

CHAPTER 5

THE PARTICIPANTS' STORIES RE-STORIED

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers a reconstruction of each of the participants' emotional experiences regarding their incestuous behaviour in the form of prominent themes. These reconstructions are based on the transcribed interviews between the participants and the researcher (see appendices B and C). It must be emphasised that the themes presented in this chapter, as delineated by the researcher, reflect the researcher's construction of the participants' emotional experiences regarding their incestuous behaviour. Although the researcher attempted to remain "objective" to the participants' emotional experiences, the influence of the researcher's biases and frame of reference cannot be excluded from what she observed. As such there could be many more thematic descriptions offered through another lens other than that of the researcher. Therefore, the identified themes in each reconstruction are not presented as the 'ultimate truths'.

This chapter will begin with the reconstruction of the first participant's story followed by the reconstruction of the second participant's story. Each reconstruction will start with an explanation of how the respective participant came to be named, followed by a description of the setting in which the

interviews were conducted. A short, factual description of the respective participant's background will follow. Emotional experiences regarding the participant's incestuous behaviour will then be discussed in terms of prominent themes. Where appropriate, statements will be illustrated by excerpts from the interviews. A discussion of the respective participant's reflections on the interviews will follow. The chapter will conclude with the researcher's reflections on the interviews.

2. DAVID1'S STORY RE-STORIED

Participant:	David1
Age at time of interviews:	42 years old
Age when incestuous behaviour began:	40 years old
Marital status:	Divorced
Relationship with child involved in incest:	Foster father
Gender of child involved in incest:	Female
Age of child at time of incest:	12 years old
Number of interviews:	Two, each approximately two hours long
Place of interviews:	Unisa psychotherapy clinic

2.1 Choosing a name

Since the information shared by the participant is of a very sensitive nature, the participant was invited to choose a pseudonym so as to remain anonymous. The researcher also felt that it was important for the participant to be able to choose a suitable alternate identity for himself, since it was his story that was being given a voice.

At the completion of the second interview, the researcher reminded the participant that he had the option of choosing a pseudonym for himself. The participant informed the researcher that he would like her to use the name of a person in the Holy Bible called David.

The participant explained that he chose this name, because he can strongly relate to David in the Bible. He then explained that according to the Holy Bible, David was a good man, a man after God's heart. According to the participant, he used to see himself as a good man before he behaved incestuously. The participant explained furthermore that just like David, who had committed murder and adultery, he committed sin by behaving incestuously. However, the participant feels that just like David, God has forgiven him his sins, that is his incestuous behaviour. According to him, the fact that God could forgive David for committing murder and adultery tells him that God will also forgive him for his incestuous behaviour.

The participant explained that although he sometimes still feels that he is a bad person, he is starting to forgive himself for his incestuous behaviour in the light

of God forgiving him for his sins. It also helps him to know that although many people say horrible things about him, God still loves him and that he is not a bad person as such.

Since both participants chose to use the name David, referring to a specific person in the Bible, this participant will be referred to as David1. The researcher did not ask the participant to choose another pseudonym, since she regarded the similarity of the participants' choices of pseudonyms as significant to their emotional experiences. This significance will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

2.2 Background of David1

David1 is a 42 years old, white, South-African male. According to David1 he is a Christian and is the eldest of three children. At the age of nine years, another boy at his school allegedly touched his private parts and masturbated in front of him. He also reported that at the age of 12 years, his cousin masturbated in front of him, touched his private parts, forced David1 to kiss him and also tried to sodomise him. David1 claims that although he knew that these incidents took place, he only became aware of the traumatic impact thereof on his functioning during his recent therapy sessions.

David1 met his ex-wife when she was only 13 years old. They married when he was 29 years old and his ex-wife was 19 years old. Two daughters were born from the marriage. His ex-wife, on the other hand, initially was an only child. Her parents later on fostered a child.

Both David1 and his wife became involved as volunteers at an orphanage during 2002, where they met Anna (pseudonym). Anna was 12 years old at that time and had been left at the orphanage by her biological mother. Anna originally stayed with her maternal grandmother before she went to the orphanage. However, her grandmother could not look after her anymore. Anna's biological mother, who was in and out of numerous relationships, unemployed and disappeared for long periods of times, did not want to take Anna and left her at the orphanage. According to Anna and her biological mother, Anna's biological father sexually abused her when she was about four years old. However, the social worker at the orphanage told David1 and his wife that these accusations were not true.

David1 and his wife then took Anna into their home for a number of weekends. After Anna's mother confirmed that she did not want to take Anna back, Anna was placed with David1 and his wife, after which her foster placement with them was finalised.

David1 described his marital relationship as very stable in the beginning, but admitted to the researcher that they started experiencing distance in their relationship when he was about 40 years old. David1 felt that his youth was slipping away and that the distance between him and his wife had increased when his wife started working long hours after opening her own business. According to David1, he then became more responsible for the children, as the mother was occupied by her work till 21:00 hours.

