RUPTURE AND RECLAMATION IN THE LIFE STORY: THE ROLE OF EARLY RELATIONSHIPS IN SELF-NARRATIVES FOLLOWING A FORCED CAREER TRANSITION*

Sally Maitlis
Said Business School
University of Oxford
Oxford OX1 1HP
United Kingdom

sally.maitlis@sbs.ox.ac.uk

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ABSTRACT

Narrative approaches to the self suggest that forced career transitions disrupt individuals' self-narratives and motivate their efforts to re-establish narrative coherence. To craft and rework their self-narratives, people draw on a range of relational resources, including relationships with family, friends, and other important people in their lives. In this paper, I explore the link, within individuals' self-narratives, between people's working lives following a forced career transition and their early parental relationships. I investigate this issue through a longitudinal narrative study of 21 professional dancers forced to change career after an injury, drawing on three waves of interviews over an eight-year period. I identify three types of self-narrative – Immersed-Striving, Oppositional-Seeking, and Supportive-Settling – that link a kind of early parental relationship to a kind of post-injury relationship to work. In each of these narratives, dance acts as a transitional object with a specific relational meaning – connection, agency, or direction – that was enacted in participants' early relationships, and that they sought to re-establish through their post-injury working lives.

INTRODUCTION

Career changes are an increasingly common part of working life (Tams & Arthur, 2010). Driven by ambition, disillusionment, or experimentation, such changes can require courage because a person must decide to step off a chosen path to make a fresh start (Ibarra, 2003). Yet other career transitions are challenging because they are not choices. When an industry shrinks, or a layoff makes it impossible to get a new job in the same domain, people are forced to rethink and try something different. The same is true when change is driven by personal circumstances, such as an imposed geographical move or a persistent health condition (Samuel et al., 2015). Whatever the cause, a forced transition can be an especially painful way to change career.

Forced career transitions bring with them distinctive challenges. In addition to the difficulty of leaving an established career, knowing the change is involuntary can heighten the sense of loss (Kinicki et al., 2000). This loss may involve income and status, important elements to many. But still more may be at stake. Work is often central to people's identities, defining who they are and what they believe in (Dutton et al., 2010). Moving out of a particular line of work can be identity-disrupting, altering how people understand themselves (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). In addition, a career is often embedded in a network of relationships that extends back over many years. Being forced to leave a career can therefore damage someone's identity and undermine key relationships. This in turn has significant implications for how that person makes sense of their life to move forward.

Narrative approaches to the self suggest that we make sense of our lives by constructing life stories (McAdams, 1997). We explain who we are to ourselves and to others by formulating, sharing, and revising narratives about our past and possible future (Bruner, 1990). Important in such narratives is coherence and continuity: we need to feel that the past connects to the present, that our life now is a product of what went before (Ibarra & Lineback, 2005; Linde, 1986).

Extrapolating from this sequence of events also gives us a sense of the future. A forced career transition disrupts our narrative, however, making it hard both to anticipate what will come next, and to make sense of the life we have lived to that point. Research on narrative disruption caused by job loss or illness, for example, highlights the variety of ways that people narrate their lives after a disruptive event, and the challenge of re-establishing a coherent life narrative (Becker, 1997; Ezzy, 2000; Gabriel et al., 2010).

We do not craft our narratives alone. Others play important roles, shaping meanings and helping us account for paths taken and not taken. A variety of people, including family, friends, teachers and bosses may feature in a life story, and the relationships that these individuals have with the narrator are frequently central to the plot (Gergen & Gergen, 1988). Families often play especially significant roles, with parents and other family members providing a person's earliest and most intimate relationships, and these relationships giving shape to the narrative far beyond childhood (Borden, 2008). Parents can be particularly influential in narratives about early career choices, for example, engaging (or not engaging) in their children's initial career decisions, and influencing these decisions through the expression and modelling of their work values, and through their own occupational choices (Dekas & Baker, 2014; Keller & Whiston, 2008; Vignoli et al., 2005; Young et al., 2001). There has, however, been relatively little systematic study of the place of parents or other close family members in individuals' self-narratives as careers unfold and change over time, especially in the context of narrative-disrupting events. Yet this is important for our understanding of the link, within a self-narrative, between individuals' early relationships and their working lives after a forced career transition.

I explore this question through a longitudinal narrative study of 21 professional dancers forced to change career following a significant injury. This represented a major unwanted

transition for them, both because of the many years they had devoted to their training and development as dancers, and also because the profession and the work itself had come to represent a very central part of their identity. In most cases, their narrative began in early childhood, typically around age three or four, and developed in the context of key family relationships, especially parental ones, that supported or discouraged the pursuit of dance. Drawing on three waves of repeated interviews collected over an eight-year period, I explore how these individuals narrated their experience of pursuing, and later losing, "being a dancer" as a central part of their life story, and subsequently their narration of building a new working life for themselves. Throughout, I pay particular attention to the role of their parents in this story.

In brief, I find three different ways in which participants related to their new work after a forced career transition and show how these were linked to three ways of narrating their parents' role in their entry into dance as a career. I thus identify three kinds of self-narratives, each linking a kind of early parental relationship to a kind of post-injury working life: Immersed-Striving, Oppositional-Seeking, and Supportive-Settling. I argue that through each of these narratives ran an important relational meaning – connection, agency, or direction – that was experienced through dance in participants' early relationships, and that they sought to re-establish through their post-injury working lives.

This paper makes three main contributions. First, I contribute to the literature on self-narratives by demonstrating the significant role of parents in individuals' narratives of their working lives. I show how people may internalize their early relationships with their parents in ways that shape how they narrate their relationship to work and important career decisions. Although it is not surprising that early narratives about careers include parents, who are often present and sometimes directly involved, I integrate my findings with the psychodynamic

literature to offer the idea that work may act as a transitional object (Winnicott, 1953) to explain the ongoing place of parents in working life narratives long into people's careers. Second, I extend previous research that has highlighted how forced career transitions can challenge important meanings for people, leading them to respond by working to construct new meanings (e.g., Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Shepherd & Williams, 2016). I provide a valuable addition to this literature by showing that what may appear to be the construction of new meanings may be the re-establishment of old meanings rooted in some of the most significant relationships of a person's life. Third, I add to research on careers that has identified a variety of important meanings that work can hold, such as a job, career, or calling ((Wrzesniewski et al., 1997), or a means of self-expression or self-development (G. Petriglieri et al., 2019). Despite the variety of meanings of work that have been explored, little attention has been paid to meanings tied to important family relationships. I show the value in attending to these relationships by identifying three distinct meanings of work tied to early family relationships that profoundly shape individuals' narratives of their working lives.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Narrating the Self After a Forced Career Transition

Transitions are often difficult (Bridges, 2020). Forced transitions – those we do not choose – can be particularly challenging (Brammer, 1992). They come in many forms: becoming a refugee due to political unrest, getting divorced against one's wishes, and in the work context, getting laid off, moving to a new role after a restructuring, or involuntary retirement. Studies of forced transitions show they are deeply emotional experiences, often involving strong feelings of loss, sorrow, fear, shame, and anger (Kiefer, 2002; Vince & Broussine, 1996). Forced transitions can also be very disorientating, undermining an individual's sense of security, position in

society, and identity (Fouad & Bynner, 2008; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; J. L. Petriglieri, 2011), and prompting questions about the past and the future (Sadeh & Karniol, 2012).

In the context of work and organizations, research has focused significantly on forced career transitions that follow job loss. For example, in a study of older professionals and managers, being laid off was experienced as a traumatic event that drove people into less skilled, lower status roles and caused a fragmentation of identity (Gabriel et al., 2013). Studies have also identified ways in which forced career transition as a result of job loss, illness, or involuntary migration threatens individuals' identities and self-worth, and challenges important work-related and other meanings (Kira & Klehe, 2016; Rimmon-Kenan, 2002; Wehrle et al., 2018). This research also shows, however, that most people do not suffer such challenges passively. On the contrary, those forced out of a career typically work hard to make sense of the loss and its implications for who they are and can become (Kanji & Cahusac, 2015; Maitlis, 2009; Zikic & Richardson, 2007). From these efforts can come new meanings, including new identities, a renewed sense of purpose, and an appreciation of other possibilities, often enacted in new careers (Blustein et al., 2013; Fraher & Gabriel, 2014; Kira & Klehe, 2016).

Such a process involves the development of a self-narrative: an "account of the relationships between different self-relevant events across time" (Gergen & Gergen, 1988, p. 19), through which a person's identity is rendered "sensible". As such, a self-narrative both describes and enables an individual's identity. In the context of disruption, it provides a means by which to restore a sense of continuity and coherence to one's life (Habermas & Köber, 2015; McAdams, 2006a; Tuval-Mashiach et al., 2004). Continuity in self-narratives is important because it provides an understanding of ourselves as extending back into the past and forward into the future (Karniol & Ross, 1996; Sadeh & Karniol, 2012; Schmiedeck, 1979). Research suggests

that in the absence of such continuity, people may experience feelings of inauthenticity (Ibarra, 1999) and psychological distress (Chandler, 1994; Zimbardo, 1999).

Crafting a self-narrative after a forced transition is thus likely to involve considerable efforts to achieve continuity (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). People do this by constructing "transition bridges" that link old, new, and possible future identities (Ashforth, 2001); these enable the production of a coherent narrative, told by an agentic protagonist (Linde, 1993; McAdams, 2006b). In accounting for a forced transition, narrators draw on a variety of personal, relational, and other resources to explain their initial career choice, the transition process, and their subsequent career direction (Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014; Hoyer & Steyaert, 2015; Ibarra & Obodaru, 2016). Narratives about such difficult events can have different themes, such as "security", that describes recovery after the event (Bauer & Park, 2010), "growth", that describes a positive transformation achieved through struggle (Maitlis, 2009), or "discounting", in which the event is played down or denied (McAdams, 1999; Vough & Caza, 2017).

Together, the literatures on forced career transitions, self-narratives, and narrative identity work after disruption highlight important themes that characterize scholarly understanding of how people story themselves following a forced career transition. Research shows that such a forced career transition can be deeply threatening to an individual's identity and can challenge the meaning they have made of their lives. But it also finds that people work hard to make new meanings, which they do by drawing on a variety of resources to engage in identity work. This in turn allows them to restore continuity and coherence to their temporarily disrupted self-narrative.

The role of close relationships in self-narratives

Self-narratives are social constructions, developed in relationships (Fivush, 2008; Köber & Habermas, 2018) and used in relationships to maintain, explain, and enable future actions or

inaction (Gergen & Gergen, 1988). They are repeatedly shared with others, these audiences evaluating their credibility, and sometimes seeking modification when narratives seem inconsistent or unsatisfactory (Hankiss, 1981; Josselson, 2009). Importantly, however, an audience need not be physically present to shape a self-narrative. On the contrary, people are often influenced by "internalized others" (Klein, 1935; McAdams, 1998; Tortoriello & Hart, 2018), including those with whom they have little contact, or relatives no longer living. In addition to serving as a real or imagined audience, others also play important roles within a self-narrative. Indeed, most self-narratives are organized around key relationships, with friends, family members and co-workers playing important characters in the plot of a person's life (Aron et al., 2013; McLean, 2016). It is these relationships, and our narration of these relationships, that give our lives their meaning (Gergen & Gergen, 1988). Self-narratives are thus constituted by, negotiated in, and constitutive of our relationships with others.

