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TEACHING FOR TRANSFORMATION: ENABLING THE EXPLORATION OF  
DISORIENTING DILEMMA IN THE CLASSROOM

A Dissertation Presented by LISA DEANGELIS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies,  
University of Massachusetts Boston,  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

December 2019

Business Administration Program

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A Dissertation Presented  
by  
LISA DEANGELIS

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## ABSTRACT

### TEACHING FOR TRANSFORMATION: ENABLING THE EXPLORATION OF DISORIENTING DILEMMA IN THE CLASSROOM

December 2019

Lisa DeAngelis, B.S., Bryant University  
M.B.A., Regis University

Directed by Professor Marc Lavine

While learning involves the acquisition of new skills and the development of existing repertoires, some educators harbor even more profound learning goals. They seek to enable learning that is transformative. Jack Mezirow, who is credited with establishing transformative learning theory, defines transformative learning as

*“an enhanced level of awareness of the context of one's beliefs and feelings, a critique of their assumptions and particularly premises, an assessment of alternative perspectives, a decision to negate an old perspective in favor of a new one or to make a synthesis of old and new, an ability to take action based upon the new perspective, and a desire to fit the new perspective into the broader context of one's life” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 161).*

Core theorizing about transformative learning posits that it requires, and is precipitated by, a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2000; Mälkki & Green, 2014; M. B. Taylor & Hill, 2016). A disorienting dilemma may be thought of as a time when new information has caused a person to call into question their values, beliefs, or assumptions. While transformative learning can occur through rich, experiential learning experiences or life events, it can also occur in the classroom (Dencev & Collister, 2010; George M. Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012; Edward W Taylor, 2007) While much has been written and understood about transformational learning, the teacher's role in the process is undertheorized. The research question I explored was how does the aim of transformative teaching enable the exploration of disorienting dilemmas?

To address this research question, I conducted field research over multiple sections of a graduate course with deliberately transformational aims. Faculty clearly articulate these aims in the course catalog description as well as the course objectives within the syllabus. Using written course assignments, classroom observations, interviews with the faculty, and archival data pertaining to the course, I undertook a qualitative analysis to address the research question. Through this research, I explored and clarified interaction between transformative teaching and transformative learning as it occurs in the classroom. In doing so, I contribute to the transformative learning and transformative teaching literatures by demystifying how the relationship between the two functions in practice.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### *My story*

The summer between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade my family moved. As I met children in the neighborhood and we began discussing the upcoming school year, the resounding feedback I received was, “Don’t get Mr. Ash. He’s so hard.” Of course, when my classroom assignment came in, I had been placed in Mr. Ash’s class. I remember begging my mother to get my class changed and her wise response that, if I was truly miserable in the class, we could revisit the conversation over the winter break, but I had to make up my own mind. Fast-forward more than four decades later, Mr. Ash remains one of the most influential teachers in my life. I cannot remember a single lesson that he taught us but I remember being excited to go to school each day for the learning I knew would lay ahead. He was a challenging teacher, but in the best of ways. He encouraged us to engage the topics we were studying, bringing them to life through stories and discussions. I felt that he truly believed that each student was smart and had potential. He worked hard to help us see that in ourselves.

While I had many other great teachers, the next teacher I remember having had such a profound impact on me was a professor in college. I recall each class centering around a case study where each student was encouraged to put themselves in the place of the case protagonist and share the course of action they would propose taking and the reasoning behind their position. The class, itself, was a space for curiosity and co-creation. Professor Silversmith encouraged my classmates and I to explore how individuals with the same set of facts may come to very different conclusions. For me, one of the resounding takeaways from

the class was the importance of seeing a situation through the eyes of another to better inform our decision. The second lesson for me was an increased awareness of how much one's values shape their decisions. As I reflect on my participation in this class, I remember that my proposals often came from a place of trying to do the right thing for the people involved, whereas others focused more on stakeholder value, public perception, etc. Through our classroom dialogues, we became aware of what drove our varied positions, which allowed us to become more confident in our own perspectives. The professor created a classroom environment that encouraged us to recognize this diversity of perspectives without attributing judgement to any of them, only noting that they were driven by differing values.

I would wager that, if those who know me knew these stories, they would say something like, “well, that explains a lot.” You see, these teachers helped to shape not only how I see myself, but how I interact with my world. That is, fundamentally, what transformative learning is about. It is about coming to deeply understand yourself *and* your interconnectedness to the world around you. While individuation – the process of bringing individuality to consciousness (Adler, Jung, & Hull, 1971, pp. 447-448) – may seem juxtaposed to interconnectedness, I would argue that they are two sides of the same coin. It is through a strong sense of self, a sense of self beyond the ego, that one is able to engage in the world around them. Each of us are capable of having tremendous influence on our world. Transformative learning allows us the opportunity to become more conscious of that influence and more deliberate in our actions (John M. Dirkx, 2000; J. M. Dirkx, Mezirow, & Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 2000).

*With Gratitude*

I can think of no better way to begin my acknowledgements than to recognize my first reader. My husband, Tony, has walked this journey next to me reading every draft, dutifully engaging in endless conversations about this research and bearing the burden of all of our household responsibilities along the way. Not only has he done this without complaint, he has encouraged me when we found ourselves in rugged terrain. Tony, this conferment is as much yours as it is mine.

To my amazing son, Anthony, who magically seems to appear to say, “I’m proud of you mama,” just when I need it most. You are the hero for whom I do this research. The exquisite way that you continue to navigate your own disorienting dilemmas leaves me in awe. I am so grateful to have you in my life and to see the amazing young man you are becoming.

To the first instigator of this chapter in my journey, Deanna. I remember well when you jokingly asked when I’d begin pursuing my doctorate while we celebrated my MBA. Who knew? Somehow I imagine you did! It is a wonderful gift to have a friend who sees you for your potential. I’m so grateful for your friendship, encouragement, and prodding.

To my writing tribe, Deanna, Georgianna, Tara, Angelina and Laura, I don’t know what I would have done without those monthly writing weekends. It was an incredible gift to have a space where I could just focus on my research and writing. And, it was an even rarer gift to share that space with an amazing group of brilliant, supportive, women. I am so appreciative for your wisdom and your friendship.

To Katie, thanks for holding down the fort and for infusing humor along the way. I am privileged to work with you.

To the teachers I mentioned in the beginning of this work, thank you. Your ability to see in me what I had not yet seen in myself started me on this journey and for that I am forever grateful.

To the faculty who allowed me such extraordinary access to them, their classroom, and their students, my deepest appreciation. Given the nature of this course, it was a leap of faith to open the space to a researcher. Thank you for trusting me to honor this sacred space.

And, finally, to my committee. Thank you for creating the container that allowed me to move through my own transformative learning process. It was interesting to see the interplay of our various value priorities throughout the process. There is an amazing reflective article in all of this, don't you think?

### *Dedication*

I dedicate this dissertation to Dr. Sherry H. Penney, an amazing friend, mentor, and role model. She has, and continues to, embolden individuals to find their voice and make a positive impact on the world around them. Her impact and legacy will be felt for generations to come.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

While learning involves the acquisition of new skills and the development of existing repertoires, some educators harbor even more profound learning goals. They seek to enable learning that is transformational. Slavich (2005) describes this as,

“an approach to teaching in which life changing experiences are expected. These change experiences are not random but rather are directly related to the course content and intended to help students truly internalize the course content” (p. 3). There are many terms used to describe transformational learning but my work here builds on Mezirow’s transformative learning theory. Mezirow (1991) defined transformative learning as “an enhanced level of awareness of the context of one's beliefs and feelings, a critique of their assumptions and particularly premises, an assessment of alternative perspectives, a decision to negate an old perspective in favor of a new one or to make a synthesis of old and new, an ability to take action based upon the new perspective, and a desire to fit the new perspective into the broader context of one's life” (p. 161). The process of transformative learning begins with awareness and culminates with action, and the classroom setting can foster this process.

Mezirow asserts that transformative learning begins with a disorienting dilemma. A disorienting dilemma can be thought of as a time when new information has caused a person to call into question their values, beliefs, or assumptions. The phenomena that I investigated is how an educator supports the exploration of these disorienting dilemmas. Mezirow (1978) describes the disorienting dilemma as, “Transformation in meaning perspective is precipitated by life's dilemmas which cannot be resolved by simply acquiring more information, enhancing problem solving skills or adding to one's competencies” (p. 108). He explains,

“There are certain anomalies or disorienting dilemmas common to normal development in adulthood which may be best resolved only by becoming critically conscious of how and why our habits of perception, thought and action have distorted the way we have defined the problem and ourselves in relationship to it” (1981, p. 7).

Mezirow posits that “one must become critically conscious of how an ideology (expressed earlier in the article as ‘a belief system and attendant attitudes held as true and valid’) reflects and distorts moral, social and political reality” (Mezirow, 1981, p. 6). Here, Mezirow is saying that adults have experiences that cannot be resolved relying on prior life experiences, beliefs and habits. The conceptual model of values that follows lends clarity to how terms such as beliefs, ways of seeing the world, and behaviors are underpinned by a values construct. “Values (1) are concepts or beliefs, (2) pertain to desirable end states or behaviors, (3) transcend specific situations, (4) guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events, and (5) are ordered by relative importance” (S. H. Schwartz, 1992, p. 4). In other words, a common aspect of adulthood is disorienting dilemmas. However, not all who experience disorienting dilemmas embark on the transformative learning process.

A disorienting dilemma may be thought of as a time when new information has caused a person to call into question something he or she has deeply held as true. Disorienting dilemmas can be subtle or seismic. They may include anything from a literary work that causes a new, deeper perspective (Dobson, 2008; Jarvis, 2006) to a trauma such as the death of a loved one (Mezirow, 1981). Mezirow (1978) speaks of the import in adult development for individuals to “move toward perspectives which are more inclusive, discriminating and integrative of experience” (p. 100). While disorienting dilemmas are an occurrence of adulthood, there is also literature that says that transformative learning can happen in the classroom (Badara, 2011; Brock & Abel, 2016; Moore, 2005).

The classroom can be a space where students are invited to reflect on a past experience, contemplate the impact of the class (curriculum, exercises, discussions) on their knowing, and consider how this new knowing might shape how they view themselves and their world. The aim of this research was to understand how the professors enable the exploration of disorienting dilemmas in the classroom. Through this manuscript my intent is to offer insights as to *how* professors create the conditions within which this learning can take place. Critical to this research is an understanding of transformative learning as it relates to transformative teaching and disorienting dilemmas.

The question I investigated was how transformative teaching enables the exploration of disorienting dilemmas. Through this research, I offer evidence of this interaction between transformative teaching and transformative learning as it occurs in the classroom. In this introduction, I offer an overview of transformative teaching and transformative learning. I

also provide insights into disorienting dilemmas. Each of these concepts are more fully explored in the literature review.

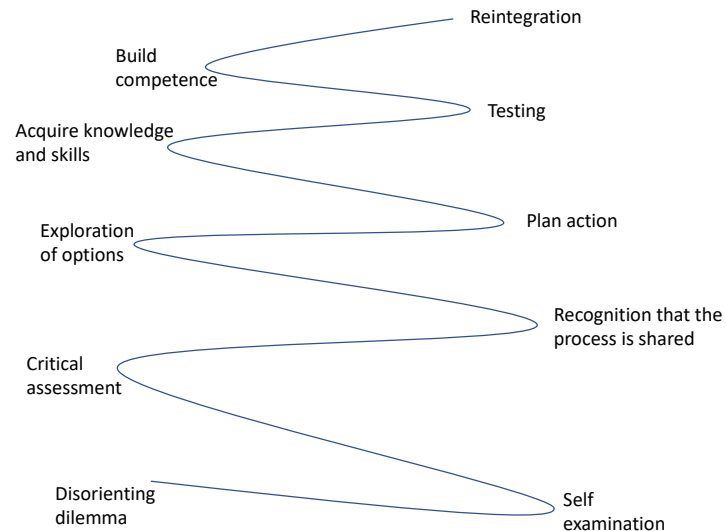
### *Transformational Learning*

The field of transformative learning has been widely explored since Mezirow's (1981) establishment of transformative learning theory. Mezirow (1981) describes transformative learning as, "the emancipatory process *of becoming critically aware of how and why the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships, reconstituting this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings*" (pp. 6-7). Similarly, Cranton (1994) declares that, "Transformative learning occurs when, through critical self-reflection, an individual revises old or develops new assumptions, beliefs, or ways of seeing the world" (p. 4). Both of these definitions seem to intimate a logical, rational, conscious process. Dirkx (2000), however, addresses the subconscious, emotional aspects of transformative learning when he says,

"The intent here is to deepen a sense of wholeness by, paradoxically, differentiating, naming, and elaborating all the different selves that make up who we are as persons. Engaging in dialog with these structures is a way of consciously participating in the process of individuation and integrating them more fully within our conscious lives" (p. 4).

As the image below illustrates (Figure 1), Mezirow's process begins with awareness and culminates in action.

*Figure 1. Mezirow's Transformative Learning Process*



### *Transformational Teaching*

While the literature of transformational forms of learning is extensive, with multiple scholarly journals devoted solely to the topic, there is much less recognized literature on forms of teaching that support or inhibit transformational learning. Further, teaching can have transformational intent and not necessarily result in transformational learning, just as transformational learning can occur even when that may not be the intent of the educator in a formal learning process. Yet, there is some work which articulates transformational teaching and within literature on transformational learning there is attention to practices, approaches,

behaviors that cultivate favorable or unfavorable conditions for transformation to occur. My research builds on and better illuminates transformative teaching.

As noted before, in this study I am interested in better understanding the tactics and aims of formal educators who have “transformational intent.” They seek to foster learning experiences that conform to Mezirow’s conceptualization of transformative learning.

The educational ethos of co-creating learning has persisted through seminal works such as Freire’s (2014) opposition to the “banking concept of education” (p. 72) where students are the recipients of, rather than participants in, the learning process, and has begun to coalesce toward a theory of transformative teaching as formalized by Slavich (2005). In the ensuing decade, efforts have been made to explore teaching practices and transformation in the classroom (Dobson, 2008; Edward W Taylor, 2006; Edward W. Taylor, 2006; Edward W Taylor, 2009), as well as exploring the concept itself (George M. Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012); though, as we’ll see in Chapter 2, a theory of transformative teaching is relatively unexplored.

### *Research study and context*

As previously noted, the research question I sought to explore was how does transformative teaching enable the exploration of disorienting dilemmas? To address this research question, I conducted field research in an elective course offered during the second-year of an MBA program at an elite business school. For the semester I was embedded in the course, two professors taught three sections (with one professor teaching two sections and the other teaching a single section). The professors teaching the course have been deliberate about the fact that this is not a *leadership* development course but rather a leader

development course. In other words, while these individuals may go on to formally lead others, this class has as its aim to help students become more ‘intentional’ in all aspects of their lives. This mirrors the aims of transformative teaching which Brookfield (2006) describes as supporting the “students' ability to say not only what they know but also why they know it” (p. 36). Using written course assignments, classroom observations, interviews with the faculty, and archival data pertaining to the Developing the Leader Within course, I undertook a qualitative analysis to answer the research question. Further details about the research setting and the methods are explained in chapter 3.

The primary assumption in this work is that teachers are able to engage students in transformative learning in the classroom. The reality is that “an educator can do nothing to ensure transformative learning. Learners must decide to undergo the process” (Cranton, 1994, p. 166). And, not all teachers are transformative. However, the course that I observed is exemplar in that it has as its aim transformative learning. An excerpt from the course description notes, “We invite you to have meaningful conversations about who you are and the purpose of your leadership.” It is in this context that I was able to investigate how these teachers enable the exploration of disorienting dilemmas.

In this dissertation, I use the voices of the professors and students to examine instances of disorienting dilemmas that educators with transformational ambitions sought to instigate or trigger to foster transformative learning and/or that learners experienced in a course with such aims. The participants own stories offer insights into the depth and complexity of how they experience a process intended to foster transformative learning. Slavich and Zimbardo (2012), in their discussion of the theoretical constructs of

transformative teaching, note that they are aware of only one study assessing transformative teaching, and this study was based on self-reported responses to a questionnaire (Beauchamp et al, 2010). Ciporen (2008) investigated how individuals behavior changed as a result of a formal transformative learning experience. My exploration of the literature suggest that this is the only work that offers evidence demonstrating how transformative teaching enables transformative learning as it occurs in the classroom. This research, therefore, maps the terrain so that the research that follows may add detail, refine, and redirect these initial findings.

### *Roadmap*

The focus of this research is on the relational space between the student and faculty member that enables the exploration of disorienting dilemmas in the classroom. Therefore, throughout this text I use excerpts drawn directly from their writings to demonstrate the phenomenon as it unfolds in the classroom.

This journey begins by seeking to understand if dilemmas appear in the classroom and, if so, what sorts of dilemma are they? As we will see, the dilemmas that appear in the classroom come from the student's lived experience rather than being contrived from a hypothetical experiment, such as "what would you do if you were in this situation?" Chapter 4 offers a typology that maps out the various dilemmas encountered in this research.

With the knowledge that dilemmas are evident in the classroom, we turn our attention to elucidate what it is about a dilemma that makes it disorienting. In order to do this, I returned to the map of transformative learning, paying particular attention to the landmarks provided. These works allude to the role of values and beliefs in the disorienting dilemma

(Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Cranton, 2002; Mezirow, 2009a; Edward W. Taylor, 1997).

However, this trail has not been explored in the transformative learning literature. Therefore, in Chapter 5, I draw upon work from social psychology to explain how values make a dilemma disorienting.

These first two chapters are in service of the heart of the research question which seeks to understand *how facilitators* support the exploration of these disorienting dilemma. In Chapter 6 we investigate the structural, tactical, and philosophical ways in which faculty in this study engage their students in this deeper learning.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *Introduction*

Articles and books on the topics of transformative teaching and transformative learning have grown over the past three decades. Niche journals such as Transformative Dialogues: Teaching and Learning Journal, the Journal of Transformative Education and Journal of Transformative Learning have been established and academic conferences and conference tracks such as the International Transformative Learning Conference have a following. Respectively, Transformative Dialogues was established in May 2007. The Journal of Transformative Education was established in January 2003. The Journal of Transformative Learning was established in 2011 “as a collection of conversations about transformative learning from the first Transformative Learning Conference at the University of Central Oklahoma. In 2014, proceedings from the annual Transformative Learning Conference were published. In 2015 the open access, ejournal emerged” (“Journal of Transformative Learning,”). The International Transformative Learning Conference was established in 1998 and runs a conference every 2 years. Their website lists just more than 1,000 members (Palmieri, 2018). A keyword search of the ERIC database, narrowed to include only peer-reviewed articles, offers a sense of the cohesiveness and vastness of the

transformative learning literature, and the burgeoning transformative teaching literature (see Figure 2). In fact, refined searches within the transformative learning literature show significant crossover. As Figure 3 demonstrates, when looking at the intersection of the term “transformative learning” and a Boolean search on the term teach, a predominance of the transformative learning literature (as represented by the 2,574 in Figure 2) also includes some iteration of the term teach (as represented by the 1,654 in Figure 3). Continuing to fine-tuning the terms, I then sought to understand how many of the 1,654 articles included the term teacher. This search string resulted in 1,131 (or 68%). As noted, in Figure 3, the search string results for the term “transformative learning” and the term instructor also produced 1,131 results. Therefore, a third search was created “Transformative Learning AND teacher NOT instructor.” This search produced no results, confirming that the terms of teacher and instructor were used interchangeably in the text. It should be noted that many of these results are, in fact, books which may include more than one author’s research in this domain. As Taylor (2007) notes in his review of transformative learning theory research, “there is less research about the possibility and process of transformative learning happening in a particular context...and more research about the nature of a learning experience” (p. 176).

*Figure 2. Key word search in ERIC database*

<b>Key Word</b>	<b>Search Results</b>
Transformative Learning	2,574
Transformational Learning	152
Transformative Teaching	36
Transformational Teaching	16

Figure 3. Search Strings (a).