After being placed with the David1 and his wife, Anna accepted David1 as her father and David1's wife as her mother. Right from the beginning of the placement, Anna experienced more comfort in her relationship with David1 than with his wife. Anna and David1 spent a lot of time together. According to David1, Anna idolised him and it seems as if Anna became a substitute for David1's wife.

After living with the foster family for 5 months, Anna allegedly started exhibiting inappropriate and sexual behaviour in front of David1. According to David1, he initially resisted Anna's attempts to involve him in sexual behaviour. However, after a while, David1 started behaving incestuously towards Anna. According to David1, his incestuous behaviour included kissing her and touching her breasts and vagina. According to David1, this continued for approximately eight months.

One night, David1's wife became aware of inappropriate behaviour between David1 and Anna. After she confronted David1 the next morning, he admitted that he had behaved indecently towards Anna. David1 contacted the social worker that was involved in Anna's foster placement and he shared the circumstances and happenings with her. The social worker then referred the family to Dr. X (pseudonym) for therapy. A week after the abuse was reported, David1's wife together with Anna and the family's own children, moved out of the family home and moved in with the maternal grandparents. Anna told Dr. X that she did not want to lay a charge against David1 and asked to visit David1 under supervision. David1 and his family continued with therapy at Dr. X.

According to David1, his wife then became romantically involved with someone else. David1 reported that he became extremely depressed and lost 14 kilograms in two weeks. He was then admitted to hospital and received sleep therapy for a week. Seven months later, David1's wife informed him that she was going to divorce him. According to David1, he lost all hope and attempted to commit suicide by taking an overdose of prescribed tranquillisers.

According to David1, his wife also informed Anna's biological mother that she no longer wanted Anna to stay with her. During a visit with her biological mother Anna disclosed David1's incestuous behaviour to her biological mother. Anna's mother reported this to the Child Protection Unit and David1 was arrested. Both David1's biological daughters were assessed to confirm that he never sexually abused them. According to David1, these children are very close to him and would even prefer to be placed in his custody.

After being in court five times, David1 was finally sentenced. According to David1, he accepted responsibility for his wrong doings and experienced intense remorse for what he did to Anna. He pleaded guilty to the charge of indecent assault and received a sentence of five years house arrest and community service.

2.3 Research setting

David1 was interviewed twice, both times in a therapy room at the Unisa psychotherapy clinic. This setting allowed adequate privacy and the researcher felt that the privacy contributed to David1 feeling safe, thus allowing him to

discuss his story openly and without reservation. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes to two hours. The conversations focused on his story and emotional experiences regarding his incestuous behaviour as well as any related issues.

David1 welcomed the opportunity to tell his story to the researcher. He felt that he had an important story to tell, a story that he has not been “allowed” to tell, since he was not the “victim” of the incestuous behaviour.

It is important to note that both interviews took place in a relatively short period before David1’s trial and sentencing. David1 felt extremely anxious about the upcoming trial, which inevitably played an important part in how David1 punctuated and told his story. The researcher also attended David1’s trial hearing and sentencing after the second interview to gain an even deeper understanding of David1’s story.

2.4 Prominent themes that emerged from David1’s story

The researcher identified the following prominent themes from David1’s story. These themes may not necessarily be mutually exclusive and may therefore overlap.

2.4.1 A sense of self-worth

Gaining a sense of self-worth seems to be David1’s most prominent emotional experience regarding his incestuous behaviour.

David1 felt that “[he] has always had a complex about the way [he] look[s]” and that “[he] has never had self confidence when it came to girls”. At the age of 40, David1 felt that “[his] youth was slipping away from [him]” and he felt insecure about himself. At this stage, David1 and his wife experienced distance in their marital relationship that increased when his wife started working long hours after opening her own business. At this stage David1 and Anna spent a lot of time together and “Anna latched on to [him] and [he] became everything to her”.

Anna “idolised” David1 and he enjoyed her attention and the favours that she did for him. It seems as though he experienced a sense of self-worth as her behaviour made him feel “special” and “filled a gap in [his] life”. He recalled:

My wife would never get up in the morning and make me a cup of coffee. It was always me doing that. Now, there was somebody else taking care of me. Somebody else, who showed me that I was special. Somebody that idolised me. Somebody that I really meant the world to. Nobody has ever treated me the way Anna treated me. Nobody has ever loved me, the way she loved me. Nobody has ever taken care of me, the way she took care of me ... not even my mother.

Anna then became very affectionate towards David1 and “she would always insist on lying on [his] lap while watching TV”. She was

always excited to see me. When I came home from work, she would always come running out the door, screaming, being happy to see me.

David1 recalled that he sometimes experienced Anna's affection towards him as inappropriate as she

was always hugging me ... but not like a daughter would hug her father. She used to tell me that she loves me more than a father.

