasks are one of the strongest predictors of performance in school (Chow, 2003; Tavani & Losh, 2003). Moreover, confidence generates greater interest, perseverance, and general feelings of self-worth while completing academic assignments (Pajares, 2003). These findings and those emerging from research on resonance warrant more scrutiny to further understand the association between self-confidence, the resonance process, and academic experiences. From a pedagogical standpoint, it is hoped that extensive intervention-based research will eventually lead to self-directed ways that self-confidence may be nurtured and regulated to maximize academic experiences and performance.

Research shows that self-talk may increase feelings of self-confidence in the process of goal attainment (Hardy, 2006; Landin & Hebert, 1999; Vealey, 2001). Defined as interpretive dialogue with the self (Hackfort & Schwenkmezger, 1993), self-talk is found to be a useful self-regulation strategy for managing cognitive processes and emotions (Hardy; Vealey). Self-talk is frequently employed by students to solve problems (Depape, Hakim-Larson, Voelker, Page, & Jackson, 2006) and it is also argued to influence students' emotions, including those experienced during academic tasks (Schutz & Davis, 2000). Zastrow (1993) demonstrated that individuals can challenge and change their self-talk by adjusting the way they think about certain events. Similarly, Simon and Durand-Bush (2009) found that medical students could change the way they thought about certain events and situations by using more positive self-talk. This, in turn, positively altered how they felt and how they responded to obstacles. More effort should be invested in examining the role of self-talk in the resonance process. It is reasonable to believe that reflecting on one's internal experiences could facilitate a greater awareness of one's self-talk as well as the capacity to adjust it. Given the reputed influence of self-talk on self-confidence, examining both constructs and their mutual influence within one's resonance process would be innovative and would address gaps in the literature.

### **Purpose**

As previously mentioned, the aim of this case study was to examine and document a student's experience as she participated in a feel-based intervention that was guided by a facilitator. Based on previous studies in which resonance was used as an intervention framework (Arcand et al., 2007; Callary & Durand-Bush, 2008; Doell et al., 2006; Lussier-Ley & Durand-Bush, 2009; Simon & Durand-Bush, 2009), it was expected

that with the help of the facilitator, the participant would develop her unique resonance process. It was also anticipated that through the feel-based intervention and the accompanying personal observation, attention, and reflection on how she felt, she would become more aware of her desired feel and ways of achieving it in important facets of her life, notably academia. Moreover, specific to this study, it was considered that this process could lead her to gain particular insight into her self-confidence. It could also lead her to pay attention to her self-talk to discover how it relates to her confidence and to examine her ability to regulate it.

## **Method**

### **Case Study**

Previous research involving feel-based interventions demonstrates the value of the qualitative case study to carefully examine participants' unique and evolving experience of resonance (Arcand et al., 2007) as well as the meaning and relevance of their experiences in general (Bachor, 2002; Kiser, 2004; Tonn & Harmison, 2004). In a case study, the researcher's role is not only to thoroughly examine and record events and experiences but also to meaningfully explore through personal interpretation what he/she observes (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). The current study, grounded in the participatory paradigm (Creswell, 2007; Heron & Reason, 1997), accomplished this in an innovative way. Specifically, the primary researcher who also participated in the intervention interpreted and documented her experience with resonance, paying particular attention to contextual elements that enriched her experience. Such recognition of subjectivity, interpretation, and meaning in a case study can be a worthy source of insight for researchers and readers alike (Kisfalvi, 2006).

The participatory case study approach allowed the lead researcher to provide a rich first-person account of her experiences to help readers better understand the complexity and value of the resonance process. Although previous studies on resonance have acknowledged participants' reflections and interpretations, no study to date has presented a first-person account of an intervention. It has been argued in the literature that in order to fully capture the subjective meanings that people assign to their lived experiences, appropriate perspectives and methods should be employed (Fitzpatrick & Watkinson, 2003; Roe & Lachman, 2005; Van Manen, 1997). Some researchers have embraced subjectivity by letting participants convey their own thoughts and feelings through narratives (e.g., Arvay, 1999; Daniels, Lamson, & Hodgson, 2007; McMahon, 2007), thus authentically preserving the meaning they attach to their experiences. In the current study, the first-person approach that was integrated into the researcher's personal narrative reveals complex and rich lived experiences that accompanied the resonance intervention.