*Note: a final search of “Transformative Learning AND teacher NOT instructor” returned no results, meaning that the term is used interchangeably in the text.*

Search String	Search Results
“Transformative Learning” AND teach*	1,654
“Transformative Learning” AND teacher	1,131*
“Transformative Learning” AND instructor	1,131*
“Transformative Learning” AND educator	542

The purpose of this literature review is to map the terrain of transformative teaching and its interaction with transformative learning. In this paper, I complement the transformative teaching and transformative learning streams of literature to explain how the classroom can be a space where students learn how to explore a disorienting dilemma. However, as noted in Figure 4, there is scant literature which brings together the concept of a disorienting dilemma and the classroom.

Figure 4. Search Strings (b).

*Note: a final search of “disorienting dilemma” AND teacher NOT instructor” returned no results, meaning that the term is used interchangeably in the text.*

Search String	Search Results
"disorienting dilemma" AND teacher	6*
"disorienting dilemma" AND instructor	6*
"disorienting dilemma" AND classroom	1
crucible AND educator NOT "the crucible"	16
crucible AND teacher NOT "the crucible"	6

crucible AND classroom NOT "the crucible"	2
"activating event" AND teacher	0
"activating event" AND instructor	0
"activating event" AND classroom	0

### What is a dilemma?

It is important to pause here and define the term, dilemma, to create a common understanding of the phenomenon and to be able to differentiate between an everyday dilemma and the more complex, disorienting dilemma. Transformative learning literature does not set the foundational stage by clarifying a dilemma. Therefore, I expanded my search of the literature. A construct offered by Sletteboe (1997) offers a clear and concise explanation of a dilemma as “(a) there were two or more alternatives to choose between, (b) when a wanted option leads to an unwanted consequence and (c) a choice where one does not know what is the right thing to do” (Sletteboe, 1997, p. 450). The author goes on to define five attributes of a dilemma. These are described as (Sletteboe, 1997, pp. 451-452):

1. *Involvement, engagement, or commitment.* To be open to a dilemma, the person needs to be involved in the situation. Otherwise she/he can escape from the dilemma, or does not recognize it.
2. *Equally unattractive alternatives.* There have to be two or more alternatives to choose between. There may be two alternatives, both of which are wanted; two alternatives, both of which are undesirable; or a choice where the solution is wanted but the result of it is unwanted.
3. *Awareness of alternatives.* The moral agent has to know about the alternatives to see a situation as a dilemma. If he or she lacks the knowledge that different alternatives could be chosen, the dilemma is not recognized.
4. *Need for a choice.* One has to make a decision and make a choice of one of the alternatives.
5. *Uncertainty of action.* The choice to be made is difficult because one does not know the real consequences of the choice or because the consequences are unwanted but unavoidable. One does not know the right thing to do.

## **Disorienting Dilemma**

My working definition of a disorienting dilemma is that it can be thought of as a time when new information has caused a person to call into question their values, beliefs, or assumptions. Mezirow (1981) describes the moment when the individual “becomes critically conscious of how and why our habits of perception, thought and action have distorted the way we have defined the problem and ourselves in relationship to it,” (p. 65) as a disorienting dilemma. As I explain later, the disorienting dilemma is the first step in the transformative learning process. Mezirow’s definition reminds us that the disorienting dilemma is only disorienting to the individual. In other words, two people can experience the very same situation and be affected in very different ways.

Dobson (2008) illuminates the disorienting dilemma in the classroom as, “When education taps the current of transformation it takes us beyond the 'facts' and categories of our lives, the limits of social structure, the pull of cultural conditioning, and the box of self-structure. In this way, we gain the capacity not only to gather the facts of our life but also to transcend and to transform them; this is where the deepest moments in education lead...” (p. 20). Here Dobson alludes to the idea that teachers can support students in the transformative learning process. This support may be evidenced through the exploration of an experience from the student’s past, classroom exercises that encourage the student to reflect on his underlying assumptions and beliefs, and classroom discussions that invite the student to consider perspectives that may be different from his own. However, as evidenced in Figure 4, little research exists which looks at the phenomena of the disorienting dilemma within the classroom. In fact, much of the literature identified in the search strings were self-reflexive in

nature with the teacher exploring their own disorienting dilemma. For those desiring to teach with transformative intent, or to more consistently enable transformative experiences for their students, we need to identify what it is about transformative teaching that supports transformative experiences for the student.

The primary body of literature to be reviewed is that of transformative teaching, though this is a bit of a misnomer. As evidenced in the database search, there is no body of transformative teaching literature, rather there is an amalgamation of concepts that suggest transformative/transformational teaching. Educational literature uses terms such as “teaching for change,” (Edward W Taylor, 2006) “powerful teaching,” (Brookfield, 2013), and “transformational teaching” (George M Slavich, 2005) to describe this phenomenon. Within this body of literature, the categories I focus on include the transformative teaching landscape, delineating a definition of transformative teaching, as well as the theoretical underpinnings of transformative teaching, and complementary theories. Because of its import to not only transformative teaching theory, but its link between transformative teaching and disorienting dilemmas, I offer an overview of Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning. I pay particular attention to his first step in the process – the disorienting dilemma.

Before engaging in the literature review, I think it important to offer context situating the educator within the educational system. The purpose of providing this background is simply to help the reader appreciate the hegemonic norms within which transformative teaching is emerging.

## **The Educational System's Expectation of Teachers**

Authors describe an educational system within which the expectation is for rote learning, or content mastery, over the course of the semester, absent the expectation that the learning be integrated into one's life (Adarkar & Keiser, 2007; Closs & Antonello, 2011; George M Slavich, 2005). (Glisczinski, 2007) frames this as, "The dichotomy of richness of information and poverty of understanding is particularly evident in colleges and universities" (p. 318). The dichotomy is not that one type of learning (instrumental or transformative) is preferred to the other, rather that it is the complement of both that is necessary (Glisczinski, 2007). Moore (2005) points out the paradox that, while educational institutions have a plethora of research at their disposal which delineate good teaching practices, they do not employ the support structures or reward systems necessary to enable this deeper learning. Moore refers to Robertson's (1996) research. In this article, Robertson (1996) suggests that the professional standards for graduate curricula, as established by the Commission of Professors of Adult Education, be revised to incorporate the dynamics of transformative learning in the classroom. Perhaps this contradiction between theory and practice exists because it is easier for universities to measure rote learning. Palmer (1998) describes this disparity as,

*"We turn every question we face into an objective problem to be solved - and we believe that for every objective problem there is some sort of technical fix. That is why we train doctors to repair the body but not to honor the spirit; clergy to be CEOs but not spiritual guides; teachers to master techniques but not engage their students' souls" (p. 19).*

Freire, as Fishman & McCarthy (2007) illuminate, says "educational institutions...are very much controlled by the ruling class"(p. 40) used to "legitimize the prevailing social

structure and help those in power maintain their power”(p. 40). Freire shines a light on this not to perpetuate it, but rather to implore educators to awaken to this reality such that they are able to awaken their students in order to shift from disseminating information to exploring possibility (Fishman & McCarthy, 2007). Shields (2010) also speaks to the importance of challenging the institutional systems that seek to uphold this power structure. The implication is that the classroom can become a place to question the current paradigms and imagine alternative future paradigms.

It is amidst this normative pedagogical system in higher education that transformative teaching literature is beginning to emerge.

### **Educator**

"In our rush to reform education, we have forgotten a simple truth: reform will never be achieved by renewing appropriations, restructuring schools, rewriting curricula, and revising texts if we continue to demean and dishearten the human resource called the teacher on whom so much depends. Teachers must be better compensated, freed from bureaucratic harassment, given a role in academic governance, and provided with the best possible methods and materials. But none of that will transform education if we fail to cherish - and challenge - the human heart that is the source of good teaching" (Palmer, 1998, p. 3). Within this educational structure which appears to be moving toward ever increasing uniformity in the classroom, researchers suggest that institutions have lost sight of the wisdom of the human beings engaged in disseminating the educational process in the classroom (Ikeda, 2001; Palmer, 1998). This is not a new concept. Taking a page from management literature,

it is imperative that we value and give voice to the wisdom of those on the front line (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Graban & Swartz, 2012; Kellogg, 2009).

There is an opportunity in today's classroom for teachers to bring their whole self to bear while recognizing the individuals they are teaching.

*“The literature that guides practitioners in adult and higher education tends to provide principles and guidelines for effective teaching without taking into account the preferences, styles, and values of the individual educator. Everyone it seems is expected to devise clearly organized sessions, speak with enthusiasm, establish caring relationships with students, and create practical and relevant learning experiences. At the same time, however, it is acknowledged that people have different learning styles, teaching styles, philosophies of education, and personality preferences” (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004, p. 276).*

As noted earlier, the penchant seems to be for a mechanized educational process where both teacher and student are seen simply as cogs in a machine (Adamson & Bailie, 2012). Within such a system, teachers become interchangeable from subject to subject, and students interchangeable from semester to semester. The ‘experience’ being the same regardless of the teacher teaching the subject or the learner learning the subject. Conversely, Ettling (2006), posits a very different classroom, one which is centered on the student, where the “educational goal for the students ranges from achieving personal success to accepting a global worldview,” (p. 60). Fishman & McCarthy (2007) remind us of Freire’s vision of “social hope - hope for a better, more equitable future”(p. 35) as a driving force for teachers. As they describe it, “In our present era – when expanding poverty, ecological damage, and international conflict have left social hope in short supply, Paulo Freire’s voice is a treasured one”(p. 35). This speaks to the need for educators not to show up as automatons steadily marching through a rote curriculum being delivered to a blank canvas of unseen students, but

rather to consciously and wholeheartedly engage each student on a learning journey (Adamson & Bailie, 2012; Palmer, 1998; George M Slavich, 2005).

### *Overview of Transformative Learning*

#### **History and Evolution of Transformative Learning**

Jack Mezirow (1981) first posited transformative learning theory as a lens through which to understand adult education. Within this theoretical framework, he articulated the process of transformative learning as “includ(ing) the following elements: (1) a disorienting dilemma; (2) self-examination; (3) a critical assessment of personally internalized role assumptions and a sense of alienation from traditional social expectations; (4) relating one's discontent to similar experiences of others or to public issues - recognizing that one's problem is shared and not exclusively a private matter; (5) exploring options for new ways of acting; (6) building competence and self-confidence in new roles; (7) planning a course of action; (8) acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans; (9) provisional efforts to try new roles and to assess feedback; and (10) a reintegration into society on the basis of conditions dictated by the new perspective" (p. 7). Mezirow's theory evolved from his work with women participating in a college re-entry program.

Edward W Taylor (1997; 1998, 2007) has conducted three comprehensive reviews of transformative learning theory. His first review examined 39 individual empirical studies that involved Mezirow's theory (1997). Taylor notes that only 3 of these were published, peer reviewed articles. The remaining 36 consisted of conference proceedings, masters theses and unpublished dissertations. He expressed concern that this lack of published work hinders the exploration and evolution of this theory. The primary finding of this review was that

“Mezirow's model was not inclusive of all the essential aspects inherent in the process of a perspective transformation” (1997). He goes on to suggest “the need for a more holistic and contextually grounded view of transformative learning in adulthood” (1997). He describes a holistic view as incorporating (a) the interdependence between feelings and critical reflection, (b) the role of unconscious knowing, (c) the importance of relationships in fostering transformative learning and enabling critical reflection, and (d) a transcendence beyond the self to a transpersonal level. Taylor encapsulates his findings on context as, “(Mezirow) fails to maintain the connection between the construction of knowledge and the context within which it is interpreted” (1997).

Taylor (1998) explains the purpose of his second literature review as exploring “seven unresolved issues: individual change versus social action, decontextualized view of learning, universal model of adult learning, adult development – shift or progression, rationality, other ways of knowing, and the model of perspective transformation” (p. vii). Here he offers three perspectives of transformative learning – Mezirow’s theory, Boyd’s process of individuation, based in Jung’s work, and, Freire’s model of emancipatory transformation (p. 13). Taylor distinguishes Boyd’s process from Mezirow’s theory, “instead of becoming more autonomous as Mezirow purports, the individual develops a greater interdependent relationship with and compassion for society” (p. 14). The essence of Boyd’s process is one of bringing the unconscious to conscious awareness so the individual can lead a more integrated life. Freire’s model focused on social transformation. “The process of conscientization, whereby the oppressed learn to realize the socio political and economic contradictions in their world and take action against its oppressive elements” (p. 16).

Conscientization can be thought of as helping the individual (or group) to recognize the ways in which the environment are constraining them so they can take action to remedy the inequity.

Taylor's (2007) third review of transformative learning theory examines 40 peer-reviewed articles published between 1999 and 2005. His analysis of these pieces identified several significant findings including "the recognition that epistemological change among some participants was not adequate for transformation to reach fruition" (p. 186), the need for "ongoing institutional support to act on this new understanding" (p. 187), and the significance of the role of relationships in the transformative learning process, "this... reveals a learning process dependent upon the need for support trust, friendship and intimacy" (p. 187).

These three reviews offer different insights into the evolution of transformative learning theory. Through his reviews of transformative learning theory, Taylor has synthesized not only the advances in clarifying and refining the theory but has also continued to offer critiques on gaps in the research. Several gaps that he identified in his works include: the need for research that offers educators clarity on how to teach toward this learning outcome, that prepares teachers for the implications of teaching with transformative intention, and that explores the influence of cultural background on transformative learning. In his later review, Taylor also points out the need to clarify the role of the teacher-student relationship in the process (p. 188).

While there may be a perception, particularly given Mezirow's numerical representation of the elements of the process, that the process of transformative learning is

linear; that perception is not the case. Researchers have described the process as recursive, evolving, and spiral-like (Cranton, 2002; Edward W. Taylor, 1997). The process, while not linear, seems to always start with a disorienting dilemma.

### **Disorienting Dilemmas**

*We make meaning of our experience through acquired frames of reference - sets of orienting assumptions and expectations with cognitive, affective and conative dimensions - that shape, delimit, and sometimes distort our understanding. We transform our frames of reference by becoming critically reflective of our assumptions to make them more dependable when the beliefs and understandings they generate become problematic”*  
(Mezirow, 2009a, pp. 29-30).

Disorienting dilemmas may be thought of as a time when new information causes an individual to call into question their values, beliefs, or assumptions. In earlier work, Mezirow (1978) describes the concept of a disorienting dilemma as, “There are certain challenges or dilemmas of adult life that cannot be resolved by the usual way we handle problems - that is, by simply learning more about them or learning how to cope with them more effectively. Life becomes untenable, and we undergo significant phases of reassessment and growth in which familiar assumptions are challenged and new directions and commitments are charted” (p. 101). Another way to think about this is when new information challenges what one has known to be true. “Through some event, which could be as traumatic as losing a job or as ordinary as an unexpected question, an individual becomes aware of holding a limiting or distorted view” (Cranton, 2002, p. 64). “The catalyst and the first phase of Mezirow's (1978) perspective transformation is a disorienting dilemma--an acute internal/external personal crisis” (Edward W. Taylor, 1997). The dilemma of losing one’s job may cause the individual

to reassess how he or she views themselves, how he or she views their work experience, and how they view the industry in which they worked.

Taylor (1997) cites S Scott's 1991 unpublished dissertation "in her study on the nature of transformation which results from a leader's participation in a community organization, identified two types of disequilibrium that were necessary for initiating change in beliefs: (a) an external event that provokes an internal dilemma, and (b) an internal disillusionment whereby the participants recognize that previous approaches and solutions are no longer adequate". Another term for disorienting dilemmas is 'activating events.' Cranton (2002) describes an 'activating events', as an "event that typically exposes a discrepancy between what a person has always assumed to be true and what has just been experienced, heard, or read" (p. 66); McGonigal (2005) defines the term as, "anything that triggers students to their thinking and the possible limitations of their understanding." Bennis and Thomas (2002) use the term, "crucible" to explain the phenomenon. They describe a crucible as, "a point of deep self-reflection that forced (leaders) to question who they were and what mattered to them. It required them to examine their values, question their assumptions, hone their judgement" (p. 40).

Mezirow (1990), goes on to say, "Anomalies and dilemmas of which old ways of knowing cannot make sense become catalysts of 'trigger events' that precipitate critical reflection and transformations" (p. 14). He suggests that these fissures in ways of knowing offer an opportunity for learning and development. Returning to the example of the individual who has lost their job, this is the work of being able to – perhaps – recognize that

the individual had intertwined their value as a human being with their work, title, or income level.

“Helping adults construe experience in a way in which they may more clearly understand the reasons for their problems and understand the options open to them so that they may assume responsibility for decision making is the essence of education” (Mezirow, 1981, p. 20). With these words, Mezirow challenged the educational institution to support transformative learning in the classroom.

### *Transformative Teaching*

#### **Definition**

Several authors have offered their insights on the phenomenon of transformative teaching. Slavich and Zimbardo (2012) define transformative teaching as, “the expressed or unexpressed goal to increase students’ mastery of key course concepts while transforming their learning related-attitudes, values, beliefs, and skills” (p. 576). (R. E. Quinn, K. Heynoski, M. Thomas, & G. M. Spreitzer, 2014b) describe these teachers as, “They know how to engage people in learning that alters their assumptions and mindsets. They know how to release potential that is unrecognized and unrealized” (p. 16). Brookfield (2013) speaks of this as, “the intent of teaching is to help learners understand how much they already know and how their experience, critically and collectively analyzed, can suggest responses to the problems they face in their communities, organizations, and movement” (p. 20). And, Cranton (2002) articulates this as, “When a student transforms her assumptions, becoming open to alternatives and new ways of thinking” (p. 70). The definition I prefer encompasses those offered above, it “enables people to sense the reality of

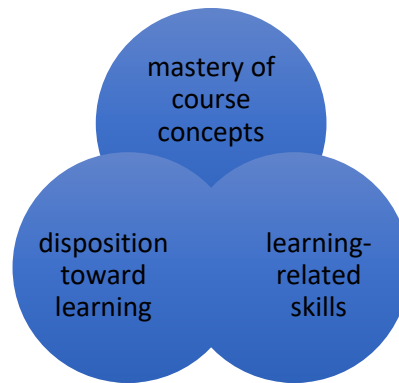
interconnectedness, to appreciate the infinite potential in each person's life, and to cultivate that dormant human potential to the fullest" (Ikeda, 2001, p. 46). This perspective encapsulates the individual's understanding of themselves, their openness to others, and the desire to bring both their and others best selves to bear.

This student-centered approach to teaching suggests not that it is the teacher's role to ensure the student achieves his or her potential. Rather, the teacher can be likened to the Sherpa who acts as a guide during a specific segment of the student's life-long journey. Endemic to this conception of teaching is that the teacher creates a classroom experience that fosters this type of learning. This encompasses everything from the course description, to the grading matrix and the use of class time (e.g. lecture versus discussion and inquiry) as well as exercises and course work.

Teachers, in creating a transformative experience in the classroom, engage the student not only in the content being taught but also in their ways of thinking and learning. "We believe that to be transformational in nature, teaching must enhance students' mastery of course concepts, their learning-related skills, and their disposition toward learning. Without all three of these components, the approach would seem to fall within the constraints of traditional classroom instruction (i.e., if it only focuses on mastering course content or on acquiring skills), or motivationally guided personal exploration (i.e., if it only focuses on examining or enhancing attitudes, values, or beliefs)" (George M. Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012, p. 596). These authors see transformational teaching lying at the intersection of content mastery, skill acquisition and learning proclivity (see figure 1). Ikeda (2001), referencing Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's concept of value-creating education, synthesizes this notion as,

“education as the process of learning to learn” (p. 13). The educator, in this schema, seeks to evoke in the student a deeper connection to the course content such that the student works to internalize the content (Ikeda, 2001; George M. Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012). The concept being articulated by these authors is on the outcomes the teacher aspires to and do not take into consideration the student’s agency in this learning process.