However, it seems as if David1 allowed this inappropriate behaviour because, Anna's loving, caring and nurturing behaviour towards him appears to have made him feel special, appreciated, loved and contributed to his a sense of self-worth. He recalled:

No one ever treated me like that. You know, when I was building her bedroom, I made a log room upstairs and I got on the ladder. I just finished the bedroom and I was about to start with the staircase and I got on the ladder and the ladder collapsed and I fell from the ceiling, head first into the passage and I ... I shattered this whole joint here ... You know, everyday she would ... she would ... she would get all the stuff right. She'd unbandage it, she would clean it all up, she would ... my fingers started curling-up, and because I wasn't ... I couldn't use the muscles yet. She

would massage my fingers and when ... after the cast came off, it was hard and I had terrible scars. She would massage it with oil. She ... my wife never ever did that for me. Anna was like a ... like a little nurse around me.

Anna's inappropriate behaviour towards David¹ then escalated as she

pulled her pants down in front of me. She said: "you wanna see" and she lay on the bed. It wasn't two days later, we were on our way to the garage, but we were going on a holiday and she went with me to put diesel in at the garage and sat she in front. She had shorts on and she said: "do you wanna see?" and she pulled her pants down again. And this time I ... I didn't know hey, because it actually made me feel good. We were in the Jacuzzi one day and we were alone and she just ... under the water she took her costume off and she just started doing summersaults with her legs open and ... I saw everything.

David¹'s sense of self-worth seems to have increased furthermore as he felt "flatter[ed]" by Anna's inappropriate behaviour, which in turn made it "extremely difficult for [him] to refuse her". He recalled:

It got to the stage where one day she said to me: "would you do it to me?" And I said: "no" and she said: "why not?" And I said: "because I can't". I said to her: "why do you want to?" and she

said: "I want to know what it feels like and I love you more than a father". And that was flattering to me. You know, this 13-year-old girl now who sees me in another way. That's the way I saw it you know. All of that was sick and it wasn't right and I knew it. But it made me feel good about myself ... it made me feel like, wow, I'm forty years old. Here is this beautiful little girl and she's prepared to show me her body.

David1 then started behaving incestuously towards Anna and he appears to have experienced an even deeper sense of self-worth since his behaviour made him feel even "better about [him]self, even more "special" and since his behaviour

gave me some form of acknowledgement. Being with Anna just made me feel better about myself and that was the cherry on top. Because, I wasn't just with any ugly old woman of my age or older than me. I was with a beautiful, young girl, almost in the prime of her life.

In sum, it seems as though David1 experienced a low sense of self-worth from a very young age. This appears to have escalated when he experienced increased distance between himself and his wife. At the same time, Anna became very affectionate towards David1. It seems as though her attention, love, care and nurturance towards him made him feel special, appreciated and loved, which contributed to his sense of self-worth. Anna then started behaving

inappropriately towards David1 and this appears to have made him feel flattered and even more special. David1 then began behaving incestuously towards Anna. His incestuous behaviour, which seems to have made him feel even more special gave him a sense of acknowledgement that resulted in an even deeper sense of self-worth.

2.4.2 Ambivalence

Even though David1 seems to have experienced a sense of self-worth, he also seems to have experienced a great amount of ambivalence regarding his incestuous behaviour.

It appears as though David1 started feeling ambivalent when Anna's breasts were developing and "[she] would wear pyjamas where you could see through the sides". It seems as if David1 then experienced ambivalent feelings between being "turn[ed] on" and feeling "nervous" and "guilty about being turned on".

When Anna exposed herself to David1, he seems to have felt torn between liking her behaviour because it "made [him] feel good and feeling "terribly guilty" about liking it. He also felt "*tempted to have sex with her, but felt terrible about wanting it*". He reported:

It was extremely difficult for me to refuse her! And I said to her: "why do you want to?" and she said: "I want to know what it feels like and I love you more than a father". And that was flattering to

me. You know, this 13-year-old girl now who sees me in another way. That's the way I saw it you know. All of that was sick and it wasn't right and I knew it. But it made me feel good about myself.

When David¹ started behaving incestuously towards Anna, he also felt ambivalent about having “this urge to do it” but “feeling guilty” about doing it. According to David¹, his incestuous behaviour continued for approximately eight months during which he seems to have experienced an intense internal struggle between opposing feelings. He felt as if he

couldn't live with myself anymore. I couldn't. I couldn't stand the fighting ... fighting this urge to make love to her and things like that.

In sum, it seems as though David¹'s feelings of ambivalence included feeling torn between varieties of opposing feelings. On the one hand, David¹ liked Anna's inappropriate behaviour as it turned him on sexually and it made him feel good about himself. On the other hand, he felt guilty about liking her behaviour and wanting to have sex with her. David¹ also appears to have felt ambivalent regarding his incestuous behaviour because he experienced a physical urge to behave incestuously towards Anna, but he also felt guilty about his behaviour.

2.4.3 Guilt

As evinced in the above theme, David1 experienced strong feelings of guilt regarding his incestuous behaviour.

David1 started experiencing feelings of guilt when Anna started behaving inappropriately towards him. He recalled:

She pulled her pants down in front of me. She said: "you wanna see" and she lay on the bed. And I told her to put her pants back on and I ... I got all flustered. I felt guilty, because she's too young. And I had this picture flashing in my mind.

Anna exposing herself to him sexually excited David1 and he felt guilty about being sexually excited. He recalled:

She was not shy at all. And she did things to show me more, like the naked summersaults in the water. It really turned me on, but on the other hand, I felt so guilty about being turned on.