## **Participants**

### **Eva.**

The main researcher was a 21 year old female student completing the fourth year of an undergraduate psychology program. Eva joined a research team investigating the process of resonance at the University of Ottawa. Within the larger research program, Eva completed her fourth year honour's thesis and chose to be a participant in her own study. As previously mentioned, she assumed the dual role of researcher and participant in a resonance intervention. At the onset of the intervention, Eva was in the second month of a demanding semester. She was preparing applications for graduate school while balancing five courses and part-time employment. She welcomed the intervention to help her find meaning and enjoyment in her demanding academic activities and hectic daily life. Having read a few articles pertaining to resonance, Eva held a basic understanding of resonance when commencing the intervention.

### **Isabelle.**

Isabelle, a member of the resonance research team and a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Education at the same university, volunteered to supervise Eva's thesis project; she also became the facilitator of the intervention. As part of the resonance research team, Isabelle had previously facilitated resonance interventions with four individuals in the context of her Master's degree research. Through the present intervention, which is detailed below, Isabelle guided Eva in applying resonance in her daily life and in drawing lessons and meaning to enrich her academic and personal experiences. Both Eva and Isabelle consented to reveal their identity in this research, approved by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Ottawa, as well as in subsequent publications.

## **Resonance Intervention**

The 15-week intervention consisted of multiple interviews, journaling, and reflective reading. Eva and Isabelle took part in seven individualized semi-structured in-depth interviews over the intervention period. The interviews were guided by the components of the RPM as well as by Eva's concerns, experiences, and reflections. They took place approximately every two weeks in a laboratory at the university. The first meeting was an intake interview that lasted approximately 90 minutes, the purpose of which was to situate resonance in Eva's life and to discuss her current context and endeavors. The following six interviews, by means of casual conversation, related to the process of resonance and were guided by important topics in Eva's life (e.g., university life, assignments, friends, family, work).

Isabelle maintained a flexible approach and engaged in meaningful dialogue to help Eva explore her current and desired feel, preparation strategies, obstacles, and revisiting strategies (see Table 1). Following are examples of questions posed during the interviews: (a) Eva, go back to the way you want to feel, tell me about it. (b) What normally helps you feel this way? (c) You said that you feel frustrated, what do you do

when you feel this way? Is there anything you can do to feel differently in this situation? (d) You said that you talked to yourself in that moment, what did you say and how did it make you feel? Through various probes, Eva reflected on and discussed meaningful and relevant topics in relation to her academic and personal life. This helped her apply resonance in her life. A post-intervention interview took place six weeks after the end of the intervention to allow Eva to discuss key reflections, lessons, and personal changes experienced throughout the intervention. All interviews were audiotaped and were transcribed verbatim by Eva for analysis. The process of transcribing was deemed valuable to begin the in-depth analytical process.

As part of a typical resonance, feel-based intervention, Isabelle suggested that Eva keep a daily journal to increase self-observation, self-monitoring, and self-reflection. In the journal, Eva indicated the extent to which she felt the way she wanted throughout the day. She included reflections on her feelings, thoughts, and actions in various situations and gave particular attention to her confidence and inner dialogue, which were of central interest in this study. She addressed evolving ways she was defining and articulating her desired feel as well as the effectiveness and challenges of identifying and consistently applying strategies to regulate how she felt in various situations. She discussed what she was learning about herself in her daily interactions and also from her discussions with Isabelle. It was anticipated that journaling would deepen her experience of the resonance process since previous studies indicated that it was an important tool to augment self-awareness (Arcand et al., 2007; Doell et al., 2006) and self-regulation (Simon & Durand-Bush, 2009). Respecting her eventful schedule, Eva decided to journal every alternate day. Finally, to better understand and reflect on the meaning of resonance in her life, Eva followed Isabelle's recommendation to read Dr. Doug Newburg's (2006) book on the theme of resonance during the 15-week intervention period. No data were directly extracted from this reading.

### **Analysis of Narratives**

All of the qualitative data emerging from the intervention and post-intervention interviews and the reflective journal were integrated into a narrative after which an analysis of this narrative was performed. According to Murray (2003), a narrative joins events together over time into a story that helps people make sense of events and experiences. In the current study, Eva employed an analysis of narrative approach to identify and describe meaningful and relevant themes within the narrative (Polkinghorne, 1995). This approach also served to make links and to help her understand the evolving experiences, events, and reflections that took place during the resonance intervention. This allowed Eva to not only present a comprehensive, theme-based account of her experiences but also elaborate on the meaning of these experiences while preserving her perspective as both researcher and participant. Narratives are valued for their ability to highlight such subjectivity and interpretation in research (Riessman, 1993).