*Figure 5. Illustration of Slavich & Zimbardo's concept of transformative teaching*



With regard to this idea of the students’ awareness of this shift in their knowing, there appear to be two primary camps. The first group believes that transformative teaching is “life-changing” (George M. Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012, p. 576), in other words the student experiences some seismic shift over the course of the semester. It should be noted that the authors only mention of the dilemma this might elicit in the student is to suggest that faculty “encourage students to appraise challenging situations as opportunities and not barriers to success” (George M. Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012, p. 588). The second camp views this learning as potentially more subtle and incremental in nature. A wonderful illustration of this is, “(Dewey) pictures a person who has accomplished more than memorizing a new fact or piece of information, but who now has new meaning in his or her life, however modest in

scope that meaning may be when weighed against the totality of the person's background” (Hansen, 2007, p. 25). It would seem that all authors assert, whether the shift is seismic or subtle, transformative teaching involves opening the learner up to the opportunity of embedding the learning beyond the classroom (George M Slavich, 2005; George M. Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012).

Transformative teaching is the intentional act of provoking, guiding, and supporting the student in their deepening understanding of themselves and the world around them. This teaching enables the student to explore where the values, beliefs, and assumptions come from that inform the way they view themselves and their environment, to actively choose whether these values, beliefs, and assumptions serve who they are becoming, and to experiment with new ways of being that align with this new knowing.

### **Purpose of Transformative Teaching**

As I have articulated elsewhere, transformative teaching is a deliberate intent on the part of the educator to create a learning environment that enables students to “engage in critical reflection (Brookfield, 2000; K. Taylor, 2000; Wiessner & Mezirow, 2000) while exploring how their values, beliefs and motivators act as filters (Cranton, 2000; J. M. Dirkx et al., 2006) that shape how the individual views themselves and their world (Daloze, 2000; Kegan, 2000; Mezirow, 1991, 2000, 2003a)” (DeAngelis, 2017, p. 4). This type of teaching seeks to support students in making meaning (Crowell & Reid-Marr, 2013) such that it influences the way they think, act, and feel (Bain, 2004; Mezirow, 1981). This alludes to an educational experience that extends beyond the classroom.

Transformative teaching helps to make the shift from knowledge to wisdom. Ikeda (2001) proposes that, “(Students) will go beyond petty egoistic thinking to become total human beings who, while considering the whole of wisdom, relate their own lives to the fate of all humankind. I am firmly convinced that cultivating excellent human beings of this caliber is the true purpose of education.” (pp. 167-168). Ikeda’s aspiration for the institution of education is to not only open the student’s eyes to a more inclusive way of being, but to support the student in understanding how to put this learning into practice – to have the wisdom to know what actions to take. Palmer (1998) encapsulates this, “To educate is to guide students on an inner journey toward more truthful ways of seeing and being in the world. How can schools perform their mission without encouraging the guides to scout out that inner terrain?” (p. 6).

### **Theoretical Underpinnings of Transformative Teaching**

In their seminal piece on transformative teaching, Slavich and Zimbardo (2012) point to four theoretical frameworks that “help form the conceptual basis for transformational teaching” (p. 577). The four pillars they point to are: social cognitive theory, transformative learning theory, intentional change theory and transformational leadership theory. In this section I will offer a brief overview of each of these theories.

Social cognitive theory comes from the field of psychology. Bandura (2001) speaks of this theory as, “Personal agency operates within a broad network of sociostructural influences. In these agentic transactions, people are producers as well as products of social systems. Social cognitive theory distinguishes among three modes of agency: direct personal agency, proxy agency that relies on others to act on one's behalf to secure desired outcomes,

and collective agency exercised through socially coordinative and interdependent effort” (p. 1). In essence this states that individuals learn about themselves and their world through the influence they exert and that is exerted on them.

Intentional change theory comes from the field of management. Boyatzis and McKee (2006) summarize this as, “People who manage their own development intentionally are poised to make good choices about what they need to do to be more effective and more satisfied with their lives” (p. 49). They identified five phases in their intentional change theory. These include: the *ideal self*, the *real self*, your *learning agenda*, *experimenting with and practicing new habits*, and *developing and maintaining close, personal relationships* (pp. 49-50). This depicts a process whereby the individual establishes a vision, or aspiration, of a ‘best self’ and then establishes and executes a plan that closes the gap between the current state and the future state.

Transformational leadership theory also hails from the field of management. Building upon James MacGregor Burns’ seminal work *On Leadership*, Bass and Riggio (2010) claim that, “Transformational leaders help followers grow and develop into leaders by responding to individual followers’ needs by empowering them and by aligning the objectives and goals of the individual followers, the leader, the group, and the larger organization” (p. 76). This theory speaks to the leader’s efforts to make conscious the connection between the individual and the collective.

Slavich and Zimbardo have drawn upon these four theories to develop a theory of transformative teaching. These theoretical pillars help to clarify not only the work of the teacher in the classroom but also the work the teacher must do with themselves. As teachers

do the work of deepening their understanding of themselves, and their relationship to their students, they are able to “become more authentic, congruent, and empathetic, no longer separate from them but experiencing ourselves as equal members of a productive community” (Quinn, 2000, p. 87). With respect to transformative teaching, this productive community is the classroom.

### **Complementary Theories**

There are a myriad of other labels that intersect with transformative teaching, drawing from a variety of disciplines. Each of these labels touch upon various aspects of transformative teaching but, as Morgan (2015) points out, transformative teaching is the umbrella under which each of these fall. Each of these concepts complements – rather than contradicts – transformative teaching. As such, I have chosen to introduce several of the more established terms and reveal their connection to transformative teaching.

Ettling (2006) highlights Lange’s practice of ‘restorative learning.’ Restorative learning enables a “rediscovery of a submerged knowing” (p. 64). She based this on research that she had conducted surrounding citizen action toward a sustainable society. With regard to ethics, what she found is that it was not as much a new way of understanding right and wrong, but rather “the restoration of the participants’ foundational ethics to a conscious place in their daily lives” (p. 64). This approach is a twist on Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning in that Lange’s work claims that rather than experiencing *new* frames of reference, the student reconnects with a deeper knowing.

Johnson-Bailey & Alfred (2006) focus on the student, talking about how ‘connected teaching’ positions the student to “jointly construct knowledge, engage in self-reflection, and

practice self-revelation” (p. 56). This conjures up the vision of a student who is working with the teacher and their classmates to affect their learning. This parallels Slavich and Zimbardo’s use of social cognitive theory where the learning process is both individual and collective.

Quinn (2000) established advanced change theory which he describes as, “a set of action principles for more effectively introducing change to human systems,” (p. 13). Quinn goes on to explain advanced change theory as being in service of a productive community which he describes as, “an envisioned set of relationships that are synergistic, in which the collective good and the individual good are one. As each pursues one’s goals, the other is enriched” (p. 235). Similarly, Daisaku Ikeda (2001) thinks about the effects of ‘humanistic education’ which he describes as the process that “enables people to sense the reality of interconnectedness, to appreciate the infinite potential in each person’s life, and to cultivate that dormant potential to the fullest” (p. 46). This perspective sees the student not only experiencing their own awakening, but encouraging this deeper learning in their classmates as well.

Adamson and Bailie (2012) wrote of an emerging field called, ‘restorative practices.’ Where restorative learning is an introspective process, restorative practices seek to create structure to the learning experience itself. The authors see restorative practices as “a practical model...that aid in creating an environment conducive to transformative learning” (p. 141). This approach, Adamson and Bailie go on to say, “creates an institutional environment that...provid[es] learning processes that balance the need for limits, boundaries and structure with engagement, support, and nurturing” (p. 147). This approach seeks to create the

conditions to support deeper learning by cultivating a participatory environment that actively engages the learner in the learning.

Another term used to describe transformative teaching is ‘authentic teaching.’ Cranton (1994) suggests that “If the educator is authentic, fosters healthy group interactions, is skilled at handling conflict, encourages learner networks, gives personal advice when appropriate, and support learner action, critical self-reflection and transformative learning will be supported” (pp. 191-192). Boyd (2009) referring to Cranton’s work, describes authentic teaching as, “Instructors and students get to know each other as people, both inside and outside the classroom” (p. 52). This describes a teacher who is self-aware and willing to engage their students in a more intimate relationship than the traditional classroom prescribes. Examples offered in the article include practices such as conducting informal meetings with students and reading student journals.

Finally, the concept of ‘holistic education’ notes that the “purpose of education becomes the development of the whole person, including the student’s intellectual, emotional, physical, social, creative, intuitive, aesthetic, moral, and spiritual development” (Dobson, 2008, p. 96). Dobson continues on to explain that holistic education views “knowledge and skills in service of understanding” (p. 97). In this manner, the teacher is inviting the student to open up to, and fully engage in, the experience of the curriculum, such that the student come to know themselves better as a result.

In her article *A Brief History of the Current Reemergence of Contemplative Education*, Morgan (2015) links the roots of contemplative education, humanistic education and transformative education. Though each of these theories are being talked about in

nuanced ways, and are drawn from a variety of sources, Morgan reaffirms that this adds validity to the general concept of transformative teaching. The thread she weaves among these theories is that they “provide a means to navigate both the entry and the exit of a passage back to wholeness” (p. 212). In other words, it is about creating the environment and exercises that enable the student to understand themselves and their relationships more fully.

### **Supporting Disorienting Dilemmas in the Classroom**

#### **Teaching Philosophy**

Across the literature on transformative teaching, the premise that undergirds the teacher’s role in the learning process is expressed in terms such as ‘helping students learn how to learn’ and ‘helping students to build new mental models’ (Bain, 2004; Brookfield, 2006; Cranton, 1994, 2002; Cranton & Carusetta, 2004; Palmer, 1998). The assumption builds upon Freire’s (2014) response to what he labelled the banking concept of education. Teacher’s subscribing to this concept, Freire claims, views students as empty vessels to be filled with the knowledge and wisdom that the teacher imparts. His belief, which is foundational to transformative teaching, is that students co-author the learning. In this section of the paper, I will explore the philosophical tenets that support transformative teaching.

Teachers rooted in transformative teaching recognize that students enter their classroom with their own lived experiences and that, consciously or not, they will filter the learning through the lens of these experiences. “Because (teachers) believe that students must use their existing mental models to interpret what they encounter, they think about what they do as stimulating construction, not 'transmitting knowledge'" (Bain, 2004, p. 27). In other

words, the teacher views their role as one of helping the student to become aware of, and to evaluate the efficacy of, how their experiences shape their views. Teachers create disorienting dilemmas for the students in the classroom and create opportunities for students to reflect on their own disorienting dilemmas. In both constructs, the underlying principle is to enable the student to reflect upon the dilemma to understand its impact on who they are now and how they view who they are becoming.

Educators attentive to transformative teaching recognize the importance of encouraging students to become critically reflexive. Critical reflection involves challenging one's assumptions and questioning habits of mind (Cranton, 2000; Cranton & Carusetta, 2004; Mezirow, 2000). As Brookfield (2006) notes, “(the) hope (is) that this habit will then be applied across the lifespan” (p. 36). He frames this as “students' ability to say not only what they know but also why they know it. It involves them providing the grounds for truth that demonstrate why they have confidence in a piece of knowledge. It also requires them to describe the procedures they have conducted that convince them of the accuracy of those grounds. This kind of cognition can only be developed through an intentional and consistent study of one's own learning processes and reactions” (pp. 36-37). These teachers see critical reflexivity as a core life skill that will serve the student well beyond the classroom (Ashby, 2013; Babacan & Babacan, 2012; Boyd, 2009).

Further, these teachers understand the importance of their ability to be critically reflexive. Palmer (1998) speaks of teaching as a “mirror to the soul” (p. 2). He clarifies this, “When I do not know myself, I cannot know who my students are. I will see them through a glass darkly, in the shadows of my unexamined life – and when I cannot see them clearly, I

cannot teach them well” (p. 2). It would, therefore, seem that these teachers have a strong yet permeable sense of self. As noted in the previous paragraph, they are able to explain what they know and why they know it, and they are open to reexamining that knowledge.

Transformative teaching appreciates that transformative learning happens outside the comfort zone. It is with that purview in mind that these teachers carefully balance creating a safe space with creating the catalyst for disorientation. The idea is to create a learning environment where students can explore new ways of knowing and being (Brock & Abel, 2016; Closs & Antonello, 2011; Cranton, 2006). The catalyst for this learning is the student’s investigation of dilemmas from their lived experience and dilemmas introduced by the teacher. At the same time, these teachers are aware that not all students will appreciate this deeply introspective process. Palmer (1998) offers this wisdom, “students who have been well served by good teachers may walk away angry - angry that their prejudices have been challenged and their sense of self shaken. That sort of dissatisfaction may be a sign that real education has happened” (p. 94).

Transformative teachers work to mitigate the power dynamics that might impede transformative learning. They strive to be "seen as a flesh and blood human being with passions, enthusiasms, frailties, and emotions, not as someone who hides behind a collection of learned role behaviors appropriate to the title 'professor.' " (Brookfield, 2006, p. 57). They allow themselves to be seen as vulnerable individuals engaged in the learning journey with their students. And, through this they encourage a more democratic classroom (Closs & Antonello, 2011; Ettling, 2006; Johnson-Bailey & Alfred, 2006) engaging their students as co-teachers and co-learners in the classroom. One way in which they might do this is to

model for the students what it means to explore disorienting dilemmas by sharing their own experiences.

### **Pedagogical Practices**

*“Transformative learning is an intensive process that demands persistence and commitment from experienced educators and structures to support the teaching and learning process” (Babacan & Babacan, 2012, p. 210).*

As noted earlier, the research points to creating a learning environment that both builds trust with students while challenging them to critically examine their beliefs. Adarkar and Keiser (2007) express the profundity of this as, “And as we acknowledge, and pay appropriate respect to, the suffering of our students, we bring them into a space where all of us are human – and *that* is a step toward a sense of an authentically compassionate classroom” (p. 254). Hansen (2007) connects this sentiment to Dewey’s philosophy of education, noting that educators should “cultivate the pedagogical talent necessary to engage students creatively with the curriculum. On the one hand, that talent encompasses the capacity to listen patiently, to speak clearly and honestly, and to be acutely attentive to students’ responses to the curriculum. On the other hand, pedagogical talent includes a command of time-honored instructional methods such as the capacity to give a good lecture, to lead a thoughtful and sustained discussion of the text, and to organize effective small-group or individual learning activities” (p. 23). This section of the paper describes the classroom practices that seem to support this effort.

A transformative classroom is an engaged classroom where everyone – teacher and students – are expected to fully contribute. The facilitator sets the expectation that each student be actively involved in the learning. The art in this teaching style is to create a

balance such that, “Quiet voices are heard and dominating voices are quieter” (Adamson & Bailie, 2012, p. 151) and where space is made to hear from “groups who are characteristically silenced or silent” (Johnson-Bailey & Alfred, 2006, p. 52).

Mezirow (1991) frames the integral nature of critical reflectivity to the transformative learning process as, “thus it becomes crucial that the individual learn to negotiate meanings, purposes, and values critically, reflectively, and rationally instead of passively accepting the social realities defined by others” (p. 3). Byrne, Crossan, & Seijts (2017) reinforce this, “We suggest that through the mechanism of critical reflection, individuals are better able to resolve the inconsistencies or tensions that exist between newly developed perceptions of leadership and character gained in crucible experiences and prior perceptions about themselves and their understanding of leadership” (p. 277). Palmer (1998) asserts that, “Learning demands solitude” (p. 76). Within the classroom, practices such as journaling and structured silence create space for the student to wrestle with the ways in which the new knowledge being generated in the classroom unsettles what they had previously believed to be true (Adarkar & Keiser, 2007; Arends, 2014; Babacan & Babacan, 2012; Bell, Kelton, McDonagh, Mladenovic, & Morrison, 2011; Brock & Abel, 2016).

While, on the surface, it may seem odd to be speaking of group work in what appears to be a very introspective process. However, the role of interactivity in the transformative learning process harkens back to Mezirow’s initial work on the theory. One might easily imagine the role that peers may play in supporting the student as they try, “(4) relating one's discontent to similar experiences of others or to public issues - recognizing that one's problem is shared and not exclusively a private matter; (5) exploring options for new ways of

acting; (6) building competence and self-confidence in new roles; (7) planning a course of action; (8) acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans; (9) provisional efforts to try new roles and to assess feedback” (Mezirow, 1981, p. 7). In her work on group learning, Cranton (1996) corroborates this when she discussed how transformative group learning supports “individuals engag(ing) in critical reflection to examine their own and others’ assumptions about their lives and the world around them” (Ziegler, Paulus, & Woodside, 2006, p. 304).

The import of community in the transformative process has been well established (Cranton, 2000; Daloz, 2000; Mezirow, 2003b). Dirkx (2006) speaks of this as creating a classroom where “a dialogical exchange in which our ignorance can be aired, our ideas tested, our biases challenged, and our knowledge expanded, an exchange in which we are not simply left alone to think our own thoughts” (p. 76). Breaking the classroom into groups of students allows the students to “learn more about one another, build relationship and trust, set behavioral norms, and collaborate in the learning process” (Adamson & Bailie, 2012, p. 149). Small groups of peers can support each other in exploring disorienting dilemmas in the classroom.

A student-centered classroom is one in which the teacher “shape(s) course curricula and content based on students’ needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles” (George M. Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012, p. 571), and recognizes “students taking responsibility for their own learning and for their learning environment” (Adamson & Bailie, 2012, p. 151). It may sound as though there is no structure to the curriculum, nor are there defined learning outcomes. This is not the case. Rather, while the objectives for the course are set and criteria

for evaluating learning established, the paths the individual students – and the class – take to arrive at those outcomes, are co-created. “In these environments, students are more likely to perceive a high quality of teaching and feel that while there is a choice of what is to be learned, clear goals and standards of learning are also present” (Badara, 2011, p. 39).

### **Psychological Safety**

A missing but helpful construct in the understanding of transformative teaching is that of psychological safety. As noted above, terms such as safety (Cranton & Wright, 2008; Duncan & Clayburn, 1997; Jeyaraj & Harland, 2014) and trust (Cranton & Wright, 2008; Haber-Curran & Tillapaugh, 2015; Robertson, 1996) are prevalent in the literature. However, as Edmondson (1999; 2003) demonstrates, psychological safety denotes a deeper, subconscious set of beliefs. She describes this as, “people’s beliefs about how others will respond if they engage in behavior for which the outcome is uncertain affects their willingness to take interpersonal risks” (p. 376). An example of this from the classroom is when students hesitate sharing a response to the professor’s question for fear of being humiliated by the teacher and viewed as ignorant by peers. Edmondson’s work showed that evidence of psychological safety led to individuals being able to embrace errors and seek feedback, and ultimately to engaging in learning behavior (A. Edmondson, 1999). Robinson (1996), uses the term psychological contract to describe “the employees perception of what they owe their employers and what their employers owe to them” (p. 574). Here again, in the construct of the classroom, this can be thought of as what the student perceives as their and the professor’s roles. In a later work, Edmondson (2003) clarifies the role of the team leader

in “creating an environment for learning” (p. 265). This can be likened to the professors role in the transformative classroom.

### **Relationship Between Teacher and Student**

Bliss (1994) offers a wonderful opening for this segment of the literature review when she says, “while knowledge comes from the environment, creativity evolves from within, inspired by the interactions between trusting human beings and life experiences within that environment” (p. 25). Referring to the work of Ikeda, she goes on to speak of the “importance of the teacher as catalyst and participant in the process of developing creative students” (p. 26). Here we will further explore how the relationship between teacher and student affects transformative learning.

The literature speaks of the importance of teachers building trust with their students (Adamson & Bailie, 2012; Ashby, 2013; Cranton, 2006; Ikeda, 2001). Adamson and Bailie (2012), building upon Imel’s work, suggest that “teachers have a responsibility to establish trust and rapport while modeling learning and accepting change” (p. 145). This can be as simple as the teacher illustrating a potential response to an exercise with an example of their own. It can also be how they handle the workings of the class itself. Authors such as Ashby, Cranton, and Ikeda address the importance of building genuine relationships with students such that students will “open up to [the teacher]” (Ikeda, 2001, p. 151). Cranton (2006) sees this trust as the foundation for “the potential for examination of previously uncritically absorbed values and assumptions” (p. 12). Each of these quotes shed light on the notion that students are less likely, if at all, to open themselves up to new ways of knowing if the teacher has not earned their trust.