It seems as though, when David1 started behaving incestuously towards Anna, his feelings of guilt increased which lead to "[his] wife, picking up something was wrong". David1 reported that his wife sensed that something was troubling him,

because I couldn't deal with what was happening. I couldn't deal with the guilt.

Whenever David¹ involved Anna in incestuous behaviour, “[he] didn’t see her as a child in [his] mind”. He felt that when she was alone with him, “she would become like this grown up person”. However, afterwards, David¹ would realise that Anna was still a child and he would experience a tremendous amount of guilt regarding his behaviour. He recalled:

When Anna was alone with me, she changed completely. The funny thing is, something would happen between us, and the rest of the family was at home, and then she would go and play with the kids outside and she would play dolls and she would be this little girl, and all of a sudden it would hit me, that she is not a woman. And it would go backwards and forwards. And then I would feel this tremendous guilt and ... because I'm seeing this little girl and I just looked at her and ... and touched her and there's this little girl playing there, and then I think, gee wiz, this is never going to happen again.

David¹ also seems to have felt guilty towards God, because of his incestuous behaviour. “[He] prayed to God” and asked God to help him to stop his behaviour. He also chose to use the name David as a pseudonym, since David from the Bible had sinned in the eyes of God. David¹ also feels that he has sinned in the eyes of God, which contributed his feelings of guilt.

After David1's wife became aware of his incestuous behaviour, David1 reported his incestuous behaviour to the welfare and he started seeing a therapist. It seems as though he then became more aware of the impact that his incestuous behaviour might have on Anna, which contributed to his feelings of guilt regarding his behaviour. He reported:

Dr. X said that if Anna doesn't get help, she will probably end up even more promiscuous and she will probably become a prostitute or whatever. And that is her concern, and it is my concern too, because I do love Anna. She's a wonderful person and I feel guilty for what I have done to her.

In sum, it seems as though David1 initially experienced feelings of guilt because he became sexually excited when Anna exposed herself to him. When he involved Anna in incestuous behaviour, his feelings of guilt seem to have increased and he also seems to have felt guilty towards God. During his therapy sessions, David1 became more aware of the impact that his behaviour might have had on Anna, which furthermore increased his feelings of guilt regarding his incestuous behaviour.

2.4.4 Powerlessness

Powerlessness also seems to be one of David1's prominent emotional experiences regarding his incestuous behaviour.

Even though David1 experienced a large amount of ambivalence and guilt regarding his behaviour, he felt that he had no control over his behaviour. He recalled:

If I had control, I would never have done it. I wouldn't have allowed it to happen.

It also seems as if David1 felt powerless regarding his behaviour as he would “tr[y] to stop it, but [he] couldn't”. He felt incapable of stopping his incestuous behaviour even though he felt that he

love my wife dearly. I mean, it really was not as if I didn't love my wife. I really ... for thirteen years I was really crazy in love with my wife. But I couldn't stop this thing. It was like I was powerless.

After behaving incestuously towards Anna, David1 would feel terribly guilty and he would

sit down with her ... with Anna and I will say: “Anna, this is wrong, it has to stop” and then she would sort of put her head down and she'd feel ashamed and I'd feel ashamed. We would say it has to stop, but it never did. It just never did. I just couldn't stop it.

David1 also felt that he was “play[ing] a double role” in Anna's life. He reported:

Sometimes, I was a father to her and sometimes I was not a father to her.

David1 “liked the [father] role”, but “[he] hated the [incestuous] role”. However, he felt powerless as he felt that he “had no control over the [incestuous] role”.

Feeling helpless and incapable of stopping his behaviour, David1 turned to God for help. One day he prayed to God and said:

God, this has got to stop, and I can't stop it. It's just not in me. I've tried everything. You've got to bring this thing out into the open and whatever consequences...

In sum, David1 felt as if he had no control over his incestuous behaviour. He experienced powerlessness and even though he wanted to stop his behaviour he felt incapable of doing so.

2.4.5 Self-hatred

Self-hatred seems to be another prominent emotion that David1 experienced.

Before David1 behaved incestuously towards Anna, “[he] used to think that [he] [was] a nice person”. But when he involved Anna in incestuous behaviour, “[he] saw that [he] was not a good person” and “[he] lost faith in [him]self”.

After David1 stopped his incestuous behaviour, “[he] still saw [him]self as this very bad person and that [he] will be like that till the day [he] die[s] and that people would see [him] that way till the day [he] die[s]”. He started to “hate [him]self” for what he has done. David1

couldn't eat. I lost 14 kgs in two weeks. I was skin and bone. I hated myself and I was scared and just... just everything.

After David1 was arrested for his incestuous behaviour, his advocate told him “that if [he] hadn't confessed to the welfare and to Dr. X, he could have won th[e] case for [David1]”. However, David1 felt that by pleading not guilty, he would have hated himself even more. He reported:

I wouldn't want it that way. I would never have pleaded not guilty if I had done it. I have to take responsibility for what I have done. Otherwise I would just hate myself even more.