It is noteworthy that representing experiences through narratives is not guided by an established method (Manning & Cullum-Swan, 1994). Rather, the analysis is mainly guided by the goal of the researcher, which in this study was to explore, using an insider perspective, a student's experience with resonance using the RPM as an educational model to frame the intervention. Eva used an inductive approach (Côté, Salmela, Baria,

& Russell, 1993) to discern noteworthy themes or topics that surfaced in the narrative (i.e., integrated interview transcripts and journal entries) and attempted to extract key findings. She then proceeded to carefully examine the data using a deductive approach (Côté et al.) to more specifically analyze the content for themes related to her experience of resonance (i.e., RPM components), self-confidence, and self-talk and link them with other inductively derived themes. While using both inductive and deductive means to analyze the content of the narrative, Eva developed reflective notes that included insights, interpretations, and meaningful, informative quotes from the interviews and journal. These are presented in the results section.

### **Trustworthiness**

Several steps were taken to enhance the trustworthiness of this study (Sparkes, 2002). First, thick and transparent descriptions of Eva's experiences were provided based on two data sources (i.e., interview transcripts and journal entries) that complemented one another (Polkinghorne, 1995). These generous descriptions combined with Eva's extensive reflective analytical notes allowed her to better interpret and present her experiences. In addition, thorough details pertaining to the context and the intervention allow readers to make inferences from the results and apply what is relevant and meaningful to their own life or inquiries (Stake, 2000). In addition to the resonance intervention interviews, Eva engaged in weekly debriefing with Isabelle and monthly peer debriefing sessions with the resonance research team. In these meetings, discussions pertaining to Eva's research experience, as well as data collection procedures and analyses, led to more in-depth and comprehensive reflections and interpretations (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

## **Results**

Since Eva, the main researcher, was also the participant in the intervention, the results are presented using the first person pronoun. Therefore, I, Eva, will present key themes representing my experiences with resonance throughout the intervention.

### **Self-Awareness**

It was no surprise that self-awareness emerged as a key theme throughout the intervention as it was the case in past research on resonance, as formerly indicated. After the first interview, I began monitoring (mentally and via journaling) my life and how I experienced it in order to understand how I could apply resonance. By doing regular checks and asking myself questions, I gradually became more aware of how I felt, what I thought, and how I acted and reacted, particularly in academic and social situations. As early as week two, my awareness began to mature, and it became easier to articulate the way I felt in different circumstances, as the following quote from our interview suggests:

Being able to connect with others makes me feel the way I want, and it's something I would like to feel a lot more, throughout the day ... Even the other day when I met up with a few friends before an exam, we bonded

because we had the same worry over the exam. We were able to connect our feelings, our anxieties about the test, and that was a really good, comforting feeling.

By paying attention and increasing my self-awareness, I became more adept in recognizing and expressing how I felt and aspired to feel in my life. Through my journaling, I often reflected on particular instances where I really felt the way I wanted; confident, relaxed, and connected with others. Consequently, I was more able to benefit from this desired feel when it occurred and this, among other things, allowed me to better engage in and enjoy academic tasks. This also pushed me to reflect on ways to recreate the way I wanted to feel, in and out of school.

With this growth in self-awareness and through meaningful interview discussions, I was also able to observe and better understand how my resonance process was taking shape, including how I could actively create it. I became more mindful of specific strategies that I could use to help myself regularly achieve a desired feel. One strategy involved making the effort to detach myself, mentally and physically, from school-related stressors and take time for myself. I described this in week ten during my interview with Isabelle:

I think I've been working on acknowledging that I need to relax sometimes and if I lose an hour in my day where I don't do anything [academically-related] at all that it's okay, and that I need these moments of relaxation to feel the way I want to feel.

This particular strategy was key since it was often difficult for me to withdraw from academic demands and stay in line with the way I wanted to feel: confident, calm, and content. This lesson was important and allowed me to be more proactive and engage in meaningful and pleasant preparation to feel the way I want more consistently and better enjoy my academic pursuits.