Throughout the literature, there is a strong sense of encouraging equality in the classroom, or a reciprocity in the learning. As juxtaposed to the sage on the stage model of teaching, where the teacher views themselves as the only one having expertise on the topic being discussed, this model recognizes the rich depth and breadth of experience the students bring to the learning (Cranton, 2006). This is described as shared power (Adamson & Bailie, 2012; Ashby, 2013) where both teacher and student influence the learning (Dobson, 2008; Fishman & McCarthy, 2007). The belief is that as “teachers become partners in the process of discovery” (Ikeda, 2001, p. 151) both teacher and student “are changed through this shared experience” (Ettling, 2006, p. 62). These quotes reveal that in the transformative classroom, while the teacher may designate the overall objective of the course, the way the learning unfolds in the classroom over the course of the class is informed by both teacher and student.

The literature also points to the need to recognize the uniqueness of each student in the classroom. This begins with the “teachers ‘awareness of learners’ prior experiences and socio-cultural factors that influence the process of learning” (Badara, 2011, p. 16). Understanding that each student is going to bring different perspectives to the classroom and these perspectives will color how the student engages in learning. Dobson (2008) and Hansen (2007) both point to the importance of being mindful of how the individual student is engaging with the curriculum. Slavich and Zimbardo (2012) point to the extensive literature across varied theoretical fields that highlights the importance of personalized attention and feedback from the teacher to the student. Ikeda (2001) shares his perspective on the impact this approach has in the classroom when he speaks of the “resonance of individual personalities associating and interacting in earnest and in harmony as complete human

beings” (p. 186), declaring that “the essence of education is the process whereby one person’s character inspires another” (p. 151). The import here is not to view the class as a collective of students but rather, to meet each student where they are on their unique learning journey, and traverse the course together.

At the same time, Chory and Offstein (2017) have opened a conversation that cautions faculty to thoughtfully consider their underlying assumptions of pedagogical caring. They provokingly point to the “sad and disappointing outcomes for students, faculty, and universities” (p. 9). While much of their argument focuses on questionable faculty behavior outside of the classroom, and the implications of this behavior on the student experience, they also highlight methods for supporting faculty interested in this pedagogical approach, such as creating space in departmental meetings to discuss issues associated with this approach, enhancing the hiring process to include an understanding of the candidate’s teaching approach, establishing mentoring programs, and expanding professional development offerings to address these issues. Hawk (2017) responded to Chory and Offstein’s essay, acknowledging that, “the type and depth of relationships faculty will have with students has shifted toward a blurring of relational boundaries and roles” (p. 669). He reminds readers that the ‘ethic of care’ that he and co-author Lyons wrote about in 2008 compel “faculty who care for the well-being of their students must exercise reason and judgment in assessing the unique characteristics of the students, the context, and the situation” (p. 673). These authors are not suggesting a movement away from pedagogical caring but rather they offer guidance for those interested in pursuing this approach.

### *Conclusion*

The seeds of transformative teaching can be understood through this quote, “According to Maslow, the primary consideration of education is to ‘help [the student] to become the best he is capable of becoming, to become actually what he deeply is potentially’” (Ikeda, 2001, p. 60). Inherently, the process of ‘helping the student become the best he is capable of becoming’ involves a shift in the way the student sees himself and, perhaps, the world around him. Mezirow (1981) describes the moment when the individual “becomes critically conscious of how and why our habits of perception, thought and action have distorted the way we have defined the problem and ourselves in relationship to it,” (p. 65) as a disorienting dilemma. A disorienting dilemma is where the transformative learning process begins.

Extensive literature exists delineating the transformative learning process (John M. Dirkx, 2006; J. M. Dirkx et al., 2006; Kegan, 2000; Kitchenham, 2008; Sharan B Merriam, 2004; Mezirow, 1981, 1991, 2000, 2003a, 2009a, 2009b; Edward W. Taylor, 1997). However, much of the empirical research is based on self-reported, retrospective data (K. M. Brown, 2005; Cohen & Piper, 2000; Sharan B. Merriam & Ntseane, 2008; Morrice, 2013; Snyder, 2008). In other words, the premise of this research is based upon asking the subject to reflect on an experience that has taken place at some point in the past.

Authors of transformative teaching literature theorize the role teachers can play in enabling transformative learning in the classroom. Again, much of the literature that exists is written by academics reflecting on their practices and experiences in the classroom.

In recent years, several studies have delved into different aspects of transformative teaching and learning. Ciporen's (2008) research examined the extent to which executives behavior changed as a result of training. Badara (2011) explored the effects of a professional development workshop in supporting teachers' reflection on their teaching and transformation of their teaching practices. (R. E. Quinn, K. Heynoski, M. Thomas, & G. Spreitzer, 2014a) interviewed highly effective teachers to gain insights into the practices they ascribe to their success. McCusker (2013) utilized a mixed method design to gather pre- and post-class data regarding students self-efficacy. (Haber-Curran & Tillapaugh, 2015) utilized end-of-course essays to understand students' experience of the leadership capstone class. Brock and Abel (2016) conducted a self-reported, retrospective quantitative survey of undergraduate students identifying incidence of transformative learning.

#### *Gaps in the Literature*

A gap in the literature lies in understanding the teacher's role in facilitating the transformative learning process as it is occurring in the classroom. Exploring this gap may offer insights as to how the teacher makes sense of the purpose and impact of their teaching, and how the student interprets the experience. For those desiring to teach with transformative intention, or to more consistently enable transformative experiences for their students, we need to identify what it is about transformative teaching that supports transformative experiences for the student.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN

#### *Research Methodology*

As detailed earlier, the transformative learning process begins with the disorienting dilemma. The disorienting dilemma may be thought of as a time when what one had believed to be true is called into question. The transformative teaching literature conveys that the classroom can become a place where students are able to identify and explore these dilemmas. Much of what is known about the transformative learning experience in the classroom is based in retrospective data gathering (typically via interviews or surveys) with either teachers (Ashby, 2013; Cranton & Wright, 2008; Keen & Woods, 2016) or students (Badara, 2011; Brock, 2010). The research I conducted investigated the exploration of the dilemma as the student experienced it within the classroom.

Much of the research on transformative teaching remains theoretical rather than empirical. (Mälkki & Green, 2014), building upon earlier literature reviews, suggest that “research should move from assessing whether transformation has occurred, toward analyzing the transformative process more in detail” (p. 6). Their claim is that understanding of the microprocesses within the transformative learning process will contribute to our

understanding of the process itself. My work empirically links transformative teaching to transformative learning through the disorienting dilemma.

While several assessments have been designed and validated to assess the transformative learning process, I have been unable to identify a tool that discerns the facilitator's role in that process. These studies include a pre- and post-assessment of educators transformation with regard to social justice (K. M. Brown, 2005), an understanding of how educators develop their authentic voice (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004), and an analysis of transformative learning in educators through professional development practices (King, 2004). Therefore, my work begins to explore this uncharted territory of identifying the ways in which facilitators use disorienting dilemmas to enable the transformative learning process for their students. Hammersley, Gomm and Foster (2000) portray the efficacy of this design for my study as, "identifying and analyzing the particular social processes and practices that cause change" (p. 236).

Case study methodology is appropriate where the questions that are being researched are 'how' and 'why' questions (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Robert K. Yin, 2012). The case, (Stake, 2010) posits, is a complex interwoven system. A case study is an attempt to achieve a deep understanding of a 'case' in its natural context (Creswell, 2014; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Krathwohl, 2009; Schutt, 2009; Stake, 2010; Robert K. Yin, 2012). (Schutt, 2009) further explains that, "the parts of this whole can only be understood in relation to each other and in the context of the entire case" (p. 428). In other words, the conditions under which the exploration of the disorienting dilemmas takes place – the university setting, the physical space, the curriculum, the peers, and so on – are integral to understanding the learning itself. At the same time, a

student's experience of a disorienting dilemma is understood in its larger context of classroom discussions and interactions with peers and faculty.

The case study illustrates the description and unfolding of the students' stories of discovering their individual values and beliefs over the course of the semester and the facilitator's role – in both their design and delivery of the course – in cultivating this learning. These stories illuminate the microdynamics of what it looks like when disorienting dilemmas are being explored in the classroom.

This research design advances the three gaps in the literature outlined above. First, this study offers insights into how the classroom is being purposefully used to guide the transformative learning process. Second, access to the student's writings over the course of the semester allows me to witness their grappling with a dilemma as it occurs. Finally, this research joins the transformative teaching and transformative learning literature by attending to the process, the relationship between the teacher and the student, that allows for this deeper learning to take place. Put simply, the three core elements of the research design are – in the classroom, in the moment, and in the interchange.

### *Research Setting*

The setting for this research is an elective class offered during the second-year of an MBA program at an elite business school. The professors of the course have been deliberate about the fact that this is not a *leadership* development course but rather a leader development course. In other words, while these individuals may go on to formally lead others, this class has as its aim to help students become more 'intentional' in all aspects of their lives.

## **Introduction to Fairhaven Business School**

Clegg and Ross-Smith (2003) lay out the development and dispersion of management education, articulating North America's dominance in practices and pedagogy. Within the field of institutions conferring global MBA degrees, Fairhaven Business School is perceived as a dominant player, typically ranked at or near the top by publications such as the Financial Times ("Global MBA Ranking 2015," 2015), U.S. World and News Report (Smith-Barrow, 2015), and Bloomberg Business (Rodkin & Levy, 2015). This affords Fairhaven the social position to act as an institutional entrepreneur where the pressures (in this case both externally as well as in the institution of management education) present a compelling argument for change in the existing structures and logics (Battilana, 2006; Hardy & Maguire, 2013; Seo & Creed, 2002).

In the past decade, Fairhaven Business School has begun to offer a graduate course entitled, "Developing the Leader Within." The purpose of this course is to help students understand and explore who they are (are becoming) as leaders. This course is offered as a second-year MBA elective. Each semester between two and four sections of the course are offered, each section accommodating nearly 90 students; yet there is typically a waitlist to get into the course, indicating that there is student support for this course.

This class, grounded in adult development theory, is very introspective and experiential; it is a stark contrast to the mainstream curriculum of this school. As an example, Fairhaven Business School's primary method of teaching is case based. The ten required

courses year one and the preponderance of the electives offered year two are taught through the case-study analytical lens. The school does offer workshops in year one that utilize team feedback and self-reflection to develop the individual's self-awareness. However, in the *Developing the Leader Within* class, the student is the ultimate protagonist of their own case study. This approach seems in line with Mezirow (1991, 2000, 2009a) and Kegan's (1982, 2000) works on transformative learning. Mezirow, ultimately, sought to understand the process an individual undertakes as they develop a deeper understanding of themselves. Kegan's research focused more on how the individual understood themselves in relationship to the world around them. This course works to draw attention to both of these topics. It also, perhaps, acts as an answer to Ashford and DeRue's (2012) charge that organizations ought to invest in the teaching of development skills "related to the learning of leadership from lived experiences" (p. 147) and Allen's (2018) assertion that, "when it comes to developing leadership, multiple paradigms of learning are needed" (p. 307). This class enables students to explore and reflect upon how their experiences have shaped them, and ultimately how this manifests in relationship to others. In other words, the class helps them understand who they are as a leader and how followers might perceive them.

### **Research Context**

This research study takes place at an elite school in the northeast. The statistics for the Masters of Business Administration (MBA) program for the class of 2016 at this school, which give a sense of the diversity of the student body, are as follows:

- 41% women
- 24% minority
- 35% international

Average age is 27  
Median GMAT score is 730 (range is 510-790)  
Average undergraduate GPA is 3.67

Further, according to the school's website, the school typically admits only 12% of those that apply. On average these students have 48 months of post-college work experience prior to entering the MBA program. These students have excelled academically, demonstrating confidence in their ability to arrive at the 'right' answer. Their application letters typically speak to their academic and professional accomplishments and their self-confidence.

In the school's online marketing materials, they speak of the differentiators of their MBA experience as enabling students to learn how to lead amidst the white waters of our current business environment and to create a strong network to support that leadership. In fact, the crux of this school's pedagogical approach is to use the case method, allowing the student to attempt to navigate actual business issues in the classroom. This approach offers students the tenets for *how* to lead while paying little attention to *why* they choose to lead.

Interestingly, nearly a decade ago the university introduced a second-year MBA elective entitled, *Developing the Leader Within*. While this class began as one section, it quickly expanded to multiple sections with a waitlist for entrance. As of this writing, nearly two-thirds of the student body takes this course during their final year. As evidenced by the course objectives outlined in the syllabus, this class has decidedly transformative aims:

*To create a space where the student is able to use their life stories and experiences to gain clarity about their values, principles and motivators so that they may better understand who they are (are becoming) as a leader and the impact that will have on those they lead.*

Over the course of the semester, students are expected to reflect upon those stories that have shaped who they are and how they view the world, to unpack where their values and beliefs come from, to consider whether these values and beliefs are their own, and to contemplate how and why they intend to lead others. The goals of the course, as described in the school's course catalog are:

1. Help you become more effective at having meaningful conversations.
2. Increase your ability to be empathetic.
3. Introduce you to practices supporting greater mindfulness and self-awareness.
4. Become comfortable assessing personal patterns of thought and behavior with honesty and self-compassion.
5. Gain clarity about how your life experiences shape your worldviews, values and motivators; and, with that clarity make conscious choices about your path forward.
6. Begin to think about how your leadership will empower, inspire and enact others.

These individuals, accustomed to standing apart from their peers (in the classroom and the office), now find themselves in an environment where they are surrounded by equally accomplished people. An environment designed to draw upon their competitive nature – from the rigorous admissions criteria, to the case method<sup>1</sup> which positions teams adversarially ("Case Study Teaching Method,"), to the expectation of classroom participation. This setting appears to be a place where the students are ultra-competitive – where they spend time learning how to analyze cases, defend their positions, and seek out ways to get their voices heard in class. Grading in this school is done on a forced curve, creating further rivalry for distinction. This structure does not necessarily encourage students

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<sup>1</sup> The case teaching method provides students with information, typically in the form of a thick narrative. The student is tasked with interpreting the information, identifying options, determining a course of action, and projecting the outcomes based on those actions. In the classroom, the professor's role becomes one of facilitating a discussion across the class that highlights the complexity of the case.

to be self-reflective and vulnerable, particularly in a way that is transparent to their peers.

The *Developing the Leader Within* class is a radical departure from the normative pedagogical approach at this school. This course, as delineated further below, offers a unique setting that prompts disorienting dilemmas. It is against this backdrop that this research offers an understanding of how the facilitators enable these students to explore the deeper, more introspective questions of who they are/are becoming as leaders, what their values and beliefs are and ultimately what their reason is for leading.

### **Curriculum**

As explained earlier, this course has transformation as its intended outcome. The premise of the course, as described in the course catalog, is,

*The purpose of Developing the Leader Within is to help you come to understand who you are (are becoming) as a leader. Developing the Leader Within requires an unusually high degree of curiosity, reflection, and interpersonal openness. You will be asked to think differently and explore new behaviors. Do not take this course unless you are open to sharing personal insights, experiences, ambitions, and fears both in class and in your Development Teams (DTs).*

As such, the professors of the course have included readings, exercises, and lectures meant to provoke disorienting dilemmas for their students. The primary text underpinning the course is, *The Discover Your True North Fieldbook* (George, Craig, & Snook, 2015). The preface of the book describes it as “offer(ing) a series of exercises encouraging you to delve deep into your life story, your passions, and develop into an authentic leader. First, you will explore your life story and its relationship to your leadership.” “By mining your life stories and exploring your crucibles, you begin to uncover unique patterns that help to define who you are, your authentic self.” “We encourage you to be as open and honest as possible when

completing these exercises. The more truthful and vulnerable you are, the greater the impact of this work. Have the courage to explore your life deeply, to understand who you are as a magnificent human being, to discover where you really fit in this world, how you can use your leadership to impact others in a positive way, and to leave a lasting legacy that you'll be proud of." Each week the students are completing the exercises associated with a given chapter in this book. Other key references include *Daring Greatly* (C. B. Brown, 2012), and *Difficult Conversations* (Stone, Heen, & Patton, 2010).

The faculty have created a course map which is shared at the start of each class. This visual is broadcast for the students to situate them as to the nature of the course and where they are on the learning journey. Each of the positions on the map represents a module within the learning cycle.

Within the semester, the students are given assignments meant to evoke a disorienting dilemma such that they can begin the work of critically reflect on how the exercise has helped them to more deeply understand who they are and how they are showing up in the world. Examples of these assignments include:

*Crucibles are those searing moments in our lives that are particularly laden with meaning. Come to class with a list of 2-3 life crucibles and the meanings and/or lessons you find in them.*

*Come to class prepared to discuss a situation when your values and principles were tested under pressure. To what extent did you deviate from your values when under pressure? What would you do differently if you had to do it all over again? Jot down a few notes and bring them to class.*

*Think of a “courageous conversation” that you need to have (but haven’t) or should have had (but didn’t). Come to class prepared to apply what you learned from the reading assignment in “Difficult Conversations” to your own, real-life mini-case.*

As demonstrated by the exercises above, the intention of the questions is drive introspection and have the student reflect on how their principles, values and beliefs shape their behavior.

### **Evolution of Curriculum**

The Fairhaven Business School has offered the course for several years. A few years into the courses run, the core teaching team of *Developing the Leader Within* determined that a radical revision of the course curriculum was needed; these changes included a departure from the traditional pedagogy focused on cases study review and debrief. This curriculum overhaul included phasing out the use of case studies, refocusing the attention of the class on the student as the case protagonist, and repositioning the small group meetings after the classroom discussion as a vehicle to more deeply engage in the content. The premise of this course can be understood through language offered in the Introduction of the primary text for the course:

“...is about mining your life story for deep insights, uncovering the unique gifts that you bring to the world, clarifying your core values, and knowing the underlying purpose of your leadership...(this) gives you flexibility to excel in a wide range of situations, all while being true to your authentic self...(it allows you to) align others around a shared purpose and values...and empower others to lead” (George et al., 2015, pp. 2-3).

The course covers topics such as *Your Leadership Journey and Life Story*, *Crucibles of Leadership*, *Values, Principles, and Ethical Boundaries*, and *Courageous Conversations*. The faculty use classroom time to situate the topic in its context, to model the topic using

personal examples, and to engage students in the topic through classroom exercises. Immediately following class, the students meet in small groups established by the faculty. These self-facilitated groups, called *Development Teams (DT's)* are tasked with supporting and encouraging each other as they individually and collectively process and engage with the week's topic. Lastly, each student is asked to submit a weekly reflection. This journaling becomes a space where students can delve into their thoughts, struggles, aspirations or fears as they reflect on who they are learning themselves to be.

This pedagogical shift, which is unique to this course within the MBA program, has seen course evaluation results rise and enrollment increase. Additionally, the end of program evaluations rate this course as one of the most transformational of the students' time at the school.

Extant texts, for example those listed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), require that researchers be aware of the need to “temper their use with an understanding of the time, context, and intended use for which the materials were created” (Mertens, 2010, p. 373). An important consideration is that these students are in the second-year of their MBA program, a pivotal time where they are preparing to transition from the university setting back into the work world. Paraphrasing one of the professors, this class is meant to help the students gain clarity about who they are and to offer the students tools and frameworks to continue to explore how they will lead authentically.

#### *Research Purpose Statement*

In this study, I describe how facilitators enable the students to engage in the exploration of disorienting dilemmas where it is evidenced in the research. Further, through

this research, I investigated the facets educators bring to students' experience, such as their teaching philosophy, the structure and content of the curriculum, the classroom environment that they create, and the relationships they forge with the students. The voices of the professors and the students illustrate how disorienting dilemmas connect transformative learning and transformative teaching. The participants own stories, as expressed through their written assignments, offer insights into the depth and complexity of how they experience this class.