It seems as if David1 hated himself because “[he] tried to save [Anna] from further abuse” when he decided to foster her. Anna was allegedly sexually abused by her biological father “and then [David1] did the very thing that [he] tried to save her from”.

Since David1 stopped his incestuous behaviour, “[he] battle[s] to forgive [him]self”. He reported:

For a long time I haven't been able to ... now I'm starting to forgive myself, but it has taken me a long time.

However, he chose to use the name David as pseudonym, because he felt that just like David in the Bible, God has forgiven him for his sin that is his incestuous behaviour. He feels that God's forgiveness enables him to also forgive himself for his incestuous behaviour.

In sum, it seems as though David1 started experiencing self-hatred while he was behaving incestuously. It also appears that he still hated himself for what he did after his behaviour stopped. However, it seems as if he, after a long time, started to forgive himself for behaving incestuously.

2.5 David1's reflections on the interviews

At the end of the interviews, the researcher asked David1 to reflect on their conversations and on how it made him feel.

David1 stated that the interviews were a positive experience for him as he could verbalise many of his thoughts and feelings without being judged. He explained that he used to criticise people who behaved incestuously. He never thought that he was capable of incestuous behaviour. He now feels that a person should never be sure of the mistakes one might make in life and should therefore, not be judgmental towards others.

According to David1, he also experienced understanding from the researcher, who helped him to be open and honest regarding his thoughts and feelings. Lastly, he also experienced a level of comfort and support, knowing that the researcher, who understands him, would attend his trial and sentencing.

3. DAVID2'S STORY RE-STORIED

Participant:	David2
Age at time of interviews:	42 years old
Age when incestuous behaviour began:	30 years old
Marital status:	Divorced
Relationship with child involved in incest:	Stepfather
Gender of child involved in incest:	Male
Age of child at time of incest:	13 years old
Number of interviews:	Two, each approximately two hours long
Place of interviews:	Office at participant's work.

3.1 Choosing a name

Since the information shared by the participant is of a very sensitive nature, the participant was invited to choose a pseudonym so as to remain anonymous.

The researcher also felt that it was important for the participant to be able to choose a suitable alternate identity for himself, since it was his story that was being given a voice.

At the completion of the second interview, the researcher reminded the participant that he had the option of choosing a pseudonym for himself. The participant informed the researcher that he would like her to use the name of a person in the Holy Bible called David.

The participant explained that he chose this name, because he can strongly relate to David in the Bible. He then explained that according to the Holy Bible, David committed adultery and murder. The participant feels that he too has committed adultery by behaving incestuously, that led to him deceiving his wife, children, friends and God. He furthermore feels that although he has not murdered someone physically, he 'murdered' a part of his stepson's life by 'stealing' his youth and 'normal' development from him.

Furthermore, the participant feels that just like David, God has forgiven him for his sins, that is his incestuous behaviour. According to the Bible, David learnt from his mistakes and after God had forgiven David for his sins, God blessed him. David² explained that he could also relate to this since he has learned a lot through his mistakes (i.e. his incestuous behaviour). He feels that his current healthy relationship with his stepson is a miracle from God and only one of the ways in which God blesses him.

Since both participants chose to use the name David, this participant will be referred to as David2. The researcher did not ask the participant to choose another pseudonym, since she regarded the similarity of the participants' choices of pseudonyms as significant to their emotional experiences. This significance will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

3.2 Background of David2

David2 is a 42 years old, white, South-African male. According to David2, he is a Christian and grew up on a farm. He felt very isolated and lonely during his childhood, because of the huge age gap between himself and his siblings. David2 experienced his late mother as extremely controlling and his late father as emotionally distant. According to David2 his mother often beat him severely and he felt emotionally neglected by his father.

At the age of 13 years, David2 was allegedly sexually abused by two of his cousins. David2 claims that although he knew that these incidents took place, he only became aware of the traumatic impact thereof on his functioning during his psychotherapy sessions. He now feels that this was the reason why he experienced his puberty years as traumatic.

At the age of 14, David2 went to a boarding school where he started experimenting with homosexuality. According to him, he knew that his parents would not approve of him having sex with a girl. He believed that by having sex with a boy he would not disappoint his parents as he would by having sex with

a girl. His homosexual behaviour continued when he joined the army and when he went to university.

When David2 got married to his now ex-wife, she had a 2 year old son, named Nick (pseudonym) from a previous relationship. David2 and his wife raised Nick and their own two daughters.

According to David2, he had a very close and affectionate relationship with Nick. He described Nick as very affectionate child, who liked physical contact, especially from the age of 10.

David2's incestuous behaviour towards Nick started when Nick was 13 years old and continued for approximately one year. According to David2, his incestuous behaviour mostly involved the fondling of Nick's genitals.

One day, Nick reported his father's incestuous behaviour at school. The school then reported it to the child protection unit and David2 was taken to court by the government. David2 pleaded guilty to the charge of indecent assault and received a suspended sentence of two years. One of the conditions of his suspended sentence was that he had to stay in psychotherapy with Dr. B (pseudonym).