In research on the construction of self-narratives, a significant stream of writing highlights the importance of family members, especially parents, in this process (Fivush, 2008; Mackey et al., 2001; McLean, 2016; Weeks & Pasupathi, 2010). For example, individuals use stories about parents to make meaning of key relationships and explain who they are (Budziszewska & Pietrzak, 2016; Fivush et al., 2005). Parents are narrated in a variety of ways, with descriptive statements that capture certain attributes of a parent (e.g., "warm"), appraisals of the nature of the parental relationship ("I was very close to my father"), and narrative accounts with different affective themes, for example, redemptive narratives in which "bad things turn good", or contamination narratives in which "good things turn bad" (Köber & Habermas, 2018; McAdams et al., 2001).

A second body of research that points to the role of early parental relationships in people's self-narratives adopts a psychodynamic perspective on human functioning (Erikson, 1968; Fotaki et al., 2012; G. Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2019). From this viewpoint, individuals' self-narratives are significantly shaped by their earliest relational experiences, with early caregiver relationships providing an imprint for an individual's subsequent attachments and responses to key life events (Bowlby, 1988; Fairbairn, 1952; Kohut, 1978; Winnicott, 1964). An important body of work in this vein explores "object relations" which are a person's internal representations of significant good and bad others (objects), typically parents, and their relationships to these objects (Fairbairn, 1952; Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983; Klein, 1935). These unconsciously held representations, formed early in childhood, act as the prototype for an individual's future relationships with others. An extension of this idea is found in attachment theory, which proposes that an individual develops one of several possible kinds of "attachment styles" based on others' responses to them within the family crucible, which they continue to enact with other people throughout their lives (Bowlby, 1969; Main, 1995; Wallin, 2007). Looking across writing in the psychodynamic tradition reveals how individuals' self-narratives are strongly influenced by their early relationships with parents and other key figures.

Turning to the context of work, research on adolescent career development finds that individuals' self-narratives about their career choices often implicate their parents (Dekas & Baker, 2014; Keller & Whiston, 2008; Young et al., 2001). One prominent set of studies draws on Erikson's (1968) theory of identity development to link an adolescent's "identity status" (Marcia, 1966, 1993) to their ways of negotiating career and other identity-relevant issues (e.g., Josselson, 1982; Meeus, 2011; Raskin, 1989; Vondracek et al., 1995). This research highlights two key processes – exploration of alternatives and commitment to a chosen direction – that, in

combination, capture the stage of an adolescent's identity development, or what is known as their identity status. This stream of work finds that parents, through attitudes and practices that support or impede their children's exploration and commitment, influence how adolescents narrate their identity, and thereby their career choices (Adams & Jones, 1983; Berzonsky & Adams, 1999; Grotevant & Cooper, 1986; Lucas, 1997). Other studies of parenting style and career-oriented behavior show that children whose parents encourage them to explore their interests, abilities, and career options describe themselves as more motivated in the career preparation process, in contrast to those whose parents are disengaged, over-anxious, or interfering (Dietrich & Kracke, 2009; Phillips et al., 2001; Vignoli et al., 2005). More generally, as audiences, imagined audiences, or characters in the plot, parents frequently play important roles in individuals' narratives of career (Sankey & Young, 1996; Young et al., 1994).

Connecting research on the role of close relationships in self-narratives with literature on forced career transitions suggests parental relationships may be important in individuals' narratives of their working lives following such transitions. Scholarship across the narrative, psychodynamic, and individual development traditions highlights the role of parents in people's self-narratives. Research on forced career transitions indicates the importance of personal and relational resources in people's efforts to re-establish continuity and coherence in self-narratives disrupted by this experience. We might therefore expect parental relationships to play a key role in these efforts, perhaps as a source of support and inspiration, or as an internalized audience prompting feelings of shame and despair about what has been lost. Despite the potential significance, however, we know little about the connection, within individuals' self-narratives, between their working lives following a forced career transition and their early parental relationships. This is the focus of the present study.

METHODS

In order to explore narratives in which individuals' working lives following a forced career transition are linked with their early parental relationships[1], I draw on an in-depth study of 63 narrative interviews conducted over eight years with 21 professional dancers who had experienced a career-altering injury. Such a longitudinal interview study allows the development of a relationship between participant and researcher that enables the sharing of personal and sensitive information (Neale & Flowerdew, 2003), and offers the opportunity to gather rich narratives over several years of an unfolding life story (Bruce et al., 2016). I collected the data for this study through three narrative interviews with each participant, the second interview conducted 12-18 months after the first, and the third interview conducted 5-6 years after the second. I analyzed the data using a thematic narrative analytic approach (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Reissman, 2008) in order to explore the link in participants' narratives between their post-injury working lives and their early parental relationships.

Data Collection

Insert Table 1 about here

Sample

I used two strategies to theoretically sample for professional dancers who had had a career-altering injury. First, I asked professional dance organizations to share my participant call on their websites and listservs. Second, I used a snowball sampling technique whereby individuals who participated in my study asked others they thought fit the sampling criteria to contact me if they were interested in participating. In total, I interviewed 21 individuals who

[1] In this study, I explore individuals' early parental relationships as they intersected with dance, but for the sake of readability in the paper, I use the phrase "early parental relationships".

were suitable participants for my study (see Table 1). Consistent with the gender gap in dance (Lange, 2020), 19 of these were women. At the time of the first interview, 11 were based in the United Kingdom, 7 in Canada, and 3 in Northern Europe. These individuals had grown up, trained, and worked in a variety of countries, including the UK, Canada, South Africa, the former Soviet Union, the USA, Portugal, The Netherlands, and Sweden. Participants ranged in age from 23-57, with an average age of 36. Their dance careers included ballet, contemporary dance, musical theatre, and acro dance, a combination of dance and acrobatics. All participants identified as dancers who had been forced to make a major change in their career as a result of injury. Because it is common for dancers to injure themselves and to continue to dance with injury, it was often difficult to pin down precisely when their career-altering injuries occurred. Most participants were at least ten years into their careers, however, when they were forced to make a major change. For some this happened earlier (some in the late stages of advanced training), and for others it came later.

Interviews

I interviewed each participant three times as part of a larger study exploring the lives of performing artists following a career-altering injury[2]. Nine of the first interviews were carried out in person, and the rest were conducted on Skype. Almost all the second and third interviews were conducted on Skype. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The purpose of the first interview was to gather a rich self-narrative of the individual's life from the time that they first danced through to the present day – up to, during, and after their injury. This interview followed

[2] The research question driving this paper arose out my observations about a subset of the larger study, where I noticed the important role that parents seemed to play in participants' stories about their early experiences of dance. This led me to attend to the links between dancers' relationships to their parents and to their work after injury. Broader questions about participants' full career paths are addressed in a separate working paper from the larger study.

the tradition of a life story interview (Atkinson, 1998) but with a particular focus on dance. It thus included an in-depth exploration of the place of dance through the participant's life and the meaning it had for them over the years, starting with their interest in dance as a young child (in most cases), and examining the role of their parents in facilitating this interest (or not doing so).

In life story interviews, the interviewer gives the participant the opportunity to tell their story in the way that makes sense to them, prompting if more information is sought on a particular incident, or if the interviewee appears to have left out a significant period of time (Chase, 2003). This kind of narrative interview provides rich, situated, temporal data (Polkinghorne, 1997) that captures individuals' ways of knowing themselves and understanding key experiences in their lives (Bruner, 1990; McAdams, 1999). While research interviews may be used to ascertain facts about an individual's life, such as their birthplace or family structure, the aim of my narrative interviews was to understand how people storied their lives (Bruner, 1987). My focus was thus not on the accuracy or "truth" of participants' stories (Adler et al., 2017), but on the meanings these individuals made of key life experiences (Singer, 2004).

This way of understanding and using narratives is grounded in a constructionist epistemology (Esin et al., 2014), which seeks to capture how people make meaning of their lives through the stories they tell (e.g., Gabriel et al., 2010; Josselson, 1996; Patriotta, 2003). Rather than looking for external confirmation of a narrative's veracity, a constructionist approach to narratives works "within" narratives to understand them: it looks for patterns in stories that provide insight into the relationships between the kinds of sense people make of different aspects of their lives. From this perspective, the narratives people construct of events both reflect the sense they have made of them and shape how they approach future experiences (Bruner, 1990; White, 2007); such stories are thus not just representational but constitutive of how people live

(McAdams, 1997). A powerful example of this is seen in research using the Adult Attachment Interview (George et al., 1996; Main, 1995), which finds that how individuals narrate their childhood relationship with their parents is predictive of their parenting style with their own children (Hesse, 2008; Steele & Steele, 2008; van Ijzendoorn, 1995).

I began the first interview with the question, "When did dance first come into your life?", which usually led the participant to speak about a parent introducing them to dance and sometimes other family members' histories with dance. As they went on to describe their early and evolving experience of dancing when young, it was common for participants to talk spontaneously about their parent(s)' involvement in and feelings about dance. When they did not volunteer the information, I asked follow-up questions, such as "Who supported you? How?" and in response to statements about the amount of time they spent dancing or their passion for dance, I asked "What did your parent(s) feel about that?". I also enquired about their parents' attitudes to the participant's eventual decision to pursue dance as a career. In addition, the interview included a detailed exploration of the participant's response to their injury and the career issues and decisions that followed. The first interviews lasted an average of 140 minutes.

I began the second and third interviews by reminding the participant of the date of the previous interview and what they had been doing then, and then asked participants to talk about the intervening time. Interviewees had been informed about the nature of the follow up interviews some weeks earlier, and so had had time to think back over the last period prior to the interview. Repeat interviews enable the development of dialogic relationships and, especially when studying biographical experience, offer a more powerful methodology than "one-shot" interviews (Reissman, 2008). Certainly, I felt that a rapport and sense of connection developed between us over the course of the study that allowed a growing intimacy in the interviews.

I conducted the second interviews (averaging 60 minutes) an average of 14 months after the first. These interviews traced experiences in the period since the first interview, exploring work-related and other developments since that time. Since several participants had been facing important career and life decisions at the time of the first interview, these second interviews provided an opportunity to learn about the choices they had made. I conducted the third interviews (averaging 130 minutes) an average of six years after the second, with the aim of learning how individuals' post-injury lives had continued to unfold. In most cases, participants mentioned their parent(s) in the third interviews (and sometimes also in the second), as they recounted what they were doing and how they were living. When they did not spontaneously mention parents in the third interview, I asked at a relevant point if they were still in touch with them, or what their parents thought of their current work.

In the later interviews, many participants also made reference to their earlier relationship with their parents. These references back to childhood were largely consistent with what they had previously shared, either repeating what they had said before, or extending it in ways that fitted with what I already knew. On the few occasions I heard something that surprised me (for example a participant who, only in the third interview mentioned biological parents in addition to the adoptive ones (who had not been described as adoptive) of whom they had spoken previously), I sought further clarification to ensure I had understood their early lives. Sometimes in later interviews participants spoke of changes in their parents over time or gave a new perspective on a parent. For example, one participant described a parent becoming more accepting with age, and another shared newfound empathy for a parent since becoming a parent herself. These additional observations enriched but did not contradict or negate participants' earlier descriptions of their childhood parental relationships.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved seven main steps. These were, however, neither discrete nor conducted in a purely linear manner: they were often overlapping or involved "back steps" as I returned to a prior analytic activity before continuing.