### *Case Study Method*

Case study research allows for the idea of nested case studies. Nested case studies can be thought of much in the same way as Matryoshka dolls, where each doll is complete in and of itself, and, at the same time, is key to the complete set. Baxter and Jack (2008), in referring to Yin's work talk about the power of looking at each nested case by looking at the differences between nested cases and looking across all of the nested cases saying, "The ability to engage in such rich analysis only serves to better illuminate the case" (p. 550). As delineated visually below, the focus of this case study is the interchange between the teacher and student, where the exploration actually happens. In order to create a more complete picture of the case, I looked at the work of select individual students, nested within the subgroups, which are nested in the classroom section which, itself, is nested in the course. I also looked at how information from one data set helped to inform my understanding of another. As an example, occasionally the exploration of one student's experience shed light on my interpretation of the experience of another student.

Case studies are bounded. These boundaries may be based on time, activity, event(s), institution, program, or a particular individual (Creswell, 2014; Krathwohl, 2009). “The intent of such studies may be to give you an insight into a particular corner of the world, or a community you are unlikely otherwise to encounter” (Krathwohl, 2009, p. 69). The focus of this case study is the exploration of disorienting dilemmas in the *Developing the Leader Within* class. The boundaries of this case are clear. This case study focused on a single semester of a single course for each professor, paying particular attention to the interchange between the facilitators and the students. Details about the cases are delineated later in this chapter.

Specifically, this study exposes how the facilitators of this class enable their students to explore disorienting dilemmas. (Baxter & Jack, 2008) explain the relevance of case methodology in investigating research questions such as this asserting, “we must explore the issue through a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood” (p. 544). For this reason, I use classroom observations, interviews with faculty, and students’ written submissions to examine the exploration of the disorienting dilemma from the vantage point of the faculty, the DT participants, and the individual students. By exploring individual cases from different section offerings of the class, I am able to provide a fuller, richer understanding of the facilitators role in this exploration as it occurs over the course of the semester (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Additionally, the convergence of these varied data points, through a process of triangulation, strengthens the interpretation of the findings (Robert K Yin, 2014, p. 17).

The case I have chosen covers two professors that teach a course that has transformation as its aim. This course, particularly within this business school context is, in and of itself, an exemplar. This case selection may be thought of as an extreme case (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Seawright & Gerring, 2008) in that it is atypical for this explicit intention around transformative learning as the topic of a course. It may also be thought of as an extreme case in its distinct variation from the normative pedagogy at this school.

### *Sample Selection*

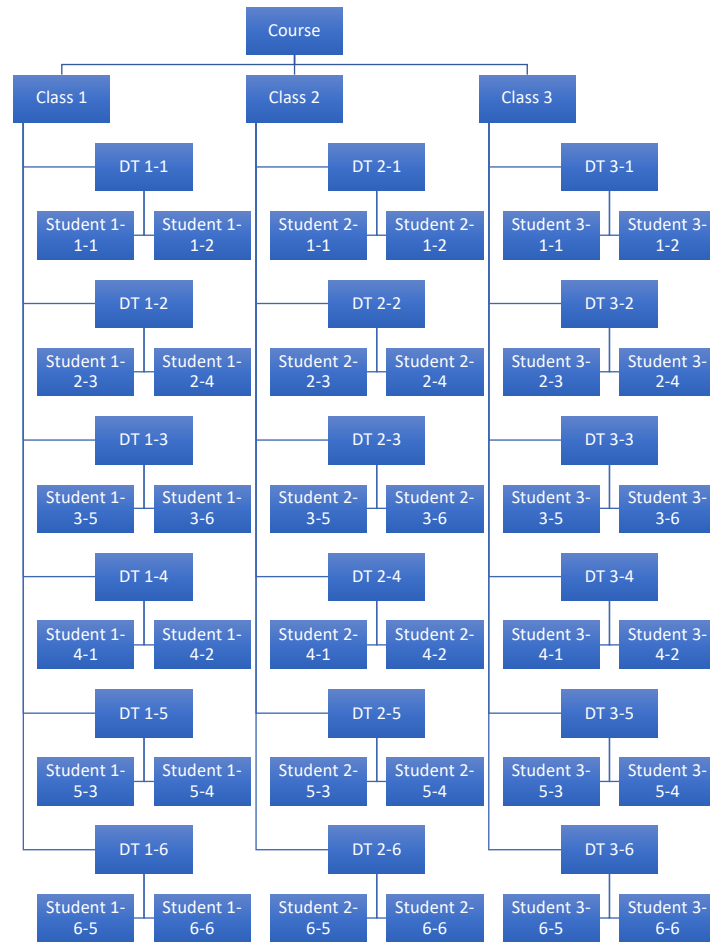
“Whenever you have a choice about when and where to observe, whom to talk to, or what information sources you focus on, you are faced with a sampling decision” (Maxwell, 1996, p. 69). In this section, I share the decisions I have made in bounding this case study.

Given the focus of this research and the depth of the case study process, it would not have been feasible to thoroughly investigate all 234 students’ experiences. Each student, should they fully participate in the coursework, would have produced 14 written documents over the course of the semester. These include a pre-class essay, weekly submissions, an end of class essay and a personal development plan. Therefore, I made decisions that allowed me to see the interaction of transformative teaching and transformative learning through “different instances of it, at different moments, in different places, with different people” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 29). As Miles and Huberman (1994) and Flyvbjerg (2006) explain, case study research and the samples selected are not concerned with representativeness or external generalizability; rather, case study research is about illustrating the phenomena that is occurring within the set of conditions being studied. Ultimately, the focus of this research is the exploration of the disorienting dilemmas. However, to

understand if and how the faculty are enabling this exploration, I also needed to examine the inner workings of the class, looking at work of select individual students, the student's interaction with the facilitator via journal feedback, and students' interactions with one another within the written summaries of the *DT*'s.

*DT*'s are formed by the professor's administrative assistant immediately following the first class (when the add/drop period has ended). Each class has 13 *DT*'s comprised of six students. The primary objective in establishing the *DT* is that the students not know each other prior to class. One method for achieving this is ensuring that the students assigned to the *DT* come from different sections, meaning that they would likely not have had much exposure to one another through prior classes. Figure 5 illustrates the nested structure of the class.

Figure 6. Diagram of the Nested Cases



To clarify Figure 5, each section of the course has approximately 80 students in it. During the semester of field research, three sections of the course were offered. Within each section, there were 13 *DT*'s comprising of six students each.

Of the 234 students enrolled in the course during the time of my field research, 212 (or 90.6%) consented to participating in this research project. To mitigate potential bias, selection of students to be included in the study was not done until after the completion of the course.

Each student, should they fully participate in the coursework, would have produced 14 written documents over the course of the semester. It was anticipated that some students would fully engage with the course content while others would have difficulty relating to the goals of the program. Because transformative learning involves becoming aware of, reevaluating and, perhaps altering, long-held values and beliefs (John M. Dirkx, 2000; Kegan, 2000; Mezirow, 1991), this is not a journey that all are prepared to undertake. While the perception might be that because this class is an elective only those who are prepared will register, the reality is that it is difficult to fully comprehend the degree of self-exploration through the syllabus or even prior students. This research looked for evidence that the transformative learning process was occurring, not the degree to which it was achieved over the course of the semester. Specifically, I looked at how the professors created the environment and experiences that enabled the students to explore disorienting dilemmas.

Using NVIVO to support this qualitative analysis, I began the process of identifying cases by conducting keyword searches within the students' texts for all 212 students participating in the research. As noted elsewhere, transformative learning literature suggests that disorienting dilemmas are accompanied by an emotional response. This is supported by values research which notes that, "values are beliefs linked inextricably to affect. When values are activated, they become infused with feeling" (S. H. Schwartz, 2012, p. 3). A full explanation of the process I will use to determine cases for inclusion in this study is reported in the Analysis of Findings section of this chapter.

Through this research, I have identified and shared cases which illustrate the interchange or process through which faculty enabled students to explore disorienting

dilemmas. Through the careful curation of these cases, I was able to shed light on what it looked like as it was occurring in the classroom. This purposeful selection aligns with Eisenhardt and Graebner's (2007) strategy where, "cases are selected because they are particularly suitable for illuminating and extending relationships and logic among constructs" (p. 27). It also eliminates undue influence of the *DT* in the findings as team dynamics are outside the scope of this research.

This longitudinal strategy allowed me to follow each of the selected students over the course of the semester. Insights gleaned from the student described how both the course curriculum and the *DT* impacted the student's learning about themselves. Additionally, because I investigated individuals within *DT*'s situated within a class, I was able to examine the learning experience of students within the same *DT* and within the same class in order not to compare the two but to provide more clarity and context to the phenomenon.

#### *Collection of Data and Information*

The primary data used in developing these case studies included pertinent documents relating to facilitation of these courses, including but not limited to student and faculty biographical data, the teaching philosophy of the individual faculty member, curriculum documentation, pre-class assignments, weekly reflections and responses by professors, *Development Team* summary sheets, end of semester *Personal Leadership Development Plans*, end of semester course surveys, and, classroom observations.

According to (Robert K. Yin, 2012), "good case studies benefit from having multiple sources of evidence" (p. 10). He goes on to list the six common sources of case study evidence as direct observation, interviews, archival records, documents, participant-

observation, and physical artifacts. This case study encompassed nearly all of these sources, including direct observation in the classroom, interviews with the professors, archival records such as teaching statements and syllabi, documents such as those submitted by the students throughout the course, and physical artifacts such as those witnessed in the classroom and on the campus. One such physical artifact is the amphitheater design of the classrooms. This broad and deep insight allows me to better understand and interpret the phenomenon. Ultimately, this method enabled me to deeply explore and understand this phenomena while also working to portray it with rich enough context that its broader applicability can be discerned (Simons, 1996).

The privilege of being an observer in the classrooms throughout the semester-long course afforded me “alternative means of establishing claims to knowledge than traditional paradigms of evaluation allow” (Simons, 1996, p. 2). As the researcher, I observed each section for each of the two professors over the course of a single semester. In all, this equated to nearly fifty hours of classroom observation as three sections of the course were offered during the semester of field observation. Each section met once per week for an hour and twenty minutes. The classes met twelve times over the course of the semester. Through field notes I attempted to archive a detailed description of classroom activities relating to the disorienting dilemma aspect of the transformative learning process, how these are explained and interpreted by different actors in the setting, how different frameworks and concepts are used, referred to and employed to support the exploration of disorienting dilemmas in practice. The observation guide detailed in Appendix A focused my attention in the field. I principally observed classroom interactions, but also asked questions of the professors for

clarification, seeking to shed light on the ways in which the professors enabled the exploration of disorienting dilemmas for their students.

Semi-structured interviews with both professors took place before the semester began. These interviews, each approximately 60 minutes in length, were recorded both through audiotape and handwritten notes. The audiotapes were professionally transcribed and I audited the transcriptions for accuracy. The purpose of the pre-semester interview was to gather each professor's perspective on the history and evolution of this course, why each teaches the course, their approach to the curriculum design and delivery, and their thoughts on transformative learning. The script that guided the pre-semester interview can be found in Appendix B.

### *Analysis of Data*

"Narrative analysis takes as its object of investigation the story itself" (Riessman, 1993, p. 1). In other words, is the professor's intention of creating or evoking a disorienting dilemma for the student being experienced as such by the student? This involves mining the students' stories for evidence of grappling with a disorienting dilemma. This could appear in a student's journal when they write about how they are reexamining concepts learned in the classroom in the context of their own life. A dilemma is only disorienting to its owner. Therefore, the text needed to be coded not simply upon the potential dilemma but also to incorporate the student's described context. As an example, a journal entry may say, "I've just realized that the oil used to cook the French fries contains animal products." For one student this may simply raise a dietary awareness whereas another student may find themselves in a moral dilemma based on their cultural practices. The content surrounding the

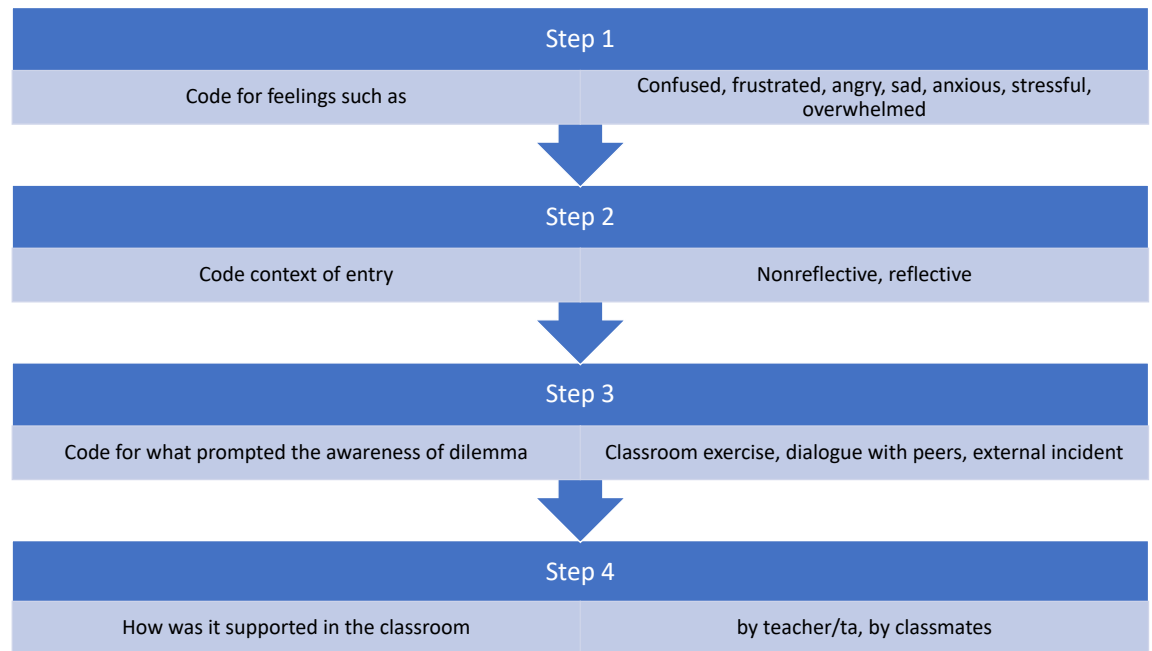
comment will be used to help elucidate whether the realization has triggered self-reflection or not.

Within the curriculum, the students are asked to “Come to class with a list of 2-3 life crucibles and the meaning and/or lessons you find in them. Crucibles are those searing moments in our lives that are particularly laden with meaning.” Perhaps the student who became aware of the oil used to cook the French fries might bring this example into the classroom to explore the cultural values, beliefs and motivators behind this norm, and in doing so gain clarity with regard to their own values, beliefs and motivators. As evidence of these disorienting dilemmas are discovered, I then looked for linkages between the learning and the construct designed by the facilitator. Through this research, I demonstrate linkages between transformative teaching and transformative learning. As explained by (Baxter & Jack, 2008), “In case study, data from these multiple sources are then converged in the analysis process rather than handled individually. Each data source is one piece of the “puzzle,” with each piece contributing to the researcher’s understanding of the whole phenomenon. This convergence adds strength to the findings as the various strands of data are braided together to promote a greater understanding of the case” (p. 554).

As discussed in the literature review, the disorienting dilemma is recognized by the dis-ease it causes in the individual, the inner strife between what they had believed to be true and new knowing. An example of this is Taylor (1994) description of a disorienting dilemma as “dissonance in the participant’s life causing stress and intense emotions” (p. 162). Taylor goes on to describe the participant’s response to the disorienting dilemma as being either nonreflective or reflective. A nonreflective response would rely on old patterns of behavior to

forge a way through the dilemma (p. 164). Whereas a reflective response would involve “deep critical reflection” and “questioning of preexisting meaning schemes” (pp. 164-165). As noted earlier, the inductive approach to the full dataset allowed me to identify cases within the dataset that illuminated the presence of a disorienting dilemma. Next, I reviewed the potential cases to determine whether the context that surrounds the keyword was reflective or nonreflective in nature (Bell et al., 2011; Clifford & Montgomery, 2015; Snyder, 2008). Of those that were reflective in nature, I triangulated the student’s text with additional data points such as classroom observation notes, curriculum delivered, and facilitator interviews to understand what might have prompted the dilemma and how the student’s exploration of the dilemma was supported. Figure 6 illustrates my approach to analyzing the data.

*Figure 7. Coding Schema*



In approaching the data, I used as my touchstone the seminal book by Pat Bazeley (2007), “Qualitative Data Analysis with NVIVO.” Within this textbook, Bazeley prescribes a method for maximizing the effectiveness of the NVIVO software to support qualitative research. In particular, I have focused on her guidance on the topics of creating goals for early work with the data, codes and coding, and connecting ideas. The questions that guided my coding were:

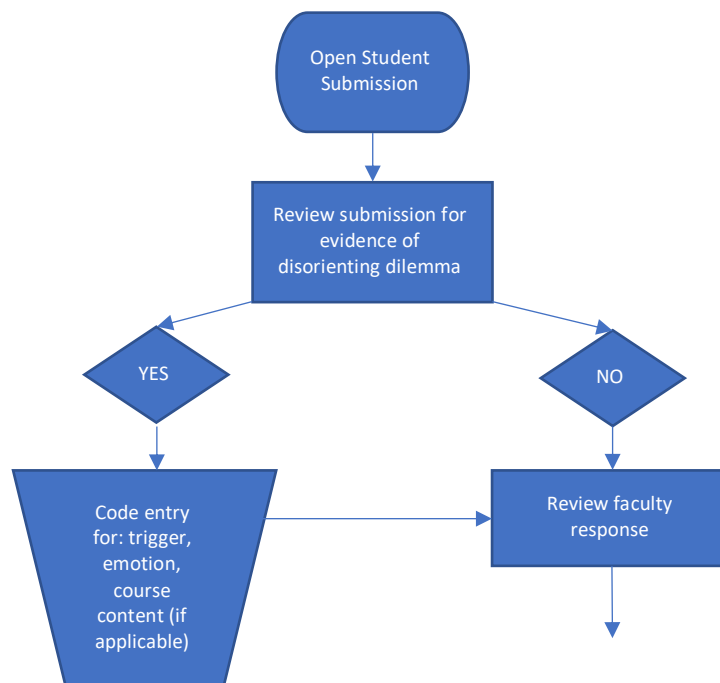
1. Does the student’s submission describe a disorienting dilemma?
2. What was the trigger or context for the disorienting dilemma?
3. What emotion(s) does the student express in the submission?
4. Does the student indicate that the entry is tied to materials covered in the course?
5. Is there evidence in the faculty/teaching assistant response that they are supporting or encouraging deeper learning for the student?

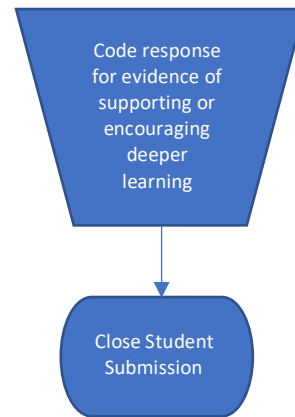
One way to understand what makes a dilemma disorienting to the individual is that it violates a value (or set of complementary values) that they hold or it sees competing held values coming into conflict. Schwartz (2012) states, “values are beliefs linked inextricably to affect. When values are activated, they become infused with feeling” (p. 3). As I delineated in the literature review chapter, authors use language such as ‘untenable,’ ‘traumatic,’ and ‘acute,’ to describe a disorienting dilemma. I have also found emotions and dilemmas linked in ethics literature, medical education literature, and social psychology literature.

To begin distilling the data, I ran a Boolean query in NVIVO to identify saturation of keywords based in emotion. The Boolean search was “ang\* OR worr\* OR lonel\* OR doubt\* OR sad\* OR anxi\* OR insecur\* OR confus\* OR frustrat\*.” Given that disorienting dilemmas

are described as causing dis-ease and indicate a violation, my search focused on negative emotional cues. 330 records had 3 or more references to these terms. Upon further investigation, 94 students had 2 or more records in the query results, with one student having 9 records. Further breakdown of this data shows 33 students in class 1, 29 students in class 2, and 32 students in class 3. By coding only those students that have 4 or more references to these terms, I coded 6 students from class 1, 5 from class 2, and 10 from class 3. Given that the same professor teaches classes 1 and 2, this gave me a fairly even distribution across the two teachers. The coding flowchart visually demonstrates the process I used with each student record. Each student, if they completed all of the assignments, had 14 records. On average, it took me approximately 12 minutes to code each record.