David2's wife supported him throughout the trial and they both received psychotherapy afterwards.

Three years after David2 was sentenced, he resumed his incestuous relationship with Nick who was then 18 years old. After a while, David2 became aware of the fact that, Nick was involved in numerous homosexual relationships and he then ended his incestuous relationship with Nick. David2's wife found out that he had resumed his incestuous relationship with Nick and divorced him. According to David2, he then decided to tell his daughters about his incestuous behaviour and moved out of the family home.

David2's ex-wife, his youngest daughter and his stepson are currently in psychotherapy. David2 is currently in individual therapy with Dr. B and is working on setting boundaries and redefining relationships.

According to David2, his ex-wife is still very angry with him and she still has many unresolved feelings regarding his incestuous behaviour. David2 has arranged a meeting with her and the church leaders in an effort to help her to resolve these feelings. His youngest daughter is reportedly also still very angry with him and does not want to spend time with him.

According to David2, his eldest daughter and her husband support him a great deal. He also finds a tremendous amount of support at the Church. David2 and Nick have started to make contact again and even though David2 doesn't foresee a very close relationship between the two of them, he describes their current relationship as healthy.

3.3 Research setting

Due to David2's busy work schedule, he could not be interviewed at the Unisa psychotherapy clinic and was interviewed in a relatively neutral office at his work. This setting allowed adequate privacy and the researcher felt that the privacy contributed to David2 feeling safe, thus allowing him to discuss his story openly and without reservation. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes to two hours. The conversations were focused on his story and emotional experiences regarding the incestuous behaviour and any issues that were related. At the beginning of the first interview, David2 ordered some tea for himself and the researcher. During the second interview, David2 enjoyed a small lunch as the interview took place during his lunchtime at work. Both the drinking of tea and enjoying his lunch during the interviews, added to a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere wherein the conversations took place.

David2 felt that he had an important story to tell, that it helped him to talk about what had happened and that by telling his story, he might help other incestuous fathers and professionals working with incestuous fathers. However, during the first interview, David2 stated that he found it difficult to verbalise his emotional experiences regarding his incestuous behaviour. He also said that he did not want to think about his emotional experiences and that he wanted to avoid it. Therefore, David2 spent the biggest part of the conversations talking about his process of redefining and reconstructing relationships and him coping with all the challenges after his incestuous behaviour stopped. The researcher did not interrupt David2, since she recognised these as valuable descriptions of him making sense of his life.

3.4 Prominent themes that emerged from David2's story

The researcher identified the following prominent themes from David2's story. These themes may not necessarily be mutually exclusive and may therefore overlap.

3.4.1 Feeling Powerful

Feeling powerful seems to be David2's most prominent emotional experience regarding his incestuous behaviour.

As a child, David2 felt "very lonely" and "isolated". It seems as if he felt that he was powerless as he experienced his mother as "very controlling". He recalled:

What I remember of my mother is how she always used to beat me. I mean I wasn't an angel. I probably deserved every hiding, but coat hangers were broken on me. Blood flowed... and my father neglected me. He was very distant. My mother was a... she was small but trained! My mother was very controlling and we were all damaged because of that.

When David2 married Nick's mother, he experienced difficulty in disciplining Nick, since he felt that he "wan[t]ed to control Nick". David2 felt that

from my side there was a lot of control already in that early stage. And that developed, I'm a control freak.

When David2 started behaving incestuously towards Nick, he experienced a huge amount of control. He reported:

In the abuse was the element of control over the child for me. I had control over Nick. And I think it's about the satisfaction I got out of it.

It seems as if the control that David2 felt he had over Nick and the fact that he “was in control of [their incestuous] relationship”, made him feel powerful. David2 knew that his incestuous behaviour was “wrong” and the fact that he could “get away with it” seems to have made him feel even more powerful. He reported:

[The control] made me feel powerful. And that I can do to him whatever I want. It's that "power position" I have over him. And there is a big element of self-satisfaction in that already – over and above the sexual act. And I think I've always known that it's wrong. To me it was all about control, to be in control in that relationship. Not wanting to stop it because I enjoyed feeling powerful. I also felt powerful because I could do all this and get away with it.

David2 also “enjoyed the physical part” of his incestuous involvement with Nick and the “special, physical attention [that he] got from Nick” seems to have contributed to his feelings of powerfulness.

After Nick reported his fathers' incestuous behaviour at school, David2 was arrested and trailed. As part of his sentence, he had to be involved in psychotherapy. During his therapy, David2 realised that "every abuser has a control problem". He also realised that wanting to powerful, he tends to be very controlling. Therefore he felt that

I have to be very aware that I don't do anything out of a "control motive."

In sum, it seems as if David2 experienced powerlessness as a child. When Nick became a part of his life, he felt the need to control Nick and when he started behaving incestuously towards Nick, he enjoyed having control over Nick and having control in their incestuous relationship. This control as well as the fact that he could behave incestuously without being caught made him feel powerful. However, during therapy, David2 realised that he tends to be controlling, because he needs to feel powerful. Therefore, he felt that he has to remain aware of his needs, so that he does not act in order to gain control.