Developing summary narratives for each participant

The first step involved first reading each interview transcript while listening to the recording, and then subsequent re-readings to develop a summary narrative for each participant that captured the essence of their story, from their first experience of dance through their injury and into their unfolding post-injury working life. Following Maitlis (2012), I constructed these narratives primarily with quotations from the transcripts, which I wove together with prose that summarized periods of the participant's life and the key experiences of those periods. Through this process I was able to combine and integrate the material from the three interview transcripts into the summary narrative, or "chronicle" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), which depicted the arc of each person's life from their earliest years to the time of the third interview. In later steps, I used this summary as a map to guide me through the full interview transcripts.

Interrogating the post-injury working life narrative segments

Second, I sought a deep understanding of the participants' narrative accounts of their working life after injury. Thus, I focused my analysis on the material aligning with this section of the chronicle, which typically constituted at least half of it. I call this material the "post-injury working life narrative *segment*" to distinguish it from the participant's full self-narrative, but it did not appear as a single segment in the interview transcripts. Following others in the narrative analytic tradition, I interrogated this material, in the chronicle and original transcripts, guided by key questions (Hoyer & Steyaert, 2015; Reissman, 2002), such as how the individual decided what kind of work to pursue, how they got that work, how they felt as they did it, and what

happened next. In most cases, individuals described engaging in more than one kind of work following the injury, and I attended to their explanations of what led them to change their work. In other cases, I noticed how they storied efforts to deepen or broaden the work they did, what made them do this, and how they felt about their work as a consequence. I also noted when participants talked about parents, partners, children, or other significant people as part of their work choices. Through this process, I developed "interim texts" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) that described each participant's approach to, and experience of, their post-injury working life over many years.

Identifying narrative themes across post-injury working life narrative segments

Third, I identified patterns in participants' post-injury working life narrative segments. By rereading both the chronicles and the interview transcripts repeatedly, and working on the interim texts described above, I began to see certain patterns in how participants narrated their post-injury working lives. Some highlighted their continuous and intense efforts to achieve excellence in their new line of work. Others emphasized the challenges of finding work that allowed them to express themselves as freely as they had when dancing. A third set of narratives had a different quality, describing settling into a new direction and an acceptance of their post-injury working life. In each case, I worked to identify characteristics of the participant's relationship to post-injury working life that seemed to underpin their narrative over time.

Interrogating the early parental relationship narrative segment

Fourth, and seeking to better understand the patterns in participants' post-injury working lives, I returned to the chronicles and transcripts to explore their early lives. In interviews and previous transcript readings, I had noticed differences between participants in how they described their parents in their earliest years of dancing. In this fourth step, therefore, I focused

on how participants narrated their early relationship with their parents[3], particularly how this relationship intersected with dance. I relied primarily on the early part of the chronicle and on the initial interview transcript, which typically contained the longest, most detailed accounts of the individual's childhood. I also incorporated any references to childhood and early parental attitudes and behavior from the later transcripts. My analysis of this early parental relationship narrative segment was guided by key questions such as how the participant described their parents when they were growing up, whether and how parents supported the participant's dancing, how they did this, and how the participant talked about this support; also whether and how parents opposed their dancing, why, and the participant's feelings about this. I was also interested in how participants described their parents' responses to their successes and failures as a young dancer (e.g., when auditioning for a specialist school or taking dance exams). In a small number of cases, I noted when the narrative included references to a grandparent or other close family relative whom they saw as important to their early story of dancing. The interim texts I wrote on this part of the narrative thus described each participant's relationship with one or both parents in their early years, particularly as it shaped their experience of dancing.

Identifying links between kinds of post-injury working life narrative segments and kinds of early parental relationship narrative segments

Fifth, I looked for patterns in participants' early parental relationships, inspired by the patterns I had found in their post-injury working lives. I found three different kinds of early parental relationship narrative segments, and these were linked in consistent ways with the different kinds of post-injury working life narrative segments. The segments describing the

[3] Many participants described their parents as a unit, but others narrated their parents in different ways. In cases where one parent's relationship dominated the narrative, that relationship served as the basis for the early parental relationship coding. However, for simplicity, in the text I simply refer throughout to "parents".

intense pursuit of excellence in work were those in which participants narrated early relationships with parents who were highly involved, practically and emotionally, in their dancing activities. The segments of searching for a self-expressive substitute for dance post-injury were those in which participants narrated early relationships with parents who had objected to or forbidden them to dance as children. The more settled working life segments were ones in which participants cast their parents as having supported their dance, but without particular personal investment. This support was described as more active in some of the segments and more passive in others, and I examined the post-injury working life segments for any differences that might mirror this distinction within the early parental relationship segments. Through this process, I identified two possible variants of the more settled post-injury working life segment: one more fully and easily resolved, and one in which the narrator described a slower or more disturbed process of settling. These two variants mapped broadly onto the two variants of the early parental support segment, but not completely. Because of this imperfect matching and the small numbers of each sub-type, and because the overall sense of support and of settling was common to all segments in these sets and quite distinct from the others, I decided to retain each of the segments as single forms.

Developing descriptors of each self-narrative type

Sixth, while maintaining a curious stance and acknowledging the complexity of each individual's narrative (Reissman, 2008), I wrote summary descriptions of each of the six narrative segment types, akin to the narrative "scripts" described by narrative identity and personality theorists to reflect an individual's typical way of understanding and responding in the world (Singer et al., 2013; Tomkins, 1987). I assigned each a descriptor: Striving, Seeking, and Settling, for each of the three kinds of post-injury working life narrative segments; and Immersed, Oppositional, and Supportive, for each of the three kinds of early parental relationship

narrative segments. Finally, I applied pairs of these descriptors to participants' full self-narratives: Immersed-Striving, Oppositional-Seeking, and Supportive-Settling.

Exploring the role of culture, class and injury type

The seventh step involved post-hoc analyses prompted by questions from the review team. My sample was quite diverse in the nationalities of the dancers, the countries they had lived and worked, and, to a lesser extent, their socioeconomic status. To explore the possibility that culture could have shaped the way individuals narrated their early parental relationships or their post-injury working lives, I examined the cultural composition in the participants associated with each narrative form. However, I found that each group contained a diverse array of nationalities such that no group was dominated by a single cultural background.

I also considered the possible influence of class on the three narrative forms. I had not asked participants explicitly about their socioeconomic status but I returned to my data to see what I could infer from the interviews. I found that some individuals in each group mentioned money as an issue for their training, but equally some in each group described the financial support they received from their parents, or from scholarships, government grants, or state-funded education. In the absence of hard data on participants' socioeconomic circumstances growing up, or clear patterns in when and how money was invoked in the narratives, I was unable to identify the influence of participants' social class on their narratives.

A third post-hoc analysis explored the possibility of a relationship between injury type and form of post-injury working life narrative. In examining the kinds of injuries participants experienced, I found that the great majority (71%) occurred through dance itself, some narrated as gradually worsening problems that eventually or in conjunction with an acutely problematic movement became disabling, and others as more acute injuries which often required surgery that did not sufficiently fix the problem. A number of these seemingly acute injuries, however,

followed many months or years of gradual or intermittently worsening problems. Of the 29% of participants who were not injured through dance, one was in a car accident, four had neurological/genetic conditions, and one had arthritis that came on after a dance injury. With these broader medical problems, the condition intersected with the physical demands of dance, gradually making it impossible to continue. Within each kind of narrative I found a mix of injury types, which in themselves were often a combination of gradual and acute injury, or injury intersecting with a separate medical condition exacerbated by dancing. Perhaps due to the ambiguity and complexity of dancers' injuries, there was no systematic variation in injury type by participants' post-injury working life narratives. This was also true of the timing of the injury, again very ambiguous, as noted earlier.

FINDINGS

I present the study's core findings in three parts. First, I describe the core commonalties across participants' self-narratives. Second, I identify three distinct ways in which individuals narrated their post-injury working lives. I refer to these as "Striving", "Seeking", and "Settling". Third, I describe three ways in which participants narrated their early parental relationships in the context of their dancing – "Immersed", "Oppositional", "Supportive" – each of which was linked to one way of narrating their post-injury working life.

Becoming a Dancer and Becoming Injured

Most of the narratives in this study were stories of individuals who wanted to be professional dancers from an early age. These children and young adolescents took several dance classes a week, giving up other hobbies and time with friends to do so. They did not characterize this as a hardship: they loved dancing and could hardly get enough of it. They all expressed a great passion for dancing and an exceptional commitment to it (see Table 2). In their stories, some left home early to attend specialist ballet schools, and others took dance classes after

school and left home later to train full time with a ballet or contemporary dance company. All the narratives conveyed training as intensely competitive and demanding: standards were very high and the utmost discipline was expected. Auditions for jobs followed. Some stories told of winning a long sought-after dance company contract. In others, an individual went freelance, auditioning for different productions, perhaps touring a show over several weeks or months. Narratives typically unfolded with the dancer moving up the ranks of a ballet company, winning a lead role in a contemporary dance production, becoming an independent dance artist, or starting their own small dance company. All narratives conveyed the emotionally and physically arduous life of a dancer. They also, however, communicated the exhilaration of working in the career for which the individual had trained so hard.

Insert Tables 2 and 3 about here

Injury in dancers is common, almost unavoidable (Bowling, 1989; Smith et al., 2015). Most experience minor injuries in the course of their training or careers and, with the appropriate care, these often heal. Because of the extreme physical demands dance makes on the body, however, more significant injuries are not uncommon. In some cases, even with good care and medical intervention, such injuries force a dancer to stop dancing professionally. Often, the seriousness of an injury is not immediately evident; it can be months or years before the prognosis is clear. Even then, it is hard for many to accept because the thought of being unable to dance again is so deeply distressing (Turner & Wainwright, 2003).

Study participants were chosen because their careers as dancers were foreclosed by injury. Their narratives all conveyed significant distress associated with this transition, describing how undermining their injury and corresponding inability to dance was for their sense of self, their future dreams and plans, and their primary means of earning a living (see Table 3).

Most described how, in the immediate months following the injury and to make some money, they took what work they could. Then, facing the reality of their new, uncertain future, they struggled to work out what alternative career they might pursue. A common theme was retraining, the former dancer eventually beginning a new profession such as physiotherapist, personal trainer, nutritionist, or speech therapist. Some narratives described how the individual stopped performing but taught dance for a while before opening their own dance school. Others described building up a portfolio of activities, for example, working as an arts administrator and doing some teaching while training as a Pilates teacher. The career choices varied, but the approaches individuals described to meet the challenge of creating a new working life seemed to fall into one of three patterns, summarized in Table 4, illustrated in Table 5, and described below.

Insert Tables 4 and 5 about here

Narrating Working Life Following a Forced Career Transition

In narrating their post-injury working lives, eight participants described striving hard to achieve high levels of success in a new line of work; four spoke of post-injury life as seeking an alternative path that allowed them to express themselves; and nine narrated themselves as settling into a largely satisfying new working life.