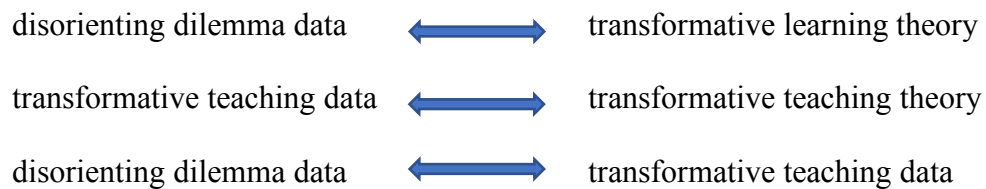
*Figure 8. Coding Process*





I am not asserting that emotional associated words are meant to uniquely identify a disorienting dilemma. However, they offered a good first probe of the data and did yield a tractable set of text as a starting point for this research. And, as I share in chapter 5, these texts illustrated the values conflicts that the transformative learning literature speak about.

This case study offered the opportunity to investigate the tension between theory and practice. Yin (2014) speaks of pattern matching as a way of linking the data to theory. This research allowed for pattern matching at three levels:



As discussed elsewhere in this text, the disorienting dilemma as a phenomenon has been undertheorized. Yet, transformative learning theory rests on the premise that the catalyst for transformative learning is a disorienting dilemma. Therefore, this study expands upon the transformative learning literature by investigating the disorienting dilemma. Secondly, as expounded on in the literature review, while a theory of transformative teaching was constructed (George M. Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012), little has been done to advance this model. I have been unable to identify any studies that examined transformative teaching

practices as they occurred in the classroom. Therefore, this longitudinal study serves to further the transformative teaching literature. Finally, through both the writings of the students and faculty and the interviews with the faculty, we are able to ascertain how the disorienting dilemmas experienced by the students shape the teaching approach of the faculty, both at the individual and classroom levels.

The focus of this research was not only on *how* the facilitators design the courses and *why* they feel that this design supports the exploration of disorienting dilemmas, but also attended to *what* aspects, if any, of disorienting dilemmas were being evidenced by the students, as exhibited in their written narratives. Particular attention was paid to the language students used to describe the impact that the learning environment had on their learning. I took an inductive approach to the data, building a coding schema through iterative reviews of the text. Interviews with the professors offered insights into how the professors define transformative learning, the thought process behind the curriculum design, the professors' views on their role in the transformative learning process, and their expectations for the students' ability to engage in the exploration process over the course of the semester.

#### *Example from the Data*

The following excerpt from the data offers an example of how the curriculum, *DT*, and interaction with the faculty come together to support the exploration of a disorienting dilemma. This text is drawn from a student's submission in the second week of the course. Here you see the student's entry, as well as the exchange between the facilitator and student as delineated by the lines between entries.

*Last week in class you talked about how some people weren't ready for this course. After you shared some people's week one expectations essay, I can say I fall in that bucket. I took the syllabus, picked out some things I liked, and threw it back onto paper. I wrote what I thought you wanted to hear... You said it's supposed to be a think blog but this is likely to be a think vomit. Please bear with the mess.*

*I think I failed or at least discounted the self-affirming narrative with my DT... I've always thought this helps others see me as humble and is generally a healthy action. But I'm starting to question if my seeming inability to acknowledge my accomplishments is eating away at my self confidence. Because right now, I don't feel confident at all. I don't think I ever really have. I always feel like I'm doing something poorly. I want to feel confident but I don't know how to get there...*

*All my decisions in life have been relatively easy – I do what's best for me. What's best for my career... But this past summer I met someone that has been making me think differently... Now we are starting long distance and I'm scared, frustrated, lost, sad. I'm scared of losing her.*

*My company is paying for my grad school. Based on recent conversations, my senior leadership has diplomatically and delicately advised that the best fit for me after school would be somewhere in Boston, Chicago, or New York City – although San Francisco is an option as well. Samantha is working in San Francisco. We both grew up in San Francisco and have all our family there. Before meeting Samantha I would be more than happy to go to any of those three locations. But I know we would both be miserable if we did long distance for longer than we already have to.*

*I've kept her in the loop on all my conversations but I'm lost. I want to come back to San Francisco but what will my senior leadership think if I tell them that? Would they understand? Would they see me as not dedicated to the company? Samantha has talked about moving with me if I went somewhere other than San Francisco after grad school but how is that fair to her? How would I make it up to her if she sacrificed that for us? And will she even do that if I end up in New York City?*

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*S, Thank-you for trying something different. I did not experience it as messy at all. I see you as human and I appreciate the honesty with which you shared your truth. I find it interesting that you describe yourself as "selfish" when you had no one else you really had to satisfy except yourself. Now you are confronted for the first time with a major choice which not affect only you, but someone you love as well. I will say that DLW is a great place to be to learn how to deal with that question in a new way. I hope you have a wonderful weekend and get "filled up" as the long distance relationships have unique challenges. – M*

---

*Really appreciate your thoughtful response and kind words. Thanks again for reading. P.s. I did have an excellent weekend introducing Samantha to our city! S*

### *Validity and Reliability*

In their manuscript, Curtis, Gesler, Smith and Washburn (2000), created a checklist based on Miles and Huberman's (1994) sampling criteria. This checklist, as demonstrated in the table below, correlates well with my study.

*Figure 9. Miles and Huberman's Sampling Criteria*

Sampling parameters (Miles and Huberman's criteria)	Study – transformative teaching
MH1: relevance to conceptual framework	The research contributes to the concept of a disorienting dilemma and offers a conceptual framework for intentional interconnectivity by faculty in the transformative learning classroom
MH2: potential to generate rich information	This research follows the interaction of 2 professors, across 3 classes, with 21 students, over the course of a semester
MH3: analytical generalizability	The findings from this study offer insights for faculty interested in creating

transformative learning environments for their students. Note: I use the terms ‘faculty’ and ‘students’ broadly.

MH4: potential to generate believable explanations

By utilizing the data as it was shared by the faculty and students

MH5: ethics

Students and professors permitted informed consent

MH6: feasibility

Access to students, classes, and professors

This research compares the goals and objectives articulated in the syllabus to the written experience of the students. Further, the experiences of the various individuals involved in the study are used to triangulate the findings. An important criterion for evaluating qualitative research is that of *trustworthiness*. In essence, trustworthiness can be explained as providing the reader with a sense that the way the research question has been investigated, the data analyzed and interpreted, and the findings presented, appear to be rational and truthful (Guba, 1981). The primary methods of ensuring the trustworthiness of these findings included:

Triangulation. Information gathered from each of the sources was analyzed to identify patterns or themes (Creswell, 2014, p. 201) that transcend groups within the research setting.

Member checking. During the research I engaged the professors to calibrate my interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2014, pp. 201-202).

Prolonged time in the field. My engagement in the classroom over the course of the semester enriches my “understanding of the phenomenon” within its context (Creswell, 2014, p. 202).

## CHAPTER 4

### THE INVITATION: ENCOURAGING THE EXPLORATION OF DISORIENTING DILEMMAS

In this chapter I explore what tactics, methods, and strategies the faculty I study employed, and how they did so, in an effort to better understand what faculty with transformative aims do or refrain from doing to encourage students to recognize and explore disorienting dilemmas. I focus on elucidating how the intricately connected web of curriculum design, content, and faculty embodiment coalesce to create the invitation that enables students to potentially encounter and then further explore a disorienting dilemma. I find that it is not simply that the faculty have attended to each detail expected in a positive learning environment, it is the totality and interconnectedness of each of these facets that seems most salient through the data, as I will illustrate in this chapter. Beyond their earnest and enthusiastically stated intentionality is the evidence of how it is enacted in the pages of text that I collected showing how they enacted those intentions.

I derive my findings from four data sources. First, I was given access to the faculty in the form of pre-semester interviews with each of the two faculty members and teaching meetings that occurred amongst the two over the course of the semester. Second, I was given direct access to the students' written works as they were submitted throughout the semester.

This access also allowed me to see how the faculty responded to the student's submissions, a focal feather of the course and my third data source. And, finally, I observed each class for both professors. It is through the careful interrogation of these four data sources that I have been able to unearth these discoveries.

Detecting transformative teaching is a complex task, as many teachers would assert that it is their intention. Rigorous case research requires that the researcher triangulate data, looking at multiple source of data to verify findings (Stake, 2010). I mined the faculty interviews, course materials, classroom observations, and curriculum materials to discern how the faculty members intention to support transformative learning is enacted in the classroom. There appear to be four bundles of practices that faculty purport to employ to enable the exploration of disorienting dilemmas. First, they are clear about how they recruit students. Second, they foster psychological safety. Third, there are a set of practices around forming and supporting the DT's. Finally, the faculty themselves model the reflexivity they seek.

In Chapter 3, I share the formal design of the curriculum in discussing the setting for my inquiry. In this chapter, I draw upon my findings to further explore and characterize how faculty leverage the curriculum in service of transformative learning. In the interviews with the faculty teaching this course, they explained the importance of being vulnerable and transparent in their own transformative learning journey as a way of connecting with and supporting the students on their journey. They also spoke of being able to alter the course curriculum to address feedback received in the weekly reflections. The chapter begins by situating the reader in the context within which the course is taught. I then delve more deeply

into how faculty curate the student experience. Next, I share insights into what faculty explain as their own motivations to teach this course. Drawing upon unsolicited commentary from students in their reflections, I have a few windows into how that manifests in the classroom. Finally, I analyzed my dataset of 227 passages of feedback, provided by the 2 faculty members to 21 students in response to 11 or 12 reflections (Professor Davidson collected 12 reflections while Professor Craig did not request a reflection for the first week of the course). This dataset of sample feedback passages enabled me to see multiple types, tones, and emphases in how the faculty were interacting with students in the quest to connect transformative teaching and transformative learning. In my analysis of these several discourses of feedback, I sought a typology of feedback styles that would help characterize the multiple faculty moves as providers of the types of feedback that might elicit or encourage the discovery of disorienting dilemmas. I found that Brookfield's typology of evaluation is a useful analytical framework to understand the process of supporting the learner in the transformative classroom. I both draw upon and contribute to this typology in expanding the empirical base for observing transformative teaching in action.

Before delving into the findings evinced from the four data sources, I will situate the course in its cultural context. The Developing the Leader Within course stands in stark contrast to the rest of the MBA curriculum in two distinct ways. First, where Fairhaven University is known for using the case-study method, in this course, the student is in the protagonist role as he explores his lived experience. Evidence of this exploration will be unveiled in the next chapter. The second way in which this course deviates from the

normative curriculum lies in the way faculty design and deliver the course. I begin this section of the chapter by describing these deviations.

One of the facets of Fairhaven's reputation, and one of the reasons that students choose to attend this university, is the caliber of its faculty. Faculty members have achieved a level of distinction in the business world for their research, publications, and experience. Even the way the classrooms are designed, as a tiered amphitheater, reinforces the perception of the faculty member as the sage on the stage where all attention is focused downward and inward toward the space at the front of the room where the faculty member presides. Fairfield utilizes a rigorous methodology to curriculum design for each of its courses, the end result of which is that the faculty member imbues their expertise into this design template and is able to deliver a Fairfield University style course. Courses at Fairhaven share commonality with other higher education institutions in that they become a space for the faculty member to share their technical acumen on a given topic and the coursework becomes an intellectual exercise where students are measured on their ability to demonstrate proficiency in the skill being taught.

As I demonstrate in this chapter, in the Developing the Leader Within course, however, faculty embody the content they are teaching, navigating between guide and fellow traveler. The course offers models and frameworks through which the student can investigate the questions of how she views herself and the world around her. Faculty often use their own experiences to illustrate the exercises. In fact, in the classroom I observed both faculty members stating to their students that they would not ask the students to undertake any activity that they did not first demonstrate to the class. Interviews with faculty revealed their

assertion that this modelling of vulnerability served two purposes in the classroom. First, it was intended to permit the students to see the depth and richness of exploration the exercise could offer, creating a benchmark of the level of vulnerability hoped for in the student's own work. And, second, it was meant to humanize the faculty, allowing the students to see the faculty member as a partner in their learning journey. In this way, the faculty were able to not only explain to the students the work they would be engaging in, but to acknowledge that this work is deeply personal and unsettling, and to reassure the student by sharing that they, themselves have, and continue to, navigate these dilemmas in their own life.

As explained earlier in this text, faculty with transformative intent seek to help their students learn how to learn by “transforming their learning related-attitudes, values, beliefs, and skills” (George M. Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012, p. 576), “altering their assumptions and mindsets” (Quinn et al., 2014b, p. 16), and encouraging them to “become open to alternatives and new ways of thinking” (Cranton, 2002, p. 70). However, much of what is known about transformative teaching has come from self-reflective writings from faculty (Bain, 2004; Brookfield, 2006, 2013). Through this research I have been able to couple faculty intent with student experience, as I demonstrate with excerpts from the students writings in Chapter 5. This coupling creates a more complete picture of intent and impact.

#### *Thoughtfully curating the experience – The learning cycle*

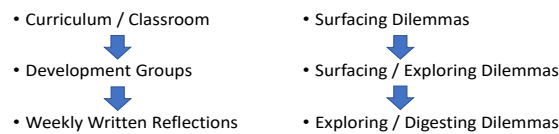
Through interviews with the faculty and observing their teaching meetings, I learned that they have designed the course to have three primary means of encouraging students to explore disorienting dilemmas. The first is the design of the curriculum itself. As the faculty members explain to the students at the outset of the semester, the flow of the curriculum over

the semester moves from understanding how the student's life experiences have shaped how she views herself and her world, through a grounding of herself in her values and priorities, to an understanding of her impact on the world around her. Another way of saying this is who has she been, who is she becoming, and how will she engage with others. They remind the students of this journey, and their progress, by illustrating it as a roadmap at the beginning of each class. The curriculum, specifies that the second method is by providing a mechanism for the student to deepen their learning, such as within DTs and through weekly written reflections. These components of the learning process serve as spaces to reflect upon, challenge, and experiment with, how the concepts being explored in the classroom might have application in the student's life. Finally, as I demonstrate in this chapter, faculty members use their responses to the student's weekly written reflections as a means of encouraging the student to continue the learning journey. This practice is one that the faculty codified and improved based on insights from previous offerings of the course. I observed the two faculty, as well as the two teaching assistants they employ, discussing in detail how to make these feedback passages personalized and meaningful as a way to propel student learning.

The pre-work, classroom, Development Groups and weekly written reflection each act as a reinforcing mechanism in support of the concept being taught. The graphic below offers a simplified understanding of the primary purpose of each component of the course and how I came to understand it as an element that operates in support of the student's exploration of the dilemma. The left-hand column shows the purposive design of the course.

The right-hand column shows the parallel possibility of engaging a disorienting dilemma that is opened up. In this chapter, I investigate each of these aspects.

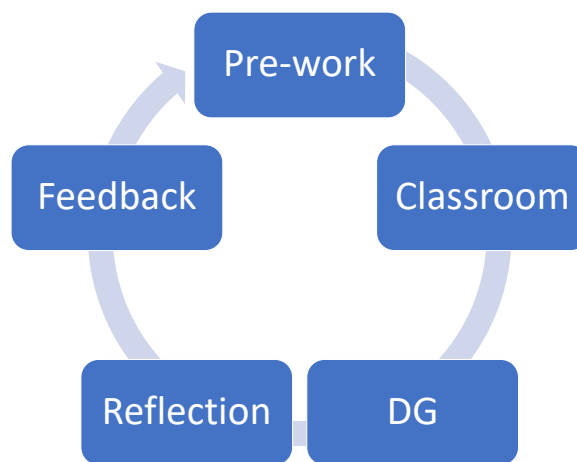
*Figure 10. How Context Supports Exploration*



The learning cycle established in this course is an iterative process. Distilled to a simple rendering, it is a three-part process: introduce the topic, explore the topic, and reflect on how the topic may be applied in your life. Each week the student is assigned pre-work associated with the topic being taught that week. As part of this, the student is encouraged to reflect on how the assigned coursework relates to her life. She then comes into the classroom where she receives additional context, in the form of frameworks, theories, and examples, and is given the opportunity to engage with the topic in brief paired dialogues and through questioning the faculty member. This is followed immediately by structured time with her small group. Later that same day the student writes a reflective essay which is submitted to the professor electronically and, prior to the next class, the student receives developmental feedback in response to their essay. Themes identified when reviewing the students' essays may influence the professor's approach to the following week's lesson plan. While this cycle remains the same, as illustrated in the interview excerpts that follow, the way each professor

describes it offers insight into their unique teaching philosophy. I will deliberate upon each of the phases of the three-part process, that of pre-work, classroom, and reflection. I have reserved feedback as a topic unto itself as I have found that it is integral to the process of transformative teaching.

Figure 11. Iterative Learning Cycle



In the excerpt below, I use Professor Craig’s own words to convey the import of the stark disparity between the human development work of this course and the curriculum the students are accustomed to. He avers that the faculty are able to create this atmosphere of psychological safety that enables the students to “work on themselves.”

*And it’s a very different kind of work. They’re working on themselves, which for many of them is something new. They’re not learning about some topic, or learning about finance, or learning about accounting. They’re actually working on themselves, which for some of them, they’re not sure how to do that. And so, the way we do that is we create a safe place, a sacred place in their busy lives. We carve out some time where they can ask these big questions. “Who am I? How do I want to*

*live my life?” And so we’re creating that space and the structure then to help them do that kind of work on themselves.*

My data suggests that the 21 students selected for this study did, in fact, feel safe to explore their dilemmas. However, it is important to be mindful of the fact that I culled the data for examples of student’s who had explored dilemmas. Therefore, it is not surprising that I found instances of student’s feeling psychologically safe to explore their dilemmas in the data. There may well be students who don’t feel this psychological safety and the professors may never know about it, or they may only learn of it during the course evaluations.

Professor Craig proceeds to unpack how the components of the learning structure support one another to create an iterative learning cycle which repeats over the course of the semester. The pre-work is meant to introduce the concept and have the student begin to think about how the topic applies to their own life. Professor Craig refers to this aspect of the learning as “readiness.” Developmental readiness, as Professor Craig describes it, is about readying the student to engage with the concepts being taught. This can be thought of as priming the pump so that the student is prepared to engage with the content for the given week.

*There are three pieces to any learning structure. There is developmental readiness, and then there are the developmental triggers or the actual experiences, and then there is reflection. How does the student make sense of those experiences, how does that feed back into their readiness for the next cycle? And so that’s the learning cycle.*

*The readiness happens when they read a chapter in the book, they engage in equivalent work in their field book, which tries to apply whatever that topic is in their own lives. The readiness happens with individual students engaging with the topic as it intersects with their own life.*

The “development triggers or actual experiences” that Professor Craig speaks of are, in Mezirow’s terms, the disorienting dilemma. The pre-work is designed to provoke the student to consider the concept being taught as it applies to their own life. While the developmental trigger may arise from a prompt from the pre-work, it may also surface in an in-class exercise, or in the Development Team dialogue. Examples of developmental triggers from the curriculum might include exercises such as “*Have a conversation with a stranger*” (lesson 3), and “*Interview your parents (or whoever raised you) to learn how **they** experienced the tensions of ‘leading an integrated life’*” (lesson 7), whereas the actual experience is a life event that the student brings into the classroom. Again, from the curriculum these might stem from exercises such as, “*Come to class with a list of 2-3 life crucibles and the meaning and/or lessons you find in them*” (lesson 4) and “*Think of a ‘difficult conversation’ that you need to have (but haven’t) or should have had (but didn’t).* Come to class prepared to apply what you learned from the reading assignment in “*Difficult Conversations*” to your own, real-life mini-case.” (lesson 9). In Chapter 5, I explore the kinds of writing and reflection that result when students take up these invitations. Here, what strikes me is how the faculty have a teaching philosophy that they can readily articulate. Not all faculty have a teaching philosophy, or they may have one that is somewhat more backstage. In my interviews with the faculty, I was impressed by how the faculty for this course have concepts anchored in the literature that they are eager to share in explaining each component of the course.