3.4.2 Ambivalence

Even though David2 seems to have experienced powerfulness, he also seems to have experienced a great amount of ambivalence regarding his incestuous behaviour.

During his incestuous behaviour, David2 "enjoyed the special attention that [he] got from Nick" and it made him feel powerful. However it seems as if he

experienced a lot of inner conflict, since at the same time, he also felt guilty about his behaviour as “[he] realised that it was wrong”.

He reported:

During the act I felt guilty but on the other hand, I also enjoyed the physical part of it. To me it was all about control, to be in control in that relationship. On the other hand I also felt guilty and realised I have to stop these activities.

It seems as though David2 felt torn between feeling powerful and feeling guilty and therefore, he

focused only on myself and blocked my own feelings. Because at the same time there were a lot of guilt feelings.

After David2 stopped his incestuous behaviour, he seems to have found a tremendous amount of unconditional acceptance and support at his Church. One day at Church a person read him the scripture of Romans 7 from the Holy Bible. David2 seems to have strongly identified with this scripture and he feels, “that it summarises what [he] felt when [he] abused Nick”. It seems as if David2 could identify especially with the parts of the scripture that speaks of feelings of ambivalence:

¹⁵ I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

¹⁸ *For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it.*

¹⁹ *For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.”*

²¹ *So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.*

²² *For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self,*

²³ *but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin, which dwells in my members.”*

Since David² could strongly identify with the above parts of the scripture, it seems as though he experienced inner conflict between his belief in God and his physical need to behave incestuously. He seems to have felt torn between wanting to behave incestuously and believing that his behaviour was morally wrong.

In sum, it seems as though David²'s feelings of ambivalence included feeling torn between varieties of opposing feelings. On the one hand, David² enjoyed the sexual satisfaction that he got from his incestuous involvement with Nick. He also enjoyed feeling powerful as he felt that he had control over Nick and their incestuous relationship. On the other hand, David² felt guilty about his incestuous behaviour. David² also appears to have felt ambivalent regarding his incestuous behaviour, as he felt torn between wanting to behave incestuously and believing that his behaviour was morally wrong.

3.4.3 Powerlessness

Even though David2 seems to have felt powerful while behaving incestuously, powerlessness also seems to be one of his prominent emotional experiences regarding his incestuous behaviour.

David2 was “thoroughly aware that [his] [incestuous behaviour] wasn’t good”, but he felt incapable of stopping his behaviour. He reported:

I knew that it was wrong. I just couldn’t stop it.

During the period that David2’s incestuous behaviour occurred, Nick was staying at a boarding school. This limited their physical contact and as such limited David2’s incestuous behaviour. However, when Nick came home for school holidays, David2 “would put in leave to spend time with him” with the “motive” of involving Nick in incestuous behaviour. Reflecting back on this, David2 felt that if Nick had to be living at home, his incestuous behaviour would occur on a more regular basis, as he felt powerless in stopping his behaviour. David2 felt

scared to even think how it would have been if [Nick] lived in the house. Then it could have been a daily story, because I wasn’t able to stop myself.

David2 has also strongly identified with descriptions of powerlessness in the Bible scripture of Romans 7, verse 14 to 25. From this, it seems that even

though he felt that his incestuous behaviour was morally wrong and wanted to stop it, he felt that he had no power over the “sin” within him that “forced” him to behave incestuously. Romans 7, verse 14 to 25 reads:

¹⁴ *We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

¹⁵ *I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.*

¹⁶ *Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good.*

¹⁷ *So then it is no longer I that do it, but sin, which dwells within me.*

¹⁸ *For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it.*

¹⁹ *For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.”*

²⁰ *Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me.”*

²¹ *So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.*

²² *For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self,*

²³ *but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin, which dwells in my members.*

²⁴ *Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*

²⁵ *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.*"

It also seems that even after David²'s incestuous behaviour had stopped, he still felt powerless in stopping himself from behaving incestuously again. David² felt that the only reason why he did not behave incestuously again was because he believed in God and the scriptures in the Bible. David² even told one of the people in his church, that

if I move away from the Bible, they must lock me up because I'm a risk to society.

In sum, it seems as if David² felt powerless regarding his incestuous behaviour. Even though he felt that his behaviour was morally wrong, he felt incapable of stopping it and even after he had stopped his behaviour, he felt powerless in preventing himself from behaving incestuously again.

3.4.4 Guilt

As can already be seen in the theme of ambivalence, David² experienced strong feelings of guilt regarding his incestuous behaviour.

Even though David² enjoyed the sexual satisfaction and feelings of powerfulness during his incestuous behaviour, "[he] felt guilty" and reported that his incestuous behaviour

was terrible and there is no way I want to even try and minimise it. I focused only on myself and blocked my own feelings, because at the same time there were a lot of guilt feelings.

After David2 stopped behaving incestuously, “[he] fe[lt] very guilty about the things that Nick went through” as a result of David2’s incestuous behaviour. David2 felt that

Nick lost a major part of his youth because of me. I do feel terrible about what I did. Especially when I see what it caused in all our lives.