Striving

In the first set of narratives, the former dancers described working with focus and intensity to create a new path. I characterize this set of narratives as “Striving” because of the concentrated dedication with which the individuals embraced forward movement, and the energy and ambition conveyed as they threw themselves into their new work and felt themselves succeeding. As Anna, who had started her own dance school, shared, “I've finally actually found

something that's mine, that I've created out of absolutely nothing, that I enjoy doing. Every morning, I get up in the morning and I'm like, “Right, so what are we going to do today?”” These narratives described the former dancers devouring further training and grabbing opportunities as they appeared. Quite quickly, they found themselves achieving positions and feeling pride in activities they had never imagined. As Rana said, “I thought I was superwoman”. However, these stories were not simply heroic. Success at work was associated with sacrifice in other parts of participants’ lives, such as sleep, holidays, hobbies, and family. There was always more work to be done and these narratives conveyed the relentlessness of the demands. Sara, the CEO of a dance company, described herself as, “a bit of a machine that has the tasks laid out in front and knows that I have to accomplish this and do this, and I just go day to day trying to get that done”. An air of struggle came through in several participants’ narratives, the individual trying so hard and feeling it was never enough. Tess shared, “I struggled with it for quite a while, actually. Obviously trying to do more and more each day and probably pushing myself a little too much”. Half of the stories ended in burnout; those that did not still conveyed high pressure working lives filled with a sense of urgency.

Marlene was a Prima Ballerina in a Canadian ballet company. Her narrative included injuries accumulated over several years that became unbearably painful and harder to conceal as she continued to try to dance on them. Eventually, she accepted she had to stop dancing and began to consider alternatives. She trained as a personal trainer and embarked on this new career, expressing joy in being able to help others move their bodies in healthier ways. She said she still struggled, however, with a voice in her head telling her she was not doing enough. She described, “this anxiety, it was just this like—hamster wheel, in my head, in my body…‘You should be doing something more. You should be thinking more about your classes, telling them

more, you should be busy,'…I just could not stop it". As she grew more confident, Marlene became certified as a medical exercise specialist, and increasingly fascinated by the psychological aspects of pain management, which she integrated into her healing work. She fantasized about setting up her own studio, where people could come and take part in a range of healthy and healing activities. Marlene described feeling passionate about the work she was doing, but also how exhausting her life was, not least because she had become a mother. While she was determined to give her young daughter her deep love and attention, this at times felt in conflict with her drive at work. She shared, "I love her to death but there's kind of like, just like I need her to kind of go away for a while so I can focus on my career".

Seeking

In the second set of narratives, the former dancers described the many ways they had sought to replace dance with new work that would allow them to express themselves as dance previously had – a search that often remained unresolved over the course of the narrative. I refer to this set of narratives as "Seeking" because they were characterized by ongoing efforts to find a new path. These participants described their uncertainty about what they should do, aware they could not know all the possibilities, and unsure how to build a new working life. Some responded positively to serendipitous offers of work and gradually built a new career through the bricolage of multiple elements, such as teaching, choreography, writing, and other forms of artistic expression. As Susanna said, "I started to build up a little portfolio of work. What did I do? Anything really". Explaining her difficulty in choosing her new path, Ruth explained "For a long time, I thought I had to pick one. And then eventually I just decided I don't have to, I'll just hop between all of them". Others sought formal training or experimented with something new but felt acute disappointment, struggling to see how it could fulfil them. As Myra explained of an early role in arts administration, "I so enjoyed being there, but then I also felt like there's still

this huge part of me missing, and that was the artistic side of myself". Like those in the Striving narratives, individuals in these stories put energy into their new work and wanted a lot from it. The focus of these Seeking narratives, however, was the ongoing effort to find a path that allowed participants' creative expression and felt as meaningful as dance had been.

Dana was a contemporary dancer who, relatively early in her career, was diagnosed with a genetic condition that had begun to affect her mobility. She was warned that it would be dangerous for her to continue dancing but she refused to give it up, rejecting her doctor's prognosis. In the middle of an overseas tour, however, the growing impact of the condition finally forced her to stop. Dana recounted how, for her own health and as she started to consider a new career, she completed a teacher training in Pilates. But, she explained, she "more or less cried my way through" because "there's nothing artistic about Pilates…there's no musicality and there's no feeling of expressiveness…. you're never, ever, ever telling anybody anything with it". Dana was subsequently offered the chance to sing, rather than dance, in a new show. She described her cautious acceptance, and later, her growing identity as a singer. Yet she still missed dancing, explaining how "There's something about that [dancing] that's so special, that music and singing and stage presence alone will never do. So no, it's not fulfilling on the same level". Eventually even this new work demanded too much of her vulnerable body and Dana faced the reality of leaving the performing world. She gained a grant that allowed her to retrain entirely – in speech therapy. Although Dana enjoyed the learning, she felt was life meaningless without art. She persisted with the speech therapy degree and achieved excellent results, but it still did not feel right. She reflected, "I know all those things and the anatomy has been really amazing, but how to build a life on all this is very strange". She had not found fulfilment on her new path.

Settling

In the third set of narratives, the former dancers described how they created sustainable post-injury working lives. I refer to this set of narratives as "Settling" because of the sense of resolution that pervaded them, and because the individuals sharing them seemed to be reconciling to their new lives. Trisha, who had retrained to become a math teacher observed, "If in 20 years I'm still doing it, that's fine, I enjoy doing it. But if I stop enjoying it, I'll go somewhere else". As with those in the other narratives, these former dancers had experienced great distress after their injury and, like them, they worked hard to establish new working lives. Their stories, however, generally lacked the sense of struggle associated with those in the other two groups. The individuals in the Settling narratives typically considered fewer possibilities and more quickly found a new direction, immersing themselves in it and expressing surprise at the fulfilment they felt. They described their excitement in learning new knowledge and skills, and their satisfaction in doing work that in many cases felt more generative, showing a concern for the growth and well-being of others, including future generations (Erikson, 1963; McAdams, 2006b, 2006c). As Alice, who worked as a doula and volunteered in her community theatre explained, "I feel a tremendous responsibility to impart knowledge and to inspire…I prefer to do stuff for other people". Similarly, Denise, who lectured and founded a dance company, reflected, "I think I have brought richness and riches to other people". They also narrated their work and personal lives as being more in balance. Looking ahead, these individuals spoke of ways their chosen work could be deepened and enriched, rather than plans to scope out better paths, or identifying greater heights to achieve. In this vein, Graham, a physiotherapist, shared "I took more courses and I garnered more knowledge to have a more fulfilling career".

Raya was a Prima Ballerina in a European ballet company. Her narrative described how she suffered a series of injuries during her career but the "final one" was a cruciate ligament, torn

mid-performance. Unable to dance, Raya waited several months for the operation and began to consider what she might do instead if she had to stop dancing. In her earlier years, she said she had never allowed herself such a thought, but now she began to feel excited about the possibility of doing something different. She observed how, after her intense training and professional life, "normal life was very attractive to me". She also began feeling she would like to have children. Two years after her injury, Raya realized that the surgery had not been successful and she could not return to dancing. She considered different possibilities, wanting "to find the same passion that I had for ballet in something else". She felt drawn to "something with medicine" and found a physiotherapy training that she thought she would try. Although the first months were hard, she said they were also "the proof that this is the study I really enjoy". Raya shared how she did not look back, saying "I really forget about the rest of the things… you change life, you change roles. It's like changing skins". Completing her initial training, she went on to do a master's degree in sports physiotherapy, wanting to work with dancers. She also discovered osteopathy, loving the manual work, "listen[ing] with your hands" and, she observed, just as in dance, "the movement gives the truth". She expressed deep satisfaction in her work, and also joy in her family life, now a mother of three.

Narrating Early Parental Relationships

An important theme in former dancers' self-narratives was the role of their parents in their initial years of dance. Because most dancers begin to dance as young children, it was not surprising to find parents early in participants' narratives. An important finding, however, was that they narrated their parental relationships in different ways and that these were linked to how they narrated their post-injury working lives. In the eight self-narratives with "Striving" working life segments, one parent, usually the individual's mother, was described as intimately involved in enabling their dancing from an early age. I call this early parental relationship narrative

"Immersed". In the four self-narratives with "Seeking" working life segments, both parents were cast as strongly opposed to the individual's interest in dance early on. I call this early parental relationship narrative "Oppositional". In the remaining nine self-narratives, those with "Settling" working life segments, both parents were cast as less central to the decision to dance. I call this early parental relationship narrative "Supportive".

Immersed

I describe the first set of early parental relationship narratives as "Immersed" to capture a close relationship in which a parent was often intimately involved in the child's dancing, which was given an important and central place in the relationship. These Immersed narratives conveyed how important it was for the parent that the child was a dancer. In several of the stories the participant spoke of a mother who had a love of dance and who had or had not been able to fulfil that passion herself. As Anna shared, "My mum always wanted to be a dancer… but her parents didn't see it as a proper vocation". The parents in these narratives were described as very intently supporting, sometimes driving, the child's participation in dance over many years, including finding dance classes, seeking out the best teachers and schools, accompanying their child to auditions, and taking them to watch professional dance performances. The relationship went beyond practical support: these Immersed narratives gave the sense of dance as a joint project between parent and child, or as an important contribution that the child made to their parent's happiness. As Cathy observed of her mother, "She'd been the whole reason I had danced in the first place, because she was so…not obsessed with it, but yes, in a way… she was the whole reason I had danced at the beginning, from so small". Most participants who narrated their early parental relationships with dance as Immersed spoke of their mother as highly involved with their dancing, expressing her love and care for the child through her connection to dance. The father was often cast as in some way absent, whether through divorce, work, or

temperament, but with generally high ambitions for his daughter. Here, dance offered a powerful arena in which the child could achieve success. This was Sara's perception, reflecting, "With my father, the way that we've identified – or he related to me – was through my achievements and my successes".

Marlene's story illustrates an Immersed early parental narrative. Marlene started dancing at age three. Her parents were divorced, and she said she was brought up primarily by her mother, who had danced when young but had to stop because of problems with her feet. Dance ran deep in the family narrative: Marlene's grandmother had wanted to dance but her parents could not afford it. She held this dream for her granddaughter. Marlene described how her mother drove and enabled her training while her grandmother paid for it. Marlene's narrative cast dance as a shared enterprise: it was "like destiny in a way, that we were just—my gran, my mother and I kind of came together, and we helped each other, and fed each other, and it carried forward". She further explained, "it was important for me to do well, as well, because my mother had put so much effort into it". Her father, she added, "wanted me to be the best in everything". It was an intense life: Marlene explained, "I never had school holidays, I would be doing ballet every single school holiday, and after school I had ballet every day. I never—I did play sport, but I never really socialized, because my time was taken up always with dancing". After moving to a high pressure "art school", she recalled saying to her mother, "I just don't know if this is actually right for me". Her mother encouraged her to "give it a little bit more time". Marlene started doing extremely well and, as her career took off, she climbed the ranks of the ballet company that she had joined, quickly becoming a principal dancer. Her mother was proud and encouraging.

Oppositional

In contrast to those in the Immersed narratives, both parents (except in the case of one dancer brought up by a single mother) in the "Oppositional" narratives expressed strong disapproval or other negative feelings about their child pursuing dance as a hobby or career. Participants described their parents' responses as rooted in concerns about the cost of dance classes and a belief that one could not earn a living through dance or a lack of understanding or appreciation of art. These parents wanted to guide their children in an appropriate way and did not see dance as a viable path. As Myra said of her parents, "they tried to stop me or, like, make me realize that this is a stupid idea". In the Oppositional narratives, the young child was not able to start dance lessons until they were older or, if they did dance, were discouraged or prevented from investing more fully in dance as they grew older. The narrators of these stories saw themselves as distinctly different from their parents, especially in the value they placed on artistic expression, but also in other values and beliefs. As Ruth explained "I don't think my parents understood". They were from a generation and background "where if you get a proper job in a bank, you're lucky". In these narratives, the individual usually left home as soon as they practically could, pursuing their own direction and freedom.