The second building block in the learning process is the classroom work. The classroom becomes a space where the faculty expands upon the concept by offering models and frameworks, examples or exercises that further the student's understanding and embodiment of the topic being discussed. As demonstrated by Professor Craig's explanation, while the foundation of the classroom work is based in the transmission of frameworks and theories, the preponderance of classroom time is spent in dialogue – whether that be dyad, triad, or full classroom – where the students can test and question the concepts. He underscores the intentional cadence of beginning with individual, reflective work, moving to an intimate dialogue and then sharing with the full class as building comfort and proficiency with vulnerability through practice.

*Then the next step is they come to the big classroom and the big classroom is 78 people. And in there, we do several things. We might have a case discussion, seeing this topic play out in someone else's life. We might do mini-exercises in class that are related to the general topic that help prime the pump to be ready to do even deeper work in your DT's. And we might share concepts of frameworks that are in the reading that are related to that topic. Depending on the topic, there's a mix of that.*

*So that's the classroom experience, which normally we'd think when you design a course, you'd just design lesson plans around the classroom. But the readiness starts with the individual work, then they come to class. And in class, we do a lot of pairing and sharing. And we believe that they worked on this topic as an individual, now in a slightly more evocative or stressful way, we're going to ask them to share what they have learned with an individual sitting next to them in class privately.*

As I noted above, Fairhaven University is a place where students strive to display confidence and mastery. While reflecting privately or even sharing with one other person may itself be a reach for some students, taking it to the next step and being vulnerable in

front of the large class size at Fairhaven is another issue. Professor Craig continues his reflection by speaking of this aspect of the design of the classroom experience:

*And then we'll often ask for them to share in front of 78 people what they learned, so it's easier to do the inside work by yourself, then share some inside work with one person sitting next to you in private, and then voluntarily we'll ask people, "What did you learn from that exercise? Share with the whole class." And we believe that way it's sort of this crawl, walk, run, in terms of becoming more comfortable with being vulnerable and doing this kind of work.*

It is one thing for an individual to sit with a concept or prompt and contemplate how it applies to their own life. It is quite another to share that rumination with classmates and the professor in a classroom setting. I wondered what the impact to the classroom experience would be if the student did not complete the exercise. In other words, if a student who had completed the exercise is paired with someone who had not, would that negatively impact the student who did the work? This is one place where, I believe, the maturity of the course is evidenced. Faculty do not assume that the students have done the pre-work assignments. In fact, in their pair-and-share exercises, they pose the query, "If you did not do the exercise, be honest with yourself as to why not. Being too busy is not a reason. You have the same amount of time as your peers. So, what's the real reason? That, in itself, is a learning." In this way, the faculty offer questions that can draw in students at different stages in relation to the issue being engaged.

I also doubted that students would be willing to share their vulnerabilities with the entire class, particularly given the environment. Though, in this case, I think that the institution's cultural norm of the expectation that students speak in the full class helped. Additionally, as the faculty members created the course norms, they elucidated that what was

discussed during the course, whether in the pair-and-share exercises, the full classroom, or in the Development Team discussions, was not to be discussed outside the classroom without the explicit consent of the student who had done the sharing. That said, not all students sought to engage in the full class discussions. Not having been able to interview the students, I cannot make attributions as to whether this was motivated by their not feeling psychologically safe or by some other factor.

The next building block in the learning process is the structured time with the Development Team. The DT, which takes place immediately following the class, is a self-facilitated dialogue among the small group to unpack, explore and challenge their understanding of the topic and its application in their life. The faculty have been deliberate in their design of the DT's. They have created a strict structure for the teams, including mandates such as the time and location of the team meetings cannot change, the peer facilitator is assigned each week and must submit a feedback form upon closing the meeting, the group must sign a contract at the beginning of the semester and review, amend, and recommit to the contract midway through the semester. As explained by Professor Craig:

*The design in the course is that the individual work and then the big classroom work is designed to create the conditions for the deepest learning, which is experiential. This happens in the small groups, the Development Teams, which are groups around six people. The Development Teams take place that afternoon that same day: two hours, safe place, very structured, we are very disciplined that they have to meet in this small classroom. These rooms are designed to be private. We want to build this discipline in that Development Team meetings are just like classrooms; you can't change the time, you can't change the place. So there is a rigor to the learning process. And every week with the different topics, someone is designated to be the faculty. So these are self-facilitated groups.*

It seemed to me that the faculty let go of control of a carefully designed learning process at this point. However, they reported to me the ways in which they are quite

deliberate in creating the norms and practices that guide the DT's. This was reinforced by the DT Contract (see Appendix G) that each student within the DT was expected to sign during the first DT meeting. In the faculty teaching meetings, I also observed the kind of careful debrief of how the DT's are functioning that I heard in Professor Craig's continued explanation:

*Faculty are not in the room. And we prepare the facilitators at the end of each class in classroom and we share with them, "Here are some lists" or, "Here is an exercise you might do," or, "Here is what we suggest you might do in your Development Teams." The facilitator is responsible for setting it up, watching the time, make sure they make the best use of their time, and then they are also responsible for sending these facilitator feedback forms to us...It's a feedback loop for us because we're not in these groups, these 13 DT's in each section. And if any red flags like, "We're having a problem in the group," or, "We're struggling with this", or, "This question came up about a concept in class," we get immediate feedback on that.*

Another deliberate component of the curriculum is that the students become owners of their own learning process. If the students think that the task is to deliver to faculty expectations to get a good grade, as in other Fairhaven classrooms, they might be less able to delve into reflections that surface disorienting dilemmas. Professor Craig explained the practices the faculty deploy to have students collaboratively steer the DT's in an effective way:

*The other thing we do to create the conditions that we believe increase the likelihood that real meaningful work will happen in their DT's is we know launches are critical for groups. So in their first Development Team, we actually have a standardized one-page contract with—I don't know—eight or ten norms that we found over the years, suggested norms, that if they adopt these, they might be more successful at doing this kind of work, creating a climate that's safe, but where they can challenge and support each other in this type of work. And so the first order of business and their first DT is to walk through each of the norms in this contract, edit it. "What does this mean to us? Does it not mean to us? Let's change these words. Should we add one, change one?" Whatever they want to add or subtract and then they all sign it, so it's a symbolic commitment that we're going to do our best to live to these norms.*

At the same time, this structure is balanced with the flexibility for the groups to use the time to attend to group members and/or topics as they relate to the overall course. In other words, if a group member is struggling with a pressing issue, the group may choose to use the time to support the individual group member in exploring how he might use the concepts from the classroom to think about the issue. While the focus, in this example, is on one member of the group, the remaining members are reinforcing their own understanding of the concepts as they support this student.

There are inherent risks to this Development Team (DT) design. First, what is to prevent the students from not meeting? Second, what is to prevent them from not discussing topics pertinent to the course? Third, what might happen if a student does not feel psychologically safe in the group? Fourth, what might happen if an issue is introduced that the students are not equipped to engage in? During the semester I observed, it seemed as though these risks had been mitigated by the faculty through the class norms, the team contract, and the clarifications of resources (including the professor himself and on-campus counseling services).

The last building block in the weekly learning process is self-reflection. By the end of the day following the class and Development Team discussion, each student is required to write a reflective essay. The students are guided that this writing is meant for them to think about what they are learning about themselves or to explore those topics that are most pressing to them. While the student may use the curriculum as the premise for her entry, she may also choose to use the space to unpack an emerging concern.

In discussing the importance of self-reflection as part of the course, Professor's Craig and Davidson offered complementary perspectives. Professor Craig focused on the intent of each phase of the learning process as an integral piece to the whole, Professor Davidson articulates the learning process from the vantage point of his expectations of the learner. As Professor Craig notes, the purpose of the reflective essay is to create the habit of pausing, noticing, and contemplating events in the student's life.

*And then the final piece. If you think of the developmental readiness as they do their individual work, they come to the big classroom and do the work in the big class, and they meet for two hours in leader Development Teams and do sort of deep work where they have time to share with the group of people that they trust. Then the last piece is reflection... Not a research paper; it's one page to two pages, think blog. "As I reflect on the whole learning cycle, what did I learn about myself, about others, about this content?" ... We tell them they can write about whatever the topic was that week or whatever is on their hearts or in their minds. And many times they'll write, "My grandfather is dying", "I'm breaking up with my boyfriend or my girlfriend", whatever they want to reflect—we just want them to get into the practice, the discipline, of reflecting and writing reflections and to squeeze meaning out of their life experiences...*

In Chapter 5, I observe that, while the content of the reflections might be commonplace, the reflective habits that students bring to these lived experiences are the overarching point. In prior classes, students might have been left to wonder whether their reflections have meaning. So, the feedback portion of the course has been carefully institutionalized in a way that students now understand and expect that their reflections are part of a dialogue.

*And then between midnight for us on Wednesday and the next week, either myself or a coach will read those and give them brief, developmental feedback on their reflections. And then we start all over the next week.*

Faculty are poised to support the student's learning whether the student is writing in direct response to the curriculum prompts or about a current dilemma they are facing. As Professor Craig frames it, "we just want them to...squeeze meaning out of their life experiences." When faculty or teaching assistants are puzzled about how to respond appropriately to a reflection, they confer with one another.

Professor Davidson offers a different perspective as he speaks of the ways in which the learning process enables the practice of having the student understand who he is presently, contemplating the experiences that have shaped their identity, and leveraging that knowledge to determine how they will move forward. In other words, the student might recognize that certain values or beliefs that have been indoctrinated in him no longer serve the person he is becoming. By understanding what that value or belief is, and where it came from, he is able to discern whether and how to carry it forward.

*In every class period, my intent is to underscore and have them experience the three ways that humans learn. Number one, they learn new content. And number two, they question their assumptions and maybe change their mind. And three, they learn something about themselves. So that's on a session level the structure that I would use and the process that I would use to get them on a daily basis. So there'll be 13 sessions and my hope is to do that in each one of those sessions. But it's to frame this first in: What's gone on in your past? A quarter of the course is how to appreciate your stories and your past, how appreciating and understanding frees you up in the present to understand your values, motivations, sweet spots, all the stuff that's in the middle of the course. And given those constructs, they set you up to say, "Okay, given that, given where I have been and where I am right now, what do I want the future to be like?"*

These responses from the faculty in my interviews clearly articulate the multi-faceted approach to the curriculum not only within a given week but across the course of the semester. There is an intentional, dynamic build from pre-work to reflection and from past to

present to future. Through an iterative process that has taken place since the course inception, these professors have refined the learning experience of the course to create this self-reinforcing mechanism for the students. In reading the interviews, I was struck by how the faculty explain that each component of the curriculum, from the topics covered to their sequence within the classroom, and from the flow from pre-work to classroom to Development Team work to reflection, is meant to enable students to step more fully into learning process. While my research supports the interconnectedness of these components, I am unclear as to whether their sequencing is essential to the learning. In other words, if one were to put the pre-work after the classroom, first introducing the concepts in the classroom and then asking the students to read and integrate the topic, what would the impact be on their learning? The course design has matured and appears to offer one good example of transformational teaching, but it is possible that another teaching team could recombine these elements in new ways that would also be impactful for students.

In a course that is student-centered, it should not come as a surprise that students shape the curriculum in real time (Brookfield, 2006; Quinn et al., 2014a). On the surface, given the course syllabus, it may not be evident that this is the case. However, as faculty surface themes within the students' weekly reflections, they adapt the course curriculum accordingly. Professor Davidson offers insight as to how interactions with students influence his teaching of the course. This deviation from the teaching plan is not an undisciplined disregard for the established curriculum, rather, this is a mindful decision to co-create the curriculum with the students in an effort to deepen the learning.

*Well, they influence it by what they write about, what they feel about. I have found myself changing my curriculum the first day based on what they have written about why they are taking the course. Their premonitions, beliefs, assumptions, stories inform how I teach. The real time conversations I have with them in class—and that's the feel part—impacts what happens in the classroom. There are going to be people who have broken off important relationships or they have been dumped, or there is a serious illness going on with them or with others, they have just received a job offer, or they've just fallen in love, or they're desperate and think they never will. Now the question is: How do I allow all of that information to impact the curriculum and the spirit in which I create that?*

The commitment to reading and responding to each student's reflection each week represents a significant investment not only in time but in emotional capital. Faculty teaching less interpretive content (for example, math and science) may invest a significant amount of time in reviewing student submissions but it is typically with an eye toward the student's ability to properly complete the problem set. This makes it far easier to employ students as teaching assistants as the expected responses are fairly standardized. The nature of student reflections in the Developing the Leader Within course are nuanced and deeply personal, requiring a more focused, individualistic response.

Through experimentation, faculty have learned that the expectation that each reflection will be read and responded to has increased the rigor with which the students complete this task. As noted in the response below, and elsewhere in the text, these reflections offer timely feedback to the professors such that they can tailor their teaching plan to address any themes that may emerge. Professor Craig offered the following insights about the purpose of responding to each student's weekly reflection:

*Knowing that someone's reading them—and not just reading them—but to the level where they are engaging in that conversation, that work, with you and you know you're going to get some feedback with the coaching, it ups the ante and the level of*

*commitment and engagement from students in terms of the quality and the richness of the reflective work they're doing.*

*It also gives us as faculty immediate feedback, which you never get when you teach. Someone will come down afterwards and say, "Oh, that was fascinating" or, "I didn't learn something", or, "I don't understand this." But you got every student at some level in their reflections sending a signal to you in what was salient in that week's learning cycle. Now it could have been life and nothing what we did in class. They could write about the case, they could write about the framework and say, "I don't understand such and such theory." "This is all B.S." or whatever. Or, "This exercise we did in class was really powerful." And so we get immediate feedback as to where people are as they're engaged with the content and the process of the work. And then we know the next time we'll start class and say, "Well, here is some of the issues or the patterns I saw in the reflections" so we can adjust or go back and say, "Let me explain this to you a little differently because it seems like some of you are struggling with this concept."*

This excerpt demonstrates the three ways in which faculty use the process of weekly self-reflection. First, it is a means to create a habit of reflection for the student. Second, it allows students to "squeeze the meaning out of their life experiences," as Professor Craig noted earlier. And, third, it is a feedback mechanism for the faculty as to how they may want to adapt the curriculum based on themes they are deriving from the students writings.

During the pre-semester interviews, I explained that I was basing my research on Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory. I then asked the faculty member to describe how they define transformative learning. Despite a self-proclaimed lack of depth in the transformative learning literature, it is clear that Professor Craig's approach to the course overlaps this body of literature. His explanation below of the difference between *informing* and *transforming*, between imparting knowledge to the student and intentionally challenging the student's thinking, closely aligns with Mezirow's definition of transformative learning as that of, "an enhanced level of awareness of the context of one's beliefs and feelings, a critique

of their assumptions and particularly premises, an assessment of alternative perspectives, a decision to negate an old perspective in favor of a new one or to make a synthesis of old and new, an ability to take action based upon the new perspective, and a desire to fit the new perspective into the broader context of one's life” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 161).

*I'm not an expert on that literature. I'll make a distinction between the two words being informed and transformed and contrast those two. I think most traditional learning and what people think is happening in the classroom in formal educational programs is they're going to be informed. So I picture this form like a concrete form, and they're going to come to class, we're just going to fill it up with new knowledge and skills. And we do that. We give 'em theories, we give 'em frameworks, we give 'em research. So they are being informed. The tricky part with this course is at the same time we're informing them, we're changing the shape of the form, and that's transformed. "Trans" means changed, "form". Changing the shape of the form. That means who they are. So the vessel itself that we're filling up with new knowledge and skills is also being intentionally challenged or changed. And so transformational learning is designed to challenge the shape of the form as well as the content of what fills up the form. So it's more than just technical knowledge and skills. It's who you are.*

Here Professor Craig shares a way to think about how the concept of transformative teaching is enacted in the classroom. To teach with transformative intent means to move beyond informing the students, beyond expanding their knowledge, and to seek to transform them, to help the student move from knowledge to wisdom. Faculty do not transform the students. They create the conditions that enable the student to explore their own transformation.

These pre-course interview responses from the faculty members shed light on the learning experience that the faculty are attempting to create in the classroom. In the sections that follow, we will discover how their teaching philosophies influence the curriculum, the

choice to model the learning, the creation of spaces for the student to deepen their learning, and the dialogic nature of the students' weekly written reflections as a learning mechanism.

### **Classroom Experience**

The professors expressed the ways in which they were deliberate about creating a learning experience for the students. I turn now to the student experience. While I did not have access to the students for interviews on their experiences, I do have data from their journals, including the instances in which they mention something directly about the classroom experience. In a way, because I was not directly asking for and prompting their comments, these journals are a good source of the naturally occurring commentary that arose from students about the course. I open with a discussion of where the course occurs in the students' MBA program and how the faculty solicit student participation in the course. I then turn to the students' reflections on the classroom and the learning process itself. Note that Chapter 5 will more fully cover student journals and the passages that suggest the nature of disorienting dilemmas. Here I consider instances where the course itself, and the content that the students find provocative, may prompt disorienting dilemmas or set the stage for them.

As mentioned earlier, this course is a second-year elective. Because the course deviates from the normative case-study teaching model in that the case protagonist in this class is the students themselves, the professors took care in crafting the course catalog description for the class. They were deliberate in their efforts to ensure a self-selection process whereby those who register for the class are developmentally ready to engage in this deeply self-reflective work. In their advertisement of the program they describe this as,

*DLW requires an unusually high degree of curiosity, reflection, and interpersonal openness. You will be asked to think differently and explore new behaviors. We expect you to be absolutely honest with yourself and others. While few of our students are completely comfortable or sure about this type of work coming in, you must be at least open to experimenting with a different kind of learning.*

Professor Craig describes the class as a narrative-based, identity-based course, “*we are the stories we tell others about us.*” Both faculty members spoke to the idea that the curriculum is founded in a variety of theories, such as adult development, communication, psychological, and relationship theory. “*We give ‘em theories, we give ‘em frameworks, we give ‘em research.*” (Professor Craig). While the curriculum was presented in the Method chapter and further explained in this chapter based on the faculty interviews about their intent and teaching philosophy, I now turn to my data on the classroom setting itself to show you glimpses of how the pedagogy is enacted. I capture these glimpses from the students’ writings and my own observations of the classroom.

The course offers insight into the individuation process that is being explored in the classroom (DeAngelis, 2017). By individuation process, I refer to the student becoming aware of their individuality. The beginning of the course looks at the influence of the environment on an individual, whether that influence comes from family, friends, work, culture, society, etc. Through the course design, the student comes to understand the ways in which each of these systems have influenced how the student views the world. The course also illuminates for the student his agency in determining whether those views remain true for him. In the students’ reflections we see how the course provided them with the space, structure, and safety for them to surface, name and explore these dilemmas.

As noted by this student's reflection, not all frameworks are readily accepted. In some cases, such as the excerpt below, the student's grappling with the framework is, itself, an evocation of a disorienting dilemma. In this lesson, faculty shared David Brook's speech about resume virtues (Adam 1) versus eulogy virtues (Adam 2). Brooks offered these two illustrations as two sides of our internal logic. He says, "We happen to live in a society that favors Adam 1 and often neglects Adam 2." Professor Craig anchored the video with the following example, "Imagine that someone watched a video of your life, looking at your calendar and how you actually spend your time, what would they conclude is most important to you?" In preparation for this same class, faculty had the students read both the (A) and (B) case study on Howard Schultz. In the classroom, faculty showed an interview with Schultz discussing his leadership of Starbucks. This was followed by faculty engaging the students in dialogue surrounding the question, "*Which is the real Howard Schultz? The person who aims to make his father proud or the ruthless businessman?*" Here, while the student notes her discontent with the Brooks video that had been shared with the class, she can also be seen struggling with the framework that the video conveyed.