David2 also felt that because of his guilt feelings, “[he] starts handing out money because [he] just want[s] to keep [Nick] happy”. As a result, David2 felt that he had to be “very aware of [his] motives” when he gives money to Nick. However, he finds this difficult to do, especially since

the world loves taking me back to “but look what you have done” and then I do things, purely out of guilt.

David2 also seems to have felt guilty towards God, because of his incestuous behaviour. Since David2 is a Christian, and incest from a Christian point of view is seen as sin, David2 felt that he had sinned in the eyes of God, which intensified his feelings of guilt.

David² associated with two people in the bible, who also sinned in the eyes of God. First, he associated with David, by choosing the name David as a pseudonym for himself. He felt that he could relate to David in the Bible, since David had sinned in the form of committing murder and adultery. David² felt that he has also sinned by “committing adultery” and by “murdering a part of [Nick’s] life” by behaving incestuously.

Second, he associated with Paul, by quoting Romans 7 from the Bible that was written by Paul. It seems as if, just like Paul, David² felt guilty, because he felt that he was “carnal” (unspiritual), which is a sin according to the Bible. Furthermore, it seems as if, just like Paul, David² also felt guilty, because he felt that his incestuous behaviour was “evil” and a “sin” in the eyes of God. Romans 7, verses 14 and 18 to 21:

¹⁴ We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin.

¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it.

¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.”

²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me.

²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.”

It appears as if most of David2's guilt was directed towards God since he felt that "[he] was held accountable before God" for incestuous behaviour. David2 explained:

For me, it's about where I stand, because at the end of the day all the psychologists can talk to me, everybody can talk to me, Nick can talk to me, my ex wife can talk to me, my daughters can talk to me, but the one that I'm going to be accountable to is God. That's ultimate!

However, David2 felt that just like David in the Bible, "God has forgiven [him] for his sins", i.e. his incestuous behaviour. Therefore, he felt that he no longer had to feel guilty. He explained:

You must take the implication of what happened at the cross and personalise it. Obviously I'm talking from a Christian's point of view. The implication is that through that I am washed clean from my sins. If I'm washed clean, and I believe it and I have the conviction but I take a magnifying glass and I go back and see spots, where God maybe "slipped up" and didn't forgive me, then I don't understand what happened at the Cross. I told one of my colleagues the other day, one of my friends in the Church that is my direct mentor at the moment with whom I have weekly contact, actually daily, I told him that the thing that bothers me most at the moment is the fact that I feel guilty for not feeling guilty anymore.

You know what he told me? He said: “you understand what happened at the cross”. That was his answer.

In sum, it seems as if David2 experienced guilt both while he was behaving incestuously as well as after he had stopped. After he stopped his incestuous behaviour, he felt guilty for the impact that his incestuous behaviour had on Nick. It appears as if most of David2's guilt was directed towards God as he felt that he had sinned in the eyes of God. However, David2 felt that God has forgiven him for his incestuous behaviour and that he only felt guilty for not feeling guilty any longer.

3.5 David2's reflections on the interviews

At the end of the interviews, the researcher asked David2 to reflect on their conversations and on how it made him feel.

David2 explained that although it is not something that he would like to do often, he experienced the telling of his story as therapeutic. He felt that it was therapeutic for him, because he could verbalise many of his thoughts and feelings without being judged. According to David2, this helped him to make sense of many confusing thoughts and feelings that he had.

Furthermore, David2 felt that it was useful for him to face the situations of the past and that he it reminded of the fact that he has to take responsibility for his mistakes. He also explained that the conversations reminded him that, even though he has stopped his incestuous behaviour and took responsibility for it,

he still needed to resolve some issues regarding his behaviour and the consequences thereof. Lastly David² felt that the interviews reminded him that it is only by God's grace that he is able to carry on with his life.

4. REFLECTIONS OF THE RESEARCHER

From the start of the interviews with the research participants, the researcher was amazed at the participants' openness and their willingness to share their stories. During the interviews, the researcher experienced a huge amount of empathy for the participants and found it surprisingly easy to unconditionally accept them. However, the researcher found it more difficult to remain empathic as soon as she exited the interview context and reflected upon the conversations. The researcher also found it challenging to stay in the role of the researcher and not to move into the role of the therapist.

Although the content and context of the participants' stories differ greatly to that of the researcher, the researcher could identify with some of the participants' emotional experiences and could associate, on a certain level with their religious beliefs. The researcher realised that this would inevitably have an influence on her understanding of the participants' emotional experiences. She, therefore, remained aware of this and continually reflected upon her feelings throughout the interpretive process.

5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a reconstruction of each of the participants' emotional experiences regarding their incestuous behaviour was provided. The reconstructions were presented in the form of prominent themes that were highlighted according to the researcher's frame of reference. As such the identified themes in each reconstruction were not presented as the "ultimate" truths and there could be many more thematic descriptions given through other lenses.

The next chapter will be the concluding chapter. An overview of the themes that emerged from the two incestuous fathers' stories will be provided. A meta-perspective in terms of reflections on this study will be discussed and recommendations for future research and clinical practice will be proposed.