Dana's story exemplified the Oppositional narrative. Despite wishing to dance much earlier, Dana did not take her first dance class until she was a teenager. She recounted, "I always wanted to, and I watched films, and I watched pictures, and I read books as much as I possibly could. But my parents weren't in favor of this. They said that you cannot earn a living dancing. Also, it was very expensive to take classes, so I wasn't allowed". Her parents were, however, happy for her to paint, so Dana told her parents she wanted to be a set designer and they supported her in that, giving her paint, drawing materials, and theatre tickets for her birthday. She explained how she saw many touring ballet companies: "I went on my own from when I was

12 because my parents didn't want to go to the theatre". She did not, however, go to learn about set design. Dana remained resolute about dancing. At 16, now earning her own money, she began dance classes that she paid for herself. She said, "From then on, everything started to be about the next class. School was not important anymore, and drawing wasn't at all". Dana started to restrict her eating, fueled by the realization that "this was what I wanted to do, and nobody wants me to do this". She said, "I stopped eating and stopped talking to the parents….I grew more and more into a very quiet person, very thin, and very much into "I'll do this no matter what they say". On finishing school, she declared, "I do the dance, I do the work, I do the school, I do the graduation. I do it all and now I finally got here and you can't stop me". "And then", she said, "I left to pursue dance". By way of explanation, she concluded, "Doing dance is like the one thing that was always mine".

Supportive

A third set of narratives described parents, usually both of them, as "Supportive" of the child's interest in dance, but somewhat indifferently. These parents were narrated as good, caring people, who wanted the best for their children. As Jolene described, "he [my father]'s the one who really encouraged me to do dance…he's like, "Well, you love dancing". They did not, however, have any special involvement in their children's dance. Nor did they discourage their children from pursuing dance as a hobby, or a vocation. Parents were a little more involved in some of the Supportive narratives, providing practical support to the child who expressed an interest in dancing. Steve explained, "They came and supported me in every way they could, especially when I went off to college as well". These narrators described themselves as close to their parents: they knew that if they wanted to dance, their parents would back them. In other stories, the narrators characterized themselves as more independent: dance was cast as something that the child discovered they enjoyed and was good at and, while parents were aware of their

interest, their input was neither offered nor sought. Amanda described her father as "very relaxed", saying, "Let her do what she wants to do and she'll realize if she's made a mistake".

Raya grew up in Eastern Europe, folk dancing and doing gymnastics as a four-year-old. In her story, she clarified that while her mother helped her, the impetus came from within, saying of the motive to dance, "I don't know if *she* wanted—because I remember *I* wanted". She said that she found it great fun and by the time she was eight, was taking five classes a week. Raya was clear that "I was never forced to do—to go, or to do anything. On the contrary, I would say even if I wanted to go, maybe sometimes they [my parents] didn't feel like taking me". At age 11, she was selected in a competition for the National Ballet Company School. This was in a different city and required Raya to board far from home. She shared that her parents were proud she had been chosen, but that her mother "was worried – she was protesting". But her father supported it; Raya went to the school and came home on Sundays. Raya described the endless work and critical teachers in the extremely demanding and competitive school regime, but quickly did well, dancing Principal roles exceptionally early in her training. She explained "I enjoyed this hard work" and yet also recalled her father's words, that "It should be fun, it should not be hard work only". Raya's career took off and she described how she became a Prima Ballerina in the National Ballet Company, and subsequently moved to the West, where for many years she continued very successfully in a different country's national ballet company.

CONCEPTUALIZING THE LINK BETWEEN EARLY PARENTAL RELATIONSHIPS AND POST-INJURY WORKING LIFE NARRATIVES

In this section, I draw on writing in psychodynamic and developmental traditions to conceptualize the link I found between the narrative segments of early parental relationships and those of post-injury working life. My argument is grounded in two sets of observations from my findings: first is the commonality in the former dancers' narratives of the central role of dance in

their early lives and the distress they felt in losing dance due to injury; second is the variation in participants' way of narrating their early parental relationships and how they worked to replace dance after their injuries. I integrate each of these observations with the relevant literatures to understand and explain the link between the participants' narratives about their early and later lives.

The participants in this study all described dance as an important and joyful part of their early lives (see Table 2), their parents' relationship to their dancing as a feature of it, and the loss of dance as a career as extremely distressing (see Table 3). When the dancers were unable to dance because of injury, their narratives portrayed a devastating loss, a void that went beyond a foreclosed career to include loss of the meaning that dance had given them. These commonalties underpin my argument that dance served a key role in the early relationship between parent and child, an activity through which the growing child got something important and needed from their parent.

Research across several domains of psychology and human development have identified the lasting impact of early relationships on individual development and functioning. From a psychodynamic perspective, an individual's feelings and behavior are influenced by an internal representation of key people and relationships that is based on early interactions between a child and their caregivers (Bowlby, 1988; Fairbairn, 1952; Winnicott, 1965). Such representations, sometimes called "object relations" (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983), unconsciously guide people's understandings of themselves in relation to others and can shape decisions about work and career, leading individuals' to do work that allows them to replicate significant childhood experiences, meet unfulfilled childhood needs, and realize occupational and professional expectations passed on to them through their family (Kets de Vries, 1989; Pines, 2000; Pines &

Yanai, 2001). This body of work suggests that people may unconsciously embed important early relationships and needs into their narratives of their working lives.

For the participants in this study, I suggest that dance can be understood as an important "transitional object" (Winnicott, 1953) that enabled the growing child to engage with and navigate their environment. A transitional object is something that "stands in for" the parent when they are absent; it is an entity created or chosen by the child to help them cope with developmental demands. It provides comfort in the face of a child's anxiety as they begin to separate from their parents and serves as a bridge to the external world as the child, and subsequently young adult, seeks more independence (Applegate, 1984; Blos, 1967). As a transitional object, dance offers an "in between" space that feels known and safe, and at the same time exciting and growthful. Over time, as an individual's gains in confidence, a transitional object such as dance, and the experiences it provides, can play an important role in strengthening a person's internal object relations, increasing their capacity to self-regulate when they encounter the inevitable developmental challenges of everyday life (Davar, 2001; Kahne, 1967; Sugarman & Jaffe, 1989).

In popular writing, transitional objects are often conceived as material entities, such as teddy bears or blankets (e.g., Sarner, 2018; Schulz, 2005). Such inanimate objects, however, are part of a much broader category of transitional phenomena that include clothing, imaginary companions, religion, and music (Benson, 1980; Kuhn, 2013; Nolan, 1989; Winnicott, 1953), and research suggests that transitional phenomena increase in their level of abstraction as a child moves through developmental stages (Hong, 1978; Sugarman, 2017; Sugarman & Jaffe, 1989). Thus, while a career in dance may seem a long way from a child's security blanket, the idea that dance may serve as a transitional object is consistent with writing in the psychodynamic

literature that has explored a range of transitional phenomena functioning through the adolescent and adult years (e.g., Applegate, 1984; Elmhirst, 1980; Harrington & Bielby, 2013; Potik et al., 2007). As a transitional object for the participants in this study, dancing seemed to enable the child, and later the adult, to go forward into the world and establish a working life that met core needs grounded in their early parental relationships.

Along with the commonalties in the dancers' narratives, the differences in how they narrated their early parental relationships and post-transition careers further support an interpretation of dance as a transitional object. The loss of dance disrupted their narratives, undermining the arc of their lives and deeply challenging the dancers' sense of themselves – who they were and who they could become. Writing on loss and mourning (Bowlby, 1973; Kübler-Ross, 2009; Parkes, 1970), highlights reactions of sorrow, anger, and despair that fuel efforts to recover what has been lost, and (sometimes) eventual acceptance of a future without the lost "object". Psychodynamic theory suggests that a mourning individual seeks to reinstate the lost object (Klein, 1940), while leaving room to invest in new activities. What form this process takes will depend significantly on the significance and meaning to the mourner of what was lost.

In this study, the dancers shared significantly different narratives of their response to interrupted dance careers which mapped onto differences in how they narrated their early parental relationships (see Tables 4 and 5). This pattern suggests differences in what was lost for the dancers – the meaning of dance as a transitional object that needed to be replaced. A narrative perspective on loss highlights the distinctiveness of individuals' experiences, and emphasizes the importance of the reconstruction of meaning after a loss (Neimeyer, 2001). Through this lens, a significant loss disrupts a person's story of themselves, often challenging its viability in ways that call for reaffirmation, repair or replacement of the central plot (Neimeyer et

al., 2014). The process of mourning thus involves rewriting the life narrative to make sense of what has been lost and to identify alternative meanings, often co-constructed with others, that allow a person to continue. In this study, I found that as the former dancers worked to construct a new working life narrative, they sought to replace dance with other work in which they could re-establish an important meaning. I argue that each of the three sets of narrative pairings – Immersed-Striving, Oppositional-Seeking, Supportive-Settling – was associated with a distinctive relational meaning that the former dancers sought to re-establish: connection, agency, and direction.

Striving for connection

The first set of narratives were those in which an individual who grew up with a parent highly invested in their early dance activities narrated their post-injury life as one of intense striving to achieve in a new work domain. These narratives described the joy that the child's dancing brought to their parents, and the pressure and pride that came with that. Dance in these narratives was thus a powerful means through which children ensured a close connection with their parents in which they felt valued. The child developed a passion for dancing that may not consciously have felt linked to the parent, but that was partly fueled by the place that dance had in their relationship with their parents. As they grew up, dance thus served as a transitional object that offered a sense of worth and connection as these children developed into adults and built their career. When the injury derailed them, they sensed not only that they had lost this object and a central part of themselves, but also their hard-won parental connection and admiration. There was an urgency about finding a new path and an intensity in their investment in it, needing to fill the void and recreate a sense of connectedness and value through a newfound success.

My argument that dance is internalized as means of connection to parents that is then disrupted by injury builds on writing in the psychodynamic literature that highlights the

importance of parental love and admiration in a child's earliest relationships (Sullivan, 1953; Winnicott, 1964). Children quickly learn that they are valued through parents' "mirroring" (Kohut, 1984) – positive responses that show the child they are seen and appreciated. But even the most loving parents inevitably respond – through their expression, tone of voice, or some more explicit behavior – differently at different times, which leads the child to gain a sense of the behaviors that engender love, and those that do not (DeYoung, 2003; Kohut, 1971). The dancers' Immersed narratives suggest that the child may have understood themselves as most loved by and connected to their parent when they did well in their dancing. Such awareness may have led them to deeply invest in certain parts of themselves (in this case, the "dancer"), and disown or "split off" other parts that were not so admired (G. Petriglieri & Stein, 2012). Faced with the loss of dance after injury, and symbolically, the loss of connection and their parents' approval, the individual felt compelled to find a replacement. They strived to succeed in another kind of work, unconsciously hoping that this achievement would preserve their parental connection, lower their anxiety, and restore their sense of self-continuity (Habermas & Köber, 2015). This pressing need was the fuel that drove these individuals' striving post-transition, motivating them to prove themselves and succeed in another sphere.