Through the course of the intervention, I also became aware that when I became drained and overwhelmed by academic tasks, I kept working without considering the way I felt. The interview discussions and reflective journaling helped me recognize that pushing on without considering how I felt affected me in that moment as well as afterwards. I eventually learned that even momentary pauses to 'empty' my thoughts, in addition to casual conversations with others, were enough to rejuvenate me and helped me to elude less than desirable feel. I noticed that these strategies helped me revisit the way I wanted to feel and enhanced my productivity and enjoyment through academic tasks, from the mundane to the most challenging (e.g., writing, test-taking).

Another self discovery in my experience with resonance was recognizing that I responded with frustration and anxiety to obstacles such as deadlines and examinations. During week five, Isabelle and I discussed how I wanted to feel when writing the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and how I could facilitate this. I discovered that it was not the examination itself that worried me, but the intimidating and overwhelming atmosphere I anticipated. In other words, the real obstacle for me was internal; it was based on my own perceptions that were translated into self-doubt and worry. This insight became the first step in responding to this hurdle.

Isabelle guided me in elaborating other revisiting strategies particularly in the context of the GRE which was a major theme in my life at that moment. I had never written this type of exam before and felt I needed to prepare for it and anticipate ways to revisit the way I wanted to feel in the face of potential obstacles such as anxiety and fear. The following journal entry during week five illustrates my experience with the exam:

I wrote the GRE this morning, and I was pretty nervous...To calm myself, I really tried to focus on the preparation we had discussed in the interview. I reminded myself of the support I had from my parents and all the hard work I put into studying. By focusing on what the exam meant to me, I felt proud to be there and that I deserved to be there.

Writing the GRE was important to me. I had prepared well for it and when I encountered nervousness and worry (i.e., obstacle) I was able to revisit the way I wanted to feel, become calmer, and complete the examination. Being able to use a pre-planned strategy to regulate what I thought and felt left me feeling pleased and helped me to finish the exam. I felt better in the moment and was focused on the examination itself rather than on my doubts and possible outcomes. This was an indication of my increased ability to not only respond to internal obstacles such as worry but also to experience overall resonance. I was able to stay focused and in control through using my self-talk to remind myself of the support I benefited from and of the hard work I had done.

In sum, the interviews and reflective journaling led me to put in the effort to become more self-aware, and to recognize how I wanted to feel in various situations in my daily life. This had a positive influence in that I experienced more control, pride, enjoyment, and confidence while engaged in my academic endeavors and was able to feel a more regular sense of calmness in life in general. I perceived this deliberate increase in self-awareness to be meaningful and essential in my intervention.

### **Self-Confidence**

At the onset of the intervention, I began monitoring the instances in which I felt or did not feel confident because I perceived this factor to have an influence on the quality of my experiences and my academic performance. As a result, I defined what confidence truly meant to me: feeling as though I had the ability to commit to what I set out to do and could accomplish my objectives. I also identified preparation strategies that led me to feel this way. These included studying diligently, working efficiently and most importantly, monitoring my inner dialogue and my beliefs in my abilities. I explored this in an interview during week three:

I think all that extra little hard work really helps me feel confident and studying helps me feel that sense of accomplishment. When I've studied for five hours, I feel and say "Wow, I've accomplished a lot in that time span", I feel it. So studying and working hard really helps me feel the way I want to feel.

This quote illustrates that I began to recognize and appreciate the strategies that I applied early on in the intervention, particularly with respect to my academic endeavors, to achieve that feel of accomplishment and confidence.

Interestingly, I also noticed early on in the intervention that I had a tendency to look for or rely on external cues, such as others' approval, to feel confident. Therefore prior to learning to apply resonance in my life, my confidence was not something I actively created or regulated; it usually transpired inconsistently within circumstances that were not self-generated. I ultimately realized that I could *create* a confident feel in academic tasks and in life in general. For instance, I recognized that my interest in academic material and my enjoyment of my studies could help me feel more competent. I acknowledged this in week ten when Isabelle asked me if I could feel the way I wanted even in a stressful period. I told her:

Definitely, I do feel it sometimes when I'm studying for an exam, in a course that I'm really interested in. I feel that it's really easy to retain the material ... It's so much easier to study and I get absorbed in it. I feel really good about my abilities as a student and I feel more confident going into the exam ... So during any challenge I know it's possible to *feel* like I want.

Reconnecting with my genuine interest for my academic field and reminding myself, through positive self-talk for instance, to enjoy the moment helped me to feel more effective, assertive, and engaged in my school work. This, in turn, facilitated more compelling beliefs about my abilities as a student and enhanced my self-confidence. Such personal realizations encouraged me to believe that feeling confident was definitely within my control. Hence, a worthy lesson that followed this conversation was that I was in control of my interests and of my beliefs about myself as a student.

Feeling confident was a fundamental element of my desired feel. Although feeling this way was inconsistent prior to the intervention, valuable reflections helped me to identify discrepancies and inconsistencies in how I regulated this. A sense of control over how confident I felt transpired from acknowledging that I could internally influence what I perceived and how I felt in different circumstances. Moreover, I developed meaningful strategies (e.g., re-kindling my interest in academic pursuits, focusing on my qualities and abilities rather than external people's perceptions and approval) in order to actively create my confident feel. This was particularly important when faced with prevalent internal obstacles such as feeling overwhelmed. Hence, a valuable lesson in living my resonance process involved recognizing that I had considerable power over connecting or reconnecting with my confident self, especially in challenging times when I was distanced from it.

### **Self-Talk**

Through my experience with resonance and my increasing awareness of the intricacies of my daily life, I also learned more about the relationship between my self-talk and the way I felt. Through the intervention, I started to pay careful attention to my inner dialogue, focusing on its nature and frequency and how it

made me feel. I noticed that I often talked to myself and that trying to change my habitual dialogue to a more positive one was a definite challenge. In this regard, I said to Isabelle during one interview early in the intervention:

I sometimes tell myself to relax and it doesn't work. I think I have tried to be as positive as possible but sometimes it doesn't sink in. I know that I have the ability to talk positively to myself ... but it's not always easy to apply it.

As the intervention progressed, paying conscious attention to the *content* of my self-talk proved to be very beneficial in applying resonance in my life. Essentially, I learned that self-talk was a valuable preparation strategy for me; being constructive in what I told myself could contribute to feeling the way I wanted, particularly in challenging situations such as exams and writing papers with deadlines. Monitoring and learning to draw on my self-talk in various situations thus became an evolving skill. I discussed this with Isabelle during our interview at week 11: "I keep noticing it [my self-talk] more and more as it's happening ... It's not that I'm using it better yet [all the time], but I'm *learning* to apply it more constructively".

Through the resonance intervention, I discovered that my self-talk could be both positive and negative. I recognized that at times, negative self-talk was in itself a major obstacle that prevented me from achieving my desired feel. In evaluative situations, judgmental self-talk could overshadow my positive self-perceptions, preventing me from feeling relaxed and competent. Noticing my negative self-talk as it occurred and attempting to change it to be more productive became an invaluable revisiting strategy in my resonance process. This is evidenced in one interview conducted at week 13 when I discussed the "writer's block" I experienced while completing one of my course assignments:

I try to talk to myself more positively, put a positive spin on the problem, encourage myself that I still have time, that I *will* work on it later, that I will get help, and then I say to myself, "You've got resources out there to help you" ... I also say things to myself like, "You'll work through it, you've done it before."

Journaling and having meaningful conversations with Isabelle to discuss my inner dialogue and various obstacles such as this writing block allowed me to explore how I felt and pinpoint *why* this obstacle prevented me from feeling competent. I realized that my initial inability to write at that moment was not the real obstacle; my own harmful inner dialogue was and this was within my control. In this regard, I said to Isabelle:

Eventually it was as if I could write but because I was thinking so negatively it prevented me from writing. This is an external obstacle in the sense that I couldn't get the words down on the page and I didn't have enough material but the fact that I was talking so negatively to myself was definitely internal.

To get through this obstacle, I initially had to acknowledge my destructive self-talk as the significant barrier that influenced how I felt in this situation. In addition, Isabelle and I discussed how I could further influence how I felt in such circumstances using strategies I revealed in my journal entries. One strategy involved removing myself from the writing activity to briefly engage in a different one, such as going for a run or cooking, both enjoyable activities. Doing so inherently facilitated more positive inner dialogue and feel.

Overall, creating and applying my personal resonance process involved considerable reflection as well as an evolving awareness of my self-talk and the internal effort to construct it more positively when necessary. Notably, I learned that what I told myself could serve as a preparation or revisiting strategy for my desired feel, or conversely, that it could be a major obstacle that distanced me from it.