This striving for connection is illustrated in Cathy's story. Prior to her injury, Cathy was a principal dancer in a contemporary dance company. Her narrative cast her early years as "doing the typical fulfilling her [mother's] desires to have been a ballet dancer". She enjoyed dancing, but it was her mother's passion. It was easy to hear how Cathy's sense of what she wanted and who she was could have been overshadowed. She observed, "she was the one that was so kind of excited about my ballet and things, so when you're 8 and 10 and 12 you didn't dare sort of think that maybe you wanted to do something else". Cathy commented how dance was "something

that was so attached to her that I think it was difficult to know – when I say like I am like her, you know, we still have that kind of connection, that sort of symbiotic connection". A powerful thread in the story was the link between Cathy's dancing and her mother's health. When Cathy was young, her mother was diagnosed a terminal illness. Her father was absorbed in his work and her older siblings had left home, leaving Cathy feeling that she "was somehow alone responsible for giving her some sort of joy". Indeed, Cathy said she felt "that my dancing was keeping my mother alive".

After a crippling back injury several years into her career, Cathy became interested in health and healing, and trained and practised in this area. From there, she became spent time at a senior level in the corporate world, but then moved back into the arena of dance to make a contribution. While the roles Cathy took were diverse, she described intense engagement in each, her commitment evident. By the end of her narrative, Cathy had built an international reputation as a dance campaigner and teacher, teaching about health and dance in many major ballet and dance conservatoires. She reflected how her mother was "ecstatically happy that, you know, that I'm working with all those ballet companies and everything; it sort of made sense of something she always wanted for me." She still sought new challenges, however, increasingly ones that allowed her to use more parts of herself. She concluded, "I believe [that] in the training of a dancer, there's enormous resilience and resource, because that's built into the training. And so even though you lose the thing, I think you still have this sense of the show must go on".

Seeking agency

The second set of narratives were those in which a child chose to pursue dance despite growing up with a parent who disapproved of and negated their interest. These stories characterized post-injury life as an ongoing search to replace dance with a form of work that was as distinctly "theirs" as dance had been. Such Oppositional-Seeking narratives describe children

growing up in environments where they felt the need to differentiate and detach themselves from their parents, and dance as compelling way of doing this. Dance in these stories thus served as a transitional object that enabled the young person to gain a sense of independence and agency in relation to their parents (Hong, 1978; Tolpin, 1971). They developed their career with their parents at a safe remove, working hard to make their choice a good one. When the injury derailed them, it brought the possibility that their parents may have been right. Losing dance meant they needed to find another way to maintain their sense of self, but in the absence of the transitional object to contain them, they struggled to know what they wanted. Dance in these narratives remained an ideal against which little compared. As they sought new work, these former dancers were searching for a new way of expressing themselves and their independence.

My argument that dance serves as a transitional object that enables agency builds on writing in studies of human development (Adler, 2012; McAdams et al., 2006), the self in contemporary careers (G. Petriglieri et al., 2018), and the emergence of autonomy in adolescence (Blos, 1967; Ingoglia et al., 2011; Ryan & Lynch, 1989). This work highlights important processes of separation and individuation, which are associated with healthy psychosocial maturation (Erikson, 1968). Adolescence has been called the "second individuation" process, a period when a young person sheds family dependencies and loosens infantile object ties in order to join the adult world (Blos, 1967). In the Oppositional narratives, a central aim of the story seems to be detaching from parents (Ryan & Lynch, 1989). Detachment, in contrast to gradual separation, is a form of distancing enacted as a defense against a lack of parental acceptance or overpowering parents (Koepke & Denissen, 2012). It focuses on the achievement of individual autonomy at the expense of mutual relatedness (Allison & Sabatelli, 1988; Minuchin, 1974), and suggests the presence of distrust, alienation, and unresolved conflict between parent and child. In

such relationships, adolescents feel they must detach in order to gain a sense of agency (Koepke & Denissen, 2012).

Seeking agency is exemplified by Ruth's self-narrative. Ruth was a contemporary dancer whose very physical style of dance eventually led to her injury. Ruth's narrative described her detachment from her parents, with dance a central part of this distancing. She shared that she became clinically depressed when her parents would not let her go to the vocational school, explaining, "I didn't know what to do with my life…I had this dream that this was what I wanted to do. All of a sudden it felt like someone had taken it away from me and there was no other door open". She described a difficult, rebellious adolescence, and parents who came from a very poor background, bringing a different conception of work: "there was me saying I wanted to be an artist. They just thought, "what are you talking about? You have no idea." It was like two separate worlds trying to talk to one another".

Ruth's story described how, after her injury, she sought out other ways to express herself. After building up her choreography and university teaching, she later stopped performing others' work, doing her own performance "art" instead of dance. Ruth's post-injury working life was one of experimentation and exploration. Working with digital technologies, neuroscientists, and migrants in a variety of different projects, she reflected, "rather than looking back...I'm still thinking about all these other things that I have to do". This included leaving the world of art, as Ruth explained: "I actually considered finishing, stopping being an artist, go and retrain as, I don't know, something else, social worker, teacher, something else…I was searching for something". In the end, however, she reoriented her artistic work to become more political, enabling others to have voice and be heard – the opportunity for agency and expression that had

long been so important to her. Ruth reflected, “my parents of course thought I was crazy” but added, “sometimes parents just stop asking and you stop talking”.

Settling on a new direction

The third set of narratives were those in which a child chose to pursue dance, supported by parents with no great involvement or investment in it; post-injury, the former dancer moved relatively smoothly into a new working life that felt satisfying. In these narratives, children grew up with the freedom to map their own course, enabled but unfettered by their parents. Dance was an important source of joy and a clear sense of direction. In this way, dance was a transitional object associated with a Supportive parental relationship in which they had space to explore and experiment, and from which they decided to pursue dance. In contrast to the other narratives, dance was thus not associated with feelings of connection or detachment, but a sense of choosing – with, but not because of, their parents’ support – an activity that they wanted to do. When the injury derailed these dancers, they were distressed and confused, having lost something they loved and in which they had invested much. They expressed uncertainty about the possibility of finding a viable alternative, and yet as they grew into their new, generative roles, they found unexpected fulfilment. Most of these individuals described a pull towards work that was focused on enabling others, and especially in populations they had not been able to reach as a performing dancer. In this set of narratives, the confidence these individuals gained when young seemed to carry them through the challenges of the forced transition: they had learned to make their own decisions and trust in them; they now did this again, identifying and settling into a positive new direction for themselves.

My argument that dance acts as a transitional object that represents a chosen direction builds on psychodynamic writing on attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969; Main, 1995; J. L. Petriglieri & Obodaru, 2019). The Supportive narratives conveyed the sense of a child growing

up in a parental relationship that provided a "secure base" (Bowlby, 1988) from which they felt safe to explore their environment. This sense of "felt security" (Sroufe & Waters, 1977) and the confidence that grew with it meant that these narratives described individuals who had developed the capacity to make choices that felt like their own and were less infused with others' judgment or expectation. Conveying a sense of both being "held" (Winnicott, 1953) and being independent, these narratives were shaped by the idea that a lost object, while sorely missed, can also be replaced with something else likely to be meaningful and satisfying (Berzoff, 2003)

Karen's narrative illustrates this process of settling on a new direction. Karen had co-founded and danced in a successful contemporary dance collective. Her narrative described a childhood in which she followed her passions, first gymnastics and then dance. Her parents were supportive as she explored and experimented. She explained how they were "were very much, 'Whatever you'd like to do is fine'…there wasn't really – there was never any big deal about either, ballet or gymnastics". This also applied to Karen's further education. She recounted her parents' view that, "as long as you're doing well in school and having fun, whatever you want to do is fine". Without much deliberation, she opted to study dance at university. Then, after her first year, she got "really sort of hungry for it" and realized "This is absolutely what I want to do". She felt her parents were happy for her.

After her knee injury, Karen shared how she tried to continue dancing but the pain eventually made it impossible. She described this as a difficult time in which she felt "depressed and confused and not really excited about anything". She spent time at a retreat center to "find out a bit of my identity without dance" and came to see "that there are all kinds of other things about me that I can do that I'm actually good at and that I have to offer". After taking a computing course, she got an administrative job in a medical clinic, which she found fascinating.

She explained, “It’s so unexpected and such a perfect job. I go and I work hard, and I feel like I’m doing meaningful work, and then I leave and I don’t think about it at all”. She still missed dance but not its intense, unending demands. Karen did not imagine staying in administration, though, and being in the world of science and health led her to consider nutrition as a possible new direction. She went on to train as a nutritionist and set up her own practice, initially based on referrals from the medical clinic. She reflected, “I think I've become, to be honest, like less ambitious. Like it doesn't, I don't need to be a superstar nutritionist”. Her wish now was to “just have a simple, nice life”.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study is to explore how, within individuals’ self-narratives, their working lives after a forced career transition were linked with their early parental relationships. In analyzing the narratives of 21 dancers who had suffered a career-altering injury, I identified three narrative types, each comprising a distinctive pairing of a certain approach to post-injury working life with a certain kind of early parental relationship: Immersed-Striving; Oppositional-Seeking; and Supportive-Settling. Drawing on psychodynamic and related literatures, I then theorized the mechanism underpinning the link between individuals’ early parental relationships and their post-injury working life narratives, identifying three core relational meanings: connection, agency and direction. In this section, I now discuss implications for research on forced transitions at work and narratives of working lives, and identify limitations of the present study and the research opportunities they invite.

Implications for Research on Forced Transitions at Work

This research was inspired by the literature on forced transitions and specifically how such transitions disrupt and are integrated into individuals’ self-narratives (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Wehrle et al., 2018). Research in this tradition has shown how a forced career transition

can challenge important meanings that individuals have made of their lives (Kanji & Cahusac, 2015; Kira & Klehe, 2016), and how people respond by working to construct new meanings (Ibarra & Obodaru, 2016; Zikic & Richardson, 2007). In contrast, this study highlights the importance of old meanings in this process. In examining the self-narratives of former dancers forced to stop performing, I identified the important role of relational meanings established early in life – long before the development of a career. I found that work can act as a transitional object, a powerful means through which significant childhood needs are met, such that when an individual loses the ability to do this work, they seek to re-establish these meanings in the narratives of their new working lives. What may appear to be the development of new meanings may instead be the re-establishment of certain old meanings, meanings grounded in some of the most significant relationships of a person's life. This study thus extends previous research that has noted the importance of achieving coherence and continuity following a forced transition (e.g., Habermas & Köber, 2015; Hoyer & Steyaert, 2015; McAdams, 2006b) by showing that continuity is maintained not only by engaging in similar careers or related activities, but by maintaining a core relational meaning through the tumult of a forced transition. The coherence of a person's self-narrative is achieved as they reattach a relational meaning, such as connection, to a new career path: it is this unconscious continuity that gives the narrative coherence.

A second contribution this study makes to the broader research on careers is grounded in the finding that different individuals' self-narratives are organized around different relational meanings of work. Prior research has identified a variety of important work meanings, such as work as job, career or calling (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997), work as an opportunity for prosocial behavior (Grant, 2007), and work as self-expression or self-development (G. Petriglieri et al., 2019). There has, however, been little exploration of the range of meanings of work that are tied

to important relationships. In the self-narratives of the present study, I found that the meaning of dance as work included a way of connecting to parents, a source of agency in relation to parents, and a purpose and direction supported by parents. Each of these work meanings was associated with the distinctive early relationship that individuals had with their parents in relation to dance. These meanings profoundly shaped the study participants' narratives of their careers, and how they storied their working lives after being forced to change career. While research has shown that work can mean different things for different people, the present study suggests an important foundation for these differences in early family relationships, and shows their implications for the production of a distinctive narrative that explains the impact of career disruption.

Implications for Research on Narratives of Working Lives

Research on the construction of self-narratives has highlighted the significance of parents as key influences through much of the lifespan (Fivush et al., 2005; Hesse, 2008; McLean, 2016). Less well understood, however, is the role of parents in individuals' narratives of their working lives. An important contribution of this study is demonstrating how people may internalize their relationship with their parents in ways that shape how they narrate their relationship to work and career decisions made throughout their life story. More specifically, I found that dance, as work, can become internalized as a means through which an important relational meaning – connection, agency, or direction – is sustained and thus serve as a kind of transitional object (Winnicott, 1953). When that transitional object is lost due to a career-altering injury, the individual engages in efforts to construct a new working life that is also a search to experience the relational meaning previously provided by dance. This idea of work as a transitional object contributes to research on people's narratives of their working lives by identifying an important mechanism connecting work and early parental relationships. That early narratives of career are shaped by parents is hardly surprising, since early career decisions are

often made in conversation with, or at least around, parents directly involved in the lives of their adolescent or young adult children. The more intriguing observation is the continuing influence of parental relationships on people's narratives of their working lives long into their careers. Conceptualizing work as a transitional object helps clarify that ongoing influence.

A second contribution to the study of narratives of working lives comes from connecting my finding of three forms of post-injury working life narrative to earlier research that identifies exploration and commitment as central processes of identity development (Marcia, 1966, 1993). Integrating these processes of exploration and commitment with the three narrative forms from the present study could deepen our understanding of how people enact each of these forms. There is already resonance between the three narrative forms and the two processes, with the Striving narrative involving less exploration and greater levels of commitment, the Seeking narrative involving more exploration with lower immediate levels of commitment, and the Settling narrative involving a moderate degree of exploration and greater commitment. Integrating these processes explicitly into research on the three narrative forms may both add further richness to our understanding of those forms, and, drawing on the identity status and career literature (e.g., Brown et al., 2000; Nauta & Kahn, 2007; Vondracek et al., 1995), help identify other factors related to such narratives. At the same time, the three forms of working life narrative that I have identified may provide a useful extension to the literature on identity status progression, which to date has focused primarily on career transitions in early life (Kelly et al., 2020; Kroger et al., 2010). Connecting core processes of identity development to narrative forms that describe mid-life career changes could enable new insights into transitions across a much broader range of situations than has been studied so far.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study of course has limitations, some providing opportunities for future research. First, the dancer population was chosen as an "extreme case" (Eisenhardt et al., 2016) because of the significance that work holds for these individuals, and the necessity of starting to train for this career from early childhood. Partly because of these characteristics, exploring the transferability of the study findings represents an important next step. Future research could valuably explore the narratives of other occupational groups, investigating whether the findings transfer to different workers and careers, and perhaps identifying additional kinds of narrative pairings and relational meanings.

Second, although interviewing each individual on repeated occasions enabled me to gather rich self-narratives, there are only 21 participants in the study sample. Because I was interested in exploring variation between the narratives, this meant that my sub-group sizes, especially for one group, were small. This made it hard for me to explore the influence of culture and socioeconomic status on participants' narratives, despite having quite a diverse sample. It also prevented a full investigation of the existence of two possible variants of the Supportive early parental relationship narrative and their associations with two possible variants of the Settling post-injury working life narrative. Although the data suggested that those who narrated themselves as receiving a more active kind of support when young might have felt a stronger sense of mastery in choosing and therefore settling into a new direction compared to those who narrated themselves as more passively supported, the number of participants and strength of the pattern prohibits any strong claims about these as distinct narrative forms. Further research maintaining the richness of data while including a larger number of participants would enable a variety of additional contributions.

A further limitation of this study is that it could not address questions of individual differences, such as whether individuals who are more optimistic are more likely to narrate their post-injury lives as Settling, or those with an internal locus of control more likely to produce Striving narratives. Doing this type of analysis on the present dataset was limited not only by the small number of participants, but also by the research method used, where the focus was on individuals' self-narratives and did not include measures of personality. Mixed methods research in the tradition of several narrative identity scholars (e.g., Lodi-Smith et al., 2009; McAdams et al., 2004; McLean et al., 2019; Pals, 2006) could valuably address questions about the relationship between personality or other individual differences and individuals' working life narratives after a forced career transition.

In addition to these directions for research, the present study invites several others. Future scholarship could, for example, usefully contribute to the literature on forced transitions by exploring other kinds of work-related transitions and investigating the role of early parental relationships on how these transitions are experienced and managed. Such research could include an examination of the different roles that each parent plays in an individual's early life narrative. In this study, participants generally spoke about both parents when sharing an Oppositional or a Supportive narrative while in the Immersed narrative they usually focused on one highly involved parent, with the other cast as uninvolved or absent. This emergent pattern could be interpreted in different ways, but is valuable in raising questions about the differential roles played by different caregivers in an individual's narrative and how these might shape future work-related transitions. A further direction for future research would be to examine the impact of other close relationships, such as siblings or partners, on different work transitions. Future studies could also contribute to self-narrative scholarship, particularly on narratives of working

life, which currently constitutes a relatively small body of work within the self-narrative literature. Research in this vein could explore how individuals narrate a variety of important events in their working lives, and unpack the roles played by different significant others (family, friends, colleagues, partners) in these narratives.

Concluding Thoughts

Individuals' early parental relationships and their working lives play profoundly important roles in their self-narratives. Both are deeply invested with meaning and shape the identities that people construct for themselves. In this study, I have shown that early parental relationships are important elements in individuals' narratives of forced career transitions, and that the specific character of those relationships is foundational to the continuity people seek as they re-establish a coherent self-narrative after a significant career disruption.

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TABLE 1:
STUDY PARTICIPANTS

	Participant	Age category (at first interview)	Type of Dancer	Narrated Early Relationship with Parent and Dance	Narrated Relationship to Post-Injury Work	New Work
1	Yvonne	35-40	Contemporary	Immersed	Striving	Founder and director of dance company
2	Sara	35-40	Ballet	Immersed	Striving	CEO of dance company
3	Cathy	45-50	Contemporary	Immersed	Striving	Corporate director; dance campaigner and trainer
4	Anna	25-30	Contemporary	Immersed	Striving	Founder and director of children's ballet school
5	Marlene	30-35	Ballet	Immersed	Striving	Health and exercise specialist
6	Soraya	30-35	Acro	Immersed	Striving	Web designer
7	Rana	40-45	Character	Immersed	Striving	Dance teacher and examiner
8	Tess	35-40	Ballet	Immersed	Striving	Founder and director of children's ballet school
9	Myra	25-30	Contemporary	Oppositional	Seeking	Choreographer; performance artist
10	Ruth	35-40	Contemporary	Oppositional	Seeking	Performance artist, lecturer, and dance teacher
11	Dana	35-40	Contemporary	Oppositional	Seeking	Singer and performance artist; speech therapist
12	Susanna	50-55	Contemporary	Oppositional	Seeking	Dance campaigner, facilitator, lecturer, author
13	Steve	30-35	Contemporary	Supportive	Settling	Elementary school teacher
14	Karen	25-30	Contemporary	Supportive	Settling	Nutritionist
15	Amanda	20-25	Contemporary	Supportive	Settling	University lecturer, PhD student
16	Denise	55-60	Contemporary	Supportive	Settling	Founder and director of dance company
17	Graham	35-40	Contemporary	Supportive	Settling	Physiotherapist
18	Raya	30-35	Ballet	Supportive	Settling	Physiotherapist
19	Jolene	25-30	Contemporary	Supportive	Settling	Pilates teacher, arts administrator
20	Alice	35-40	Ballet	Supportive	Settling	Doula, arts administrator
21	Trisha	20-25	Contemporary	Supportive	Settling	High school teacher

TABLE 2:
ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTATIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS' EARLY PASSION AND COMMITMENT TO DANCE

Narrative Form	Early Passion and Commitment to Dance
Immersed-Striving	Ballet was my passion at that point…I was obsessed about getting to ballet class (Yvonne). I remember the first class, I was completely into it. Within a week, there was no doubt that I had found something that I was incredibly interested in…My grandfather actually built me a barre in my room and I would practice pretty much every day after school, even if I didn't have dance class. I started with two days a week, and within about – I'd say within about a month, I was up to three or four days a week (Sara). At school, normal friends wouldn't particularly understand why I'd dash out of school and get on the bus and go straight to ballet, rather than go home or go out with my mates (Anna) I decided that I wanted to be on the stage. From a pretty early age, I was like "this is what I need to do" (Soraya)
Oppositional-Seeking	I knew so deeply that this is what I should do and this is what I want to do (Myra) It was everything I wanted, really. It was brilliant – I loved it" (Ruth) It's not just that you want to do it. You *have* to do this (Dana) It was my life. It was totally my – just the music, the creativity, finding ways performing, dancing. Absolutely. It's everything I ever wanted to do from as early as I can remember. Definitely from the age of six (Susanna)
Suppportive-Settling	I apparently said to my mother when I was three that I wanted to start dancing. I nagged for about six months, so I started dancing at three-and-a-half…. I was completely committed from day one… I wouldn't call myself precocious, but I was very clear about what I wanted (Denise) I auditioned for it, and I got in, and then I started understanding how dance was, and I really, really loved it. (Graham) I knew from the very, very beginning that I know myself that I have to dance (Raya) As far back as I can remember I had always wanted to be a dancer… I knew. I loved it…If I'd miss classes, I'd get upset…My other friends would be doing things or sleep-over parties, and I'd have to leave really early in the morning so that I would still make it to my ballet class. I remember that, as well. I never felt jaded or upset that I was missing out on other things, because I still had my – I was doing what I wanted to do (Alice).

TABLE 3:
ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTATIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS' POST-INJURY DISTRESS

Narrative Form	Post-Injury Distress
Immersed-Striving	The idea of someone else dancing that role, having only done it – having it created and done it the one time. I just so needed to do that again. I felt like I had lost everything (Sara)
	It's something that you actually can't let go of, that you're inextricably linked to. You're not disassociated from it or dispassionate about it (Cathy)
	I knew that I had given every single thing that I had…I knew in my heart that I had done everything possible, that I had still stuck it out right until the end, and I had still danced the best I could under the circumstances (Marlene)
	I can now talk about and smile about it, because if not I'd just probably get very depressed (Rana).
Oppositional-Seeking	I had a feeling that it wasn't so bad, that it [the injury] would just go away, and then I kind of had the feeling that "What if it doesn't?" Like, I was so terrified, like, really terrified. Like, "What if it doesn't?" (Myra)
	I was just like, "Why is my body doing this to me?" I mean, I know I'm an old dancer and have to understand that, but still… I was quite angry and quite frustrated, and it's quite an emotional reaction. And I was quite ashamed after it because the poor physiotherapist was just looking at me going, "Calm down." (Ruth)
	One day I woke up with the feeling "if this is going to be the rest of my life, if this is going to be how it feels, then I don't want to live anymore" (Dana, dancer)
	I thought there must be a way around it. But it got to a point after two-and-a-half years of struggling where I couldn't (Susanna)
Suppportive-Settling	It was, yes, the reason that I had to end, you know, a career that I loved, and then it was really… like my whole world (Karen)
	He [the surgeon] was saying "maybe you need to think about a different career." He was like…"you've got loads of options open to you." But for me, I'd put my eggs in the dance basket (Amanda)
	I think being not able to dance caused my depression (Graham)
	I have a really hard time to see shows. And it's not that I don't support the community or I don't want to see my friends dancing, it's just really hard not to be dancing anymore…. I miss that. I love performing. I love dancing (Alice).