Learning to live my life in accordance to my desired feel involved developing a personal awareness of my thoughts and actions that imparted me with a greater sense of control over internal and external challenges. This involved considerable personal investment and commitment to the way I felt and to what I could do to contribute to this in my student life and in general. I summed up this insight with Isabelle in our post-intervention interview:

I think that some of the discussions that we've had have prepared me for future obstacles, in that I will be able to respond in a way that I take the way I feel into consideration. I learned that I don't have to neglect the way I would like to feel simply because I am being faced with certain stumbling blocks.

### Discussion

This evocative account reflects Eva's unique experience with resonance, including how the process took shape in her life and how her increased self-awareness influenced this experience. This is consistent with the findings of previous studies in which feel-based interventions were conducted (Arcand et al., 2007; Callary & Durand-Bush, 2008; Doell et al., 2006; Lussier-Ley & Durand-Bush, 2009; Simon & Durand-Bush, 2009). As the intervention progressed, Eva gained a deeper understanding of resonance and developed different contributing pieces of her own process, including her self-confidence and self-talk, in order to experience more harmony in her daily student life.

Eva's insight into the resonance process began by paying attention to how she felt and identifying how she wanted to feel in her academic and personal life. Pavlovich (2007) and Woodward (1998) indicated that it is important for students to become self-aware and acknowledge how their educational experiences can change and enhance the way they perceive their learning, their abilities, and themselves. In this regard, Eva also developed by attending to how she *wanted* to feel when encountering obstacles or setbacks: confident and in control. Notably, one of Eva's key lessons was distinguishing between external and internal obstacles and recognizing the control she had over the latter. For instance, while she initially felt little control over her writer's block, she found that she could challenge her negative self-talk and respond to the situation more

productively, which eventually bettered the way she felt and helped her to complete her task.

According to Zimmerman (2000), paying attention to internal responses in this way is an important step to regulate oneself, including how one feels, and Arcand and colleagues (2007) argue that this can also offer a greater sense of control over how one perceives and handles inevitable daily obstacles. In the current study, open discussions and journaling throughout the intervention facilitated this attention and led to Eva's increased personal awareness, ownership and control over how she felt and what she thought. This sense of control was an emergent theme that is consistent with previous studies of resonance interventions (Arcand et al.; Callary & Durand-Bush, 2008; Lussier-Ley & Durand-Bush, 2009; Simon & Durand-Bush, 2009). Moreover, Eva learned to plan and cyclically adapt her thoughts, feelings, and actions in daily endeavours, an indication that she continually developed strategies to regulate the way she felt. These findings are noteworthy because self-regulation skills have been linked to superior learning (Pintrich, 2002; Zimmerman, 1990), as well as personal growth and better personal care in students, particularly in the medical field (Elder, Rakel, Heitkemper, Hustedde, Harazduk, Gerik, et al., 2007).

As an important aim of this study, Eva explored the mutual connection between resonance and her self-confidence, self-talk, and self-awareness throughout the intervention. Akin to previous studies of resonance (Arcand et al., 2007; Callary & Durand-Bush, 2008; Simon & Durand-Bush, 2009), Eva noticed a gradual improvement in her personal confidence, not only from a cognitive standpoint (i.e., she had more confident thoughts) but also a feel standpoint (i.e., she felt more confident). Results showed that by intently focusing on and planning her desired felt experiences, for example while writing the GRE, Eva was able think and feel more confident in challenging situations. These findings support other authors who have linked higher self-confidence to better performance, success, and well-being in academia (Shrauger & Schohn, 1995; Tavani & Losh, 2003). In addition, Cheng and Furnham (2002) found that while students' self-confidence (i.e., self-rated academic performance) predicted their happiness, their actual grade point did not. This indicates that students' thoughts related to their competencies, which could be modified through living the resonance process, may considerably influence how fulfilled and satisfied they feel in their academic endeavors.

Eva also retained lessons regarding her self-talk, which was noted to be a strategy that helps maintain a healthy psychological balance (Depape et al., 2006). She found that the nature of her internal dialogue shaped her interpretations of events and influenced her ability to achieve her desired feel. Although previous studies of resonance have not focused on self-talk specifically, it was found to be an important preparation and revisiting strategy (Arcand et al., 2007; Doell et al., 2006; Simon & Durand-Bush, 2009). Eva's experience suggests that it may be beneficial for individuals participating in feel-based interventions to observe their inner dialogue, particularly in the face of obstacles. Notably, Eva's careful monitoring of her internal dialogue made her aware that she had negative and debilitating thoughts in challenging situations; these thoughts incapacitated her and did not allow her to feel the way she wanted to feel. In this regard, authors have suggested that individuals can alter how they feel (Zastrow, 1993) and behave (Neck &

Manz, 1992) in response to situations by challenging and internalizing what they tell themselves.

Eva's appreciation of and ability to change her internal dialogue illustrates her growth in self-awareness and self-control (Zimmerman, 2000). Interestingly, research supports that inner speech can facilitate self-observations of one's inner life (Morin, 2005) and that frequently attending to one's thoughts and perceptions is an indicator of self-awareness (Schneider, 2002; Steels, 2003). Undoubtedly, there is merit in further investigating the links between one's self-talk, felt experiences, and the process of resonance as it was shown in this study that while self-talk can be a surmountable obstacle, it can also be used as a preparation and revisiting strategy to achieve desired feel.

The present study is unique in that results reveal the potential value of the resonance process in the context of education. Eva's case highlights a valuable process in which students may identify desirable ways to feel, prepare to experience this feel and reconnect with it in the face of obstacles, as these aspects have often been overlooked in a field that has been traditionally performance driven (Newburg et al., 2002; Scheiefele, 1991). In Eva's experience, she learned to take deliberate moments to let go of academic stressors in order to rekindle with preferred felt experiences (Vohs & Baumeister, 2004). Seemingly, a feel-based intervention could help students to pay attention to what they can do to feel the way they want and derive more meaning from their academic experiences. In this regard, Wallin and Graham (2002) suggested that educational goals should be achieved through necessary reflection and a valuation of students' experiences. The current study demonstrates that the resonance process may be one way that students can achieve greater control over the way they feel in academic pursuits by focusing on internal qualities of their experiences.

Documenting Eva's experience with resonance using the participatory paradigm is another innovative contribution of this study. Presenting the intervention from her own perspective expands the existing knowledge on resonance interventions. Rather than having an outside researcher interpret the experience of resonance *for* the participant, Eva provided an honest, reflective, and informed portrayal of her personal growth as she learned to apply resonance in her life. Researchers who have used a similar in-depth perspective in their case studies argue that it allows them to be both participants and observers in order to understand a particular phenomenon as a whole (Newton, 1994).

Despite the noteworthy findings of this study, a few limitations must be mentioned. Firstly, although Eva's dual role as researcher and participant in the intervention offered an in-depth perspective of resonance, it also led her to apply resonance and reflect on her own transcribed data in an exceptional manner. This evidently deepened her experience with resonance and may not be representative of a typical intervention based on the RPM. Furthermore, Eva's openness and commitment to all stages of the research process and intervention facilitated her understanding and implementation of resonance. Her growth is tied to this engagement and it should not be assumed that all participants will demonstrate the same readiness or willingness to develop and live their personal resonance process. The effort individuals are prepared to invest and the depth of their personal reflections should thus be considered in any intervention.

Secondly, this study presented the case of one undergraduate student participating in a person-centered intervention. Hence, just like with any other case study, readers are encouraged to consider their own internal world and life context in relation to the one described herein before making a judgment regarding the transferability of the findings (Stake, 2000). Given the limited research involving the application of feel-based interventions in education, it is recommended that more studies be conducted to examine the resonance process of students of different ages and levels in various learning contexts. As a result, we may gain more insight into the potential benefits that students could reap from developing their abilities to regulate the way they feel with the hope of being able to maximize the quality of their experiences and learning in academia.

### Conclusion

This study provided a rich account of how resonance can be applied to improve the quality of a student's experience. It shed light onto how a feel-based intervention can lead to increased self-awareness and self-control as well as skills and strategies to better regulate how one feels. In this case, a female undergraduate psychology student learned to identify and manage desired felt experiences by engaging in deliberate preparation to feel certain ways in her personal and academic life, and by identifying, anticipating, and responding to personal obstacles that distanced her from her desired feel. This study showed how self-confidence and self-talk were important in this student's life, how they were linked to the process of resonance, and how they could be enhanced and regulated through a feel-based intervention. The ability to regulate one's thoughts and felt experiences has been associated with increased learning and functioning in the literature (Schunk & Ertmer, 2000; Zimmerman, 1990), however, little to no empirical studies have shown how this may be applied in educational contexts. This study will hopefully lead to other in-depth accounts that could eventually have important implications for helping students enhance their learning experiences (Pavlovich, 2007; Woodward, 1998).

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