TABLE 4:
ELEMENTS OF THE NARRATIVE THEMES

Immersed-Striving 8 participants (38%)	***Immersed***	***Striving***
	Parents intimately involved in child's dancing	Concentrated dedication to new work
	Dance given central place in the parental relationship	Conveyed energy and ambition
	Parents intently support child's participation in dance	Feeling the pressure
	Dance as a joint project between parent and child	Sense of relentlessness
	Love often expressed through dance	Making sacrifices for career
Oppositional-Seeking 4 participants (19%)	***Oppositional***	***Seeking***
	Parents disapprove of child's dancing	Ongoing efforts to find new path
	Parents discourage or prevent child from dancing	Uncertainty about options
	Parents do not see dance as viable career path	Making bricolage of multiple elements
	Child has very different values from parents	Accepting opportunities and experimenting
	Child keen to leave home as soon as possible	Seeking creative self-expression and meaning
Supportive-Settling 9 participants (43%)	***Supportive***	***Settling***
	Parents support child's dancing	Quickly finding a new direction
	Parents have limited involvement in child's dancing	Immersing in new work
	Parents neither encourage nor discourage dance as a career	Choosing generative paths
	Some parents give more active support	Finding fulfilment
	Some children more independent, do not seek support	Balancing work and non-work

TABLE 5: ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTATIONS FOR EARLY PARENTAL RELATIONSHIP TO DANCE AND POST-INJURY RELATIONSHIP TO WORK

Participant	Early Parental Relationship to Dance	Post-injury Relationship to Work
	Immersed	**Striving**
Yvonne	My mother was a dancer and she was my dance teacher at just a local school. My godmother also was my teacher. They danced together as children and then they formed this school. That's how I started About 10 years ago I asked my mother why I went to stage school, because it just happened. She said to me, "oh, because you were talented and you were different from the other dancers. That's why we took you to audition." My father wasn't really around	It's constant, you know, I'll finish one thing and then OK, I've got to get the Arts Council application in now for the next one and it goes on and on and on The shifts and the adapting and the overcoming and getting on to the next thing is just that's, I guess that's part of me, part of how I've got through life Striving to do something, I think it's different with the arts or whatever, I don't know, it may be the same in sport, I don't know but yes, you're constantly trying to achieve something
Sara	With my father, the way that we've identified – or he related to me – was through my achievements and my successes I'd say that, in a way, yes, I'm an overachiever and that has a lot to do with how my relationship developed with my parents and whatnot. But I think the support when you're young, and going through and off to those schools, and what happens in that environment, really determines how one is going to cope and survive within the professional environment.	I wanted to impress him [the Artistic Director] – it's almost like Jim became my father – and I wanted to show that I could do all this, that I was superwoman I knew that it was going to be three years of just, my life was going to be just [Dance Company]. And it's weird because it feels in many ways that I'm kind of, you know, for the past three years I've been back in the place where I was [a Principal Dancer]. It's weird because I see that, you know, when I was back dancing and [injured] and knew that that was not sustainable and I, you know, it's like I learnt the lesson from that, but oddly enough I find myself back in a very similar situation [in my new career] where I know that it's probably my health that is in jeopardy right now. I've lost that spirituality, I think. And the work, the work that comes as a replacement, the work, like driving myself forward,
Anna	My mum always wanted to be a dancer… but her parents didn't see it as a proper vocation I got into quite a few schools. But then my mum couldn't afford for me to go… I was holding it together for my mom back then, because she felt so awful that she couldn't help me…I think at the time I was more worried that she was so disappointed that I didn't internalize it myself.	I think that anything is possible if you want it. Where it's down to you, you've got to put the work in, it's only you can make things happen, you can't wait around and let things fall in your lap, but then equally be ready just to jump on an opportunity if it does pass you by. I've had to let go of – it's quite interesting, like certain things that I thought I really wanted… We haven't been away on a family holiday ever, we're going away this August for a week, it's our first ever family holiday and that's just been a sacrifice that we've had to do
Soraya	My mother is also an artist as well, so it's very much in my family There's some deeper stuff, deeper stuff around performing, and the pressure that I've put myself under to be very good and to keep momentum, and sort of in a way I identified some links to my mother, which was quite interesting, because she's an artist. She feels like she's failed, and she, I think, has in some kind of way almost put a lot of pressure on me to be this amazing performer… [when I pulled out of a performance due to injury] I kept hearing her voice going, "What do you mean? It's a missed opportunity. You're sabotaging your life"	I just get really absorbed. I'm just absolutely, like, I'm just that typical computer geek that hours will go by and I won't realize, and I think, "Oh my God, I have to get up and walk around, I have to get off the computer. I have to—" I'm pretty good at making myself take breaks, but sometimes I just get so absorbed. It's constant problem-solving, which is interesting, so. And learning, just constant learning, there's just like a whole world of technology out there. It's like you learn one thing and you just, it's opened this whole Pandora's Box, really. So it's pretty overwhelming I had about two or three burnouts over the last two years which has kind of led me to where I am at the moment.

	Oppositional	Seeking
Myra	They [my parents] tried every possibility they could find to stop me from doing it. They were just, like, really disapproving…They had, like, ways to kind of make you feel guilty for not doing the way they want you to be. They tried to stop me or, like, make me realize that this is a stupid idea…since I was the smart one – like, theory was my thing, and it's like, "Yeah, but why should you throw away that to go into the arts? That's silly". I think my dad was a bit more like, "This is ridiculous". Because I had, like, huge fights with him. And I think my mom agreed, but she kind of more had a sense that I would still do it even though they disapproved. I think she more sensed that this is not something they can make me change my mind about.	There was something – something really missing. Like, something really huge from me missing I can't say that I would love to do *this job* because … there's a few of them that I find really appealing and some that I think would be interesting, and there's probably some I even don't know exist I feel like I'm in the same spot and I'm not really getting anywhere, I need to go from there somehow. But yet at the same time it's like "OK, I either need to go there or I need to go there", but then I'm not quite sure. I feel like I really, I need to land somewhere a bit and just, yes, just land, I think. If I could be happy, you know, go off and do like a so-called proper job, in a way that would be so easy. I could just go, I could get paid, I could, you know, live properly and all of those things, but then, you know, I would go mad, like I would really not know what to do with myself.
Ruth	I remember being very upset because my parents wouldn't let me go because they said I was too young. I couldn't just move out. I had this dream that this was what I wanted to do. All of a sudden it felt like someone had taken it away from me, and there was no other door open. I don't think my parents understood… They were from a generation in Southern Europe, in a background where if you get a proper job in a bank, you're lucky. That's what you should aspire to. Then there was me saying I wanted to be an artist. They just thought, "what are you talking about? You have no idea." It was like two separate worlds trying to talk to one another.	I've always been really interested in all aspects of dance, from writing about it, to researching it, to making work, to performing in work. And for a long time, I thought I had to pick one. And then eventually I just decided, "I don't have to, I'll just hop between all of them." I considered it [doing completely different work] seriously to the point that I looked at some university courses, but to be honest I think I was confused. I went into many different directions. I don't even know if I'll be an artist in five years' time but I don't actually, I'm not attached to it, I kind of just, because I know what will be will – if I shift, it will be because it makes sense to me and to the world. And so, and actually I think sometimes when people do get attached to a particular identity or something, that's when it starts becoming problematic because things change around you
Susanna	I was brought up in a culture of, "You are not anything. You are not anyone, you will never this, you will never that". I was constantly told that [by] my mother particularly. I was never good enough. She [my mother] used to call me the drone. I was never lazy. I think she did it because she wanted to motivate me.	From there I started to build up a little portfolio of work. What did I do? Anything really Didn't know what to do, thinking, "oh gosh, what am I going to do?" Then serendipity, suddenly [a call] came out of the blue [I said to myself] well OK, by the grace of god I've got to work another 14 years, so what am I going to do? How am I really going to make every second count? How am I going to live my life… in a way that has the same vibrancy and meaning that I found after my accident? I just feel like there's something so much more I want to do but I don't know, I don't know where or how to do it

	Supportive	Settling
Steve	My parents thought it was great. I've always had the support from my parents through all of my dance career, from day one until now. They were quite happy. … they came and watched the performances at the school. They came and supported me in every way they could, especially when I went off to college as well. He [my dad] paid and helped me out financially. They were just happy that I found something that I liked, to be honest, because I didn't really like anything else	Teaching is pretty much my next passion, in terms of dance. Teaching dance in schools, and communities, and stuff like that. That would satisfy me for quite a long time to come I moved straight on to the teaching qualification. I thought I'm on a roll, I may as well do it, so I did it I'm teaching music and drama and I'm absolutely loving it, absolutely loving it. Yes, it's been a bit of a rollercoaster. I'm finding all these things that I really enjoy through education that's not necessarily dance and I feel that I can still put that experience that I've had from dance and now the experience I've got as a teaching assistant, and put it all in one
Amanda	My parents made us do something every night of the week, because we were quite hyperactive children, and they needed to tire us out. …We were busy children. It was good because our parents they didn't – if we didn't want to go, we didn't have to go. It came from us, we want[ed] to go and do it. Mum had said, "if you want to do it, pay for it yourself." She didn't want to waste her money on something that was a fad, or something like that, that she didn't know we wanted to stick with. My dad's pretty easygoing in terms of how things pan out.	Perhaps possibly teaching and lecturing would be a better kind of career path for me to follow, maybe. And then I got the job and I thought, "Yeah, it's really good." And now I've been doing it for a year, and I really enjoy it. I really enjoyed it [associate lecturer job] and that turned into a full-time job then in 2018, and then that supported me then to be able to get more grants from the Arts Council I'd love to be kind of doing what I'm doing now but with sort of more, more freedom I think
Graham	Whatever I wanted to do, they [my parents] said, "Here's the money. Go do it." They were fine with it [doing dance classes until late in the evening every day after school]. They just hated picking me up at nighttime. I got into a show on the cruise ship, my first one. And my dad is like, "Yes, that's my son!" finally.	I've been in physio clinics all the time [with the injury], and I think, "Hey, this looks pretty cool. I should check this out." So I started relearning what I learned in high school so I could go into university and take these courses…Even stuff that was hard that I needed the tutor for, I still stuck at it and did it. Because this is what I wanted now. Some of these physios made a massive difference in my life, and I think that's what held me to do this profession. I developed a specialty, so therefore anyone with leg, back, mobility problems, I could fix it within like three, two or three visits.
Trisha	They supported it…. I remember my mom being a bit like, "are you spending too much dancing and not doing too much schoolwork?" – but then, I was quite clearly doing OK with my schoolwork.	Someone said to me that there's probably quite a few like people that can teach dance well but maybe there aren't so many maths teachers. So someone made me think that maybe I should go and do that, which is what I've done… So I trained as a math teacher. I found the training really difficult, but I've done it for a couple of years now and I really do enjoy it a lot I kind of miss performing, but in a small way I get to do that every day. Essentially, I try and work with young people so that maths at least isn't painful for them…I'm happy if I end up doing it forever, but I don't feel any restriction on now I've done this I can't do anything else