*When I prioritized a personally fulfilling career in my job search after college, even if it meant forgoing some financial upside, my parents were perplexed. For them, money, stability, and growth potential should be my primary concerns; fulfillment could be found outside of work in my time with friends and family (essentially Brooks argument)... Listening to Brooks, I felt as though I was being put in an Adam 2 bucket, given my desire to "serve" and build a career focused on social impact. I don't care about achieving, building, or being effective? Not true. I am driven by a desire to win and have a great career. But I believe that I can make a positive difference in people's lives along the way, as Howard Shultz has done (I'm not so skeptical about his work). If they're at odds as Brooks frames it, social impact work will always be at the fringes – an after-thought for people driven to achieve. I refuse to believe that's true.*

This video was shared during a lesson on values and principles. The essence of the video, as the professors explain to their students, is to convey the tension between success and values. The student's response highlights precisely the type of disorienting dilemma the faculty are trying to provoke in the students. As I will further explain in Chapter 5, this video surfaces for the student an external values conflict. In her writing the student is wrestling with what she perceives as a disparity between her parents (and Brooks) values and her own. This passage, and others like it, begin to show how values and values conflicts become salient for students, a theme and interpretive lens I will develop in Chapter 5.

Professor Davidson aimed to bring both Adam 1 and Adam 2 to the students' attention, and animated this concept with an example from his own life, which illustrates the intention discussed above to enact and model the reflections the faculty aim to elicit from the students. As Professor Davidson posited to the class, "My hope is that you are comfortable in Adam 1 *and* Adam 2." He went on to share the story that when his child was young, she would ask him why he skipped pages when reading to her. He did not want to tell her that it was about getting back to his "*real work*." He was describing a conflict over time management, between his commitment to his professional role and his parent role. This moment caused him to pause and reflect on his priorities. He was willing to deliberate aloud in class about how what he might say was a priority he placed on family was actually coming into tension with his work and was not fully being enacted in his life as a parent. Sharing stories with vulnerability, like this one, is an example of enacting one of the professor's stated goals for the course. The purpose of offering this framework is to help these high-achieving students think more holistically about what success may look like for them. The

student's journal, which showed some struggle and resistance around this offering, is a good example of how provocative the material is for students.

### **Class Norms**

The faculty are deliberate in creating strict course norms, particularly as it pertains to engaging with the course content, personal reflection, and giving and receiving feedback. These norms, as explained in the Development Team Contract (see appendix G), include openness, trust, confidentiality, differences, tolerance, feedback, and challenges. Both professors explain in their classrooms that the intent is to create a safe space that enables the student to get out of their comfort zone and to the edge of their learning. They are also careful to help the students understand that they remain in control of what they choose to share. As one professor put it, *"You are the editor of your story. This isn't a tell all. Pace yourself."* Each student comes to the course with their own level of comfort in self-reflection and vulnerability. The intent behind this guidance being that the work done in this classroom is to build these muscles, for them to assess where they are and take incremental steps forward, learning to trust themselves and their Development Team in the process.

The role of the fellow students in the classroom and in the Development Team is to both support and challenge one another. As denoted in the Development Team Contract (see Appendix G), students are asked to behave in a manner that enables learning. Language in the contract speaks to "allowing for individual differences" and highlights that "respectful challenges can contribute to meaningful learning for all."

These norms, which are not just espoused but are embodied in the classroom, help us to see how the concept of psychological safety encourages this deeper learning. Edmondson

(1999) explains this concept as, “people’s beliefs about how others will respond if they engage in behavior for which the outcome is uncertain affects their willingness to take interpersonal risks” (p. 376). A fuller explanation of psychological safety can be found in the Literature Review chapter. The effectiveness of this course is predicated on the establishment of psychological safety, both in ensuring that the student feels safe to explore their dilemmas and that the student helps to create that safety for their classmates. It is not to be understated how significant it is that these professors are able to establish this level of trust amidst the strong campus culture from the very outset of the class. We will now explore the methods by which they accomplish this.

### **Modeling the behavior**

Throughout the course, the professors modeled the depth of vulnerability and transparency that they hoped for in their students. Each faculty member, in their own way, shared their responses to the various exercises with the classroom. This began with the very first class. Professor Craig shared his competing narratives with the class. While, in Professor Davidson’s class, he facilitated an exercise where each student wrote their greatest fear on a slip of paper. He collected the papers, shuffled them up and redistributed them to the students to read aloud. One student noted that there was an extra slip of paper to which Professor Davidson responded, *“That’s for me. I filled one out too.”*

This comment taken from a weekly reflection highlights the value to the student of seeing the behavior modeled in the classroom.

*Seeing other people making themselves incredibly vulnerable makes it easier to do so myself. There is also something reassuring in realizing that everyone, even the most accomplished professor, struggles with doubt.*

This student's entry demonstrates Brookfield's (2006, 2013) belief of the importance of modeling the behavior for students not only for its value in setting expectations but, as importantly, for its ability to humanize the faculty. In this course, the faculty lay bare their own learning journey as they engage with the course content. The modeling of this depth of self-reflection and vulnerability creates the invitation for the students to step more deeply into their own learning and to support their classmate's self-exploration.

### **In-Class Exercises**

The classroom is the container for delving into frameworks, theories and principles that underpin the purpose of the course. These in-class sessions allow students to question what they are learning, engage in dialogue with the faculty member in service of understanding the topic being introduced, and think about not only how they are reacting to the topic but the reactions of their classmates. In this section I offer insights from course materials, my classroom observation, and students' writings to illustrate how the exercises advance the learning.

Within the classroom there are opportunities to engage with the content through exercises. Typically, these are small groups, dyads or foursomes, where the student's share their experience with an assignment. One example from an early class was the assignment to interview a stranger. The premise for this week's class was the concept of vulnerability. The professors had the individuals pair and share and then they asked to hear from those who had done the exercise as well as those who had not.

One of the resources supporting this week's concept of vulnerability was Brene Brown's TedTalk on the "*Power of Vulnerability*". In it, she speaks of the power of

connection. She describes the foundation of disconnection as shame, *“Is there something about me that, if other people know it or see it, that I won’t be worthy of connection?”* This excerpt from a student’s weekly reflection offers insight as to how this student internalized the power of connection. His entry personifies Brown’s idea that *“in order for connection to happen we need to allow ourselves to be seen, really seen.”* Student journal entries like this one are a window into how the material is taken up by the students.

*Also, I was blown away by my interaction with the random student during our exercise yesterday. I paired up with someone whom I recognized from another class but we had never talked. Within one minute, I feel like we had really connected, partly because the thing he shared with me was something I completely related to, but also because he was such an empathic listener. I was truly struck by how connected I felt to someone who had previously been more or less a stranger to me. It reminded me how many great people are all around me and how much there is to gain from spontaneity and reaching out to relative strangers.*

A second example illustrating faculty’s use of in-class exercises to evoke disorienting dilemmas occurred when faculty posed the question to the student’s, *“What’s your number?”* Prior to this prompt, faculty showed a scene from the movie, *Wall Street 2*, where one actor asks another this same question in an effort to discern what it would take for the individual to do what was being asked of them. In the classroom, faculty explain to the students that this question offers a way for them to begin to surface their values and priorities. Faculty offered further guidance to the students with clarifying questions such as, *“If I gave you that amount of money right now, what would you do differently RIGHT NOW?”* and *“If your resources were unconstrained, how would you spend your life?”* They then had the students come to the front of the room and plot their number on a graph so that the class could see the broad range of responses. And, finally, they had the students break into groups of 3-5 to discuss

how they came to their number and their reaction to the composite of the class. As this student's writing reflects, her number is motivated by her values of wanting to provide for her family.

*Interestingly enough, if you had asked me my "number" as discussed today a week ago my answer would have been lower. Since my father has passed my eyes have been opened to just how much he was struggling financially and how money had such a negative impact on his life. It is hard to learn this now and it truly breaks my heart. But this only motivates me to make an annual salary where I can fully support my mom, giveback to my grandma, support my children and let them live a comfortable life with the best education. It only motivates me to live the life that my dad wanted for me, and to have the financial independence and stability that I so badly wish I could have had when he was alive to help him more.*

This reflection from the student shows that there is not a simplistic relationship between money and values, and that the student is reframing a common tradeoff. Much of what is evidenced in the students' writings from this exercise surround three themes. First, the students show their discomfort with the idea of articulating a number. Second, the students experience unease with how their number compared to their classmates, whether higher or lower. And, third, as noted in the excerpt above, the students may develop a burgeoning understanding of what motivates the number for them. In her example, the death of her father triggered a disorienting dilemma as she became aware of her father's financial situation and its impact on not only him but their family. This dilemma caused her to reevaluate her own financial situation.

These passages from the students' journals show some examples, from the 21 students from my dataset upon whom I focused, of how the course materials and classroom exercises are received by the students. Because these statements were not prompted by an interview question that directly asked the students to give a reaction, they are interesting as expressions that the students provided on their own. The students offer the candid reflections – including pushback and resistance regarding the course materials – knowing that the teaching team will be reading them. In the next section, I continue to dig deeper into the practices of transformational teaching by look at the rich set of texts from faculty responses that are my third type of data for this chapter.

*Space to deepen learning*

### **Development Teams**

The professors explain that the construct of the course is that the students meet in a plenary session once per week and, immediately following class, the students will meet with their Development Team. I have delineated the formal norms earlier in this chapter, and have offered the DT contract in Appendix G. Faculty articulated to the students their expectation that norms of the Development Team mirror that of the class: start on time, the group is a safe place for discussing sensitive topics, no attribution, and while you decide what you will disclose, remember that the theoretical push of the class is to share beyond what you might normally.

As noted elsewhere, the students facilitate their Development Teams. In the first Development Team meeting, the facilitators are given a contract that each student has to sign (see appendix). Each Development Team is allowed to adapt the contract as they see fit, but

this becomes their contract with one another. Halfway through the semester, the professors give the students an assessment to complete within their Development Team. The seven-question survey (see Appendix) allows the student to reflect on the dynamics of the group as well as their contribution to the group. It is used as a discussion prompt for the Development Team to determine what ways, if any, they want to deepen their work over the remainder of the course.

At the end of each class, the professor meets with that week's DT facilitators and offers them some prompts that they may use in facilitating their team's dialogue. As one faculty members framed it, *"I will give you guidelines to facilitate the discussion, but these are just suggestions. You should run your own Development Team, coming up with an agenda that works for you."* This flexibility allows the team to determine what they feel will be the most valuable use of their time together, whether that be directly exploring the construct introduced in the classroom that week, having a dialogue to further their understanding of a shared experience (for example, the presidential election), or supporting a team member in contemplating an emergent issue.

These intimate small-team sessions are intended to create a reinforcing mechanism for the classroom learning. The self-facilitated discussions offer both support and challenge as the student's grapple with what they are learning about themselves through this process. As I have shown in the excerpts, conversations range from exploring the topic at hand to addressing what is most pressing for the student in that moment.

The DT's aim to create a bridge for students to begin to make the transition from coursework to personal application. Faculty have designed the DTs to be student-led and

self-directed with the intention that students more deeply explore and experiment with the course content and experience the course content through the lens of their peers. Self-reflection, then, is meant to be the space for the student to marinate in and reflect upon the application of the course content to their own lived experience. I did not have direct observation of the DT meetings, as they were a confidential space, and I can only infer their impact on the students from some of the student passages that mention them and from the resulting student journal entries, examined in Chapter 5, that may spring at least in part from the DT processes. What I can observe directly is how the faculty urge the students onward in their reflections with the weekly faculty responses, to which I turn next.

### **Self-reflection**

In offering instructions to the class at the beginning of the semester, the faculty explain that a significant component of the course is the weekly electronic reflection. They describe the reflection as an essay, a blog, or a brain and heart dump. They warn that it will be ineffective for the student to enter the reflection with the mindset, *“I wonder what the professor wants to hear from me.”* They clarify that the purpose of the reflection is first and foremost for the student, a forcing mechanism to deepen the learning. They underscore the importance of this work noting, *“I spend two full days reading and writing back to each of you. It might be a question or a link to additional resources.”* There are several possible risks or limitations even with a course designed around the intent of transformational teaching. There is the risk that the invitation is too intense for the students and they do simply write what they think the professor wants to hear, especially in a context in which they are asked to fairly quickly switch away from the dominant and normative mode of operating at their

university. Another is that the faculty center all their efforts to “transmit” the heart of transformational teaching in the classroom. While I cannot address the former, the latter is one that the faculty take on directly with their weekly feedback, for which I do have data. I have 454 texts (227 from the students and an equal number of feedback responses from the faculty) that indicate how faculty respond to the students reflections. As noted before, many studies of transformational teaching might have only the faculty moves and methods, but because I also have the students’ uptake of the course’s invitations, which will appear in Ch. 5, the unit of analysis for my dissertation is the space between the “send” and “receive” of transformational teaching and transformational learning, which will be linked together in Ch. 6.

This excerpt from a student’s weekly reflection offers perspective on the impact of the course in creating space for the student to reflect. Here the student appears to be grappling with the disorienting dilemma created by the disjuncture between how he had thought he would feel, or what he might have been told he should feel, about the opportunity to study at Fairhaven, and his actual experience. He notes how the course structure and the weekly reflections are helping him navigate this experience.

*However, I have not been “living the dream” or enjoying myself at all this year. The initial excitement and pride have been replaced by stress, anxiety and a lack of confidence in myself. Professor Davidson, I am really grateful that I am taking DLW this semester with you. It has been a tremendous support to me through attending my DT and writing about my feelings in my weekly reflections. I could not imagine how I would be able to handle my life right now if I was not in this course.*

If this reflection were taken in isolation, it might be interpreted as the student playing up to Professor Davidson. Taken at face value, this entry appears to be imbued with an

authentic and plaintive tone. My research was able to follow the student's continued dialogic relationship with the professor over the entire semester, so it is more likely that the student is attempting to be honest than trying to "game the course" for a boost to his transcript.

There are two layers to the curriculum component of journaling. The first is, as noted elsewhere, as a reinforcement mechanism for the learning. In other words, how are the students internalizing the experience of the classroom, the Development Team, or other events in their life. The second is to introduce the students to a method of reflection – journaling, and to give them an opportunity to practice this skill. The second phase of transformative learning, after the disorienting dilemma, is self-examination. Faculty chose to employ journaling as a mechanism for students to self-reflect because it enabled them to engage the student in this reflective process.

#### *Responding to student journal entries*

The primary method of interaction between student and faculty is through the weekly electronic journal entries. The faculty members made a decision years ago that one way to deepen the learning for each student was to let the student know that the entries would be read and responded to each week. According to both faculty members, this process has, in fact, increased the depth of the journal entries. Professor Craig explains that the rationale of responding to the journal entry goes beyond increasing the student's accountability to the exercise and offers another opportunity to deepen the student's learning.

*It ups the ante for them. It really extends the learning because if the learning stopped just between them and the piece of paper, if you keep a diary or a reflective journal, it stops there. But if you share that with someone else, and they give you feedback on that, now we're in the second derivative of the learning and you're getting at least one more reaction of, "Ah, I hadn't thought of that." And many times the coaching responses are simply, "Wow. Have you thought of this?" And ask another question*

*which even further extends the learning. So it ups the ante in terms of their engagement and the quality of the reflections, and it extends the classroom and it extends the learning one more layer.*

I was curious as to whether and how the idea that these journal entries would be read by another might alter their substance. Would the student write what they thought the faculty member wanted to hear? Would the student moderate their “stream-of-consciousness” journaling in favor of what they deemed a more polished version appropriate for faculty consumption? As I reveal in Chapter 5, I did not see this dynamic in the student reflections. This does not mean that there were not students whose entries were more performative, only that the 21 students whose entries I selected for this study did not appear to exhibit this behavior.

In order to maintain the quality of individual student interaction and expand the number of sections taught, it became necessary for the faculty to test another cultural norm, that of having teaching assistants in the classroom. Each faculty member had one teaching assistant per class section to support their efforts to respond to each student’s weekly submission. During the time of my field research, one was an experienced leadership development consultant, one a psychologist, and the third was a PhD student from a partner school who had taken the class the prior year. Faculty were careful to explain to the students that only the professor and the assigned teaching assistant would review and respond to the student’s journal entry. The professors also made a point of sharing the expertise the teaching assistant brought to bear on this subject and how hearing from two different voices over the course of the semester would enhance the student’s learning.

There are two components to the written feedback given to each student. The first is the content of the response itself. In other words, how does what is being shared further the student's learning? The second is tone. How does the way in which the professor articulates his response invite the student into the learning process? As I learned from my research, the tone the faculty took – using collegial language, remaining non-judgmental, and demonstrating inquiry rather than advocating or being prescriptive – in their response were pervasive regardless of the content type. My research suggests that the combination of personalized content and appreciative, inquisitive tone, invites the student to further their learning.

The remainder of this chapter will focus on the nature of the faculty feedback as central to the invitation. Thus far, I have presented data from interviews with faculty members discussing their philosophy coupled with classroom observation. I was curious as to why the faculty felt it important to provide feedback to *each* student, *each* week, over the course of the semester. With nearly 80 students in each section, this meant hours of work every week. Another type of data I have are actual passages of feedback given in response to student journal entries. I read 274 passages from four people (the two faculty members and the two teaching assistants) addressed to the 21 students over the course of twelve weeks. I re-read the passages through multiple iterations to try to detect some patterns to the approach to feedback. What I came to see was that it was not simply about giving timely feedback, there seemed to be some pattern to the types of feedback.

A careful and iterative re-reading of my data enabled me to surface multiple feedback types that more clearly explain the phenomenon. My coding showed so many varied forms of

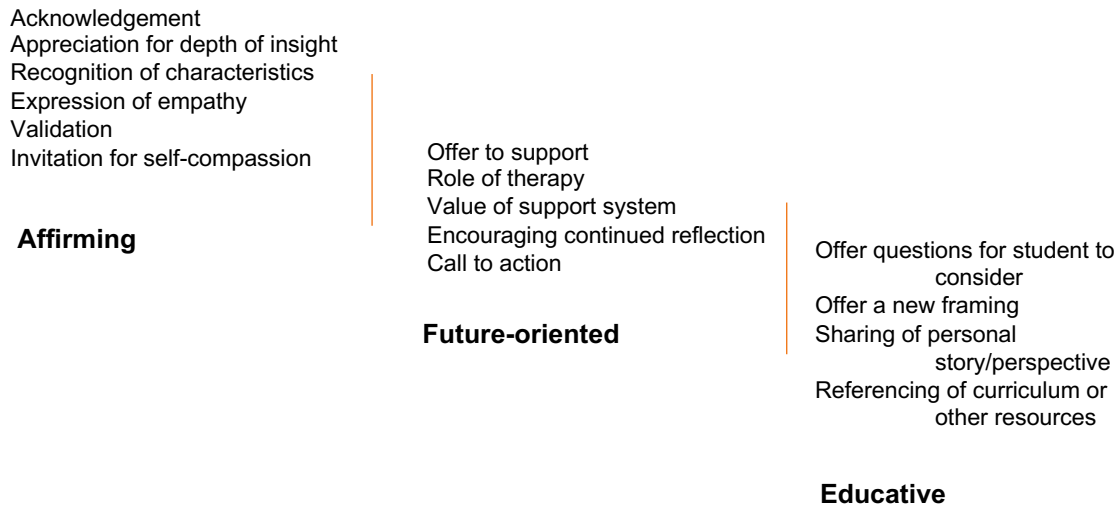
feedback that it described something that is carefully customized. As illustrated in Figure 3, I identified 15 discrete types of feedback offered by the faculty. As noted above, it is the interweaving of the “what” and the “how,” the content and the tone of the feedback that appears to differentiate it from traditional classroom feedback, which may be more likely to have fewer varieties and to stick more closely to a standardized feedback rubric. When I speak to interweaving of content, I mean to say that the faculty draw upon multiple types in crafting their feedback to the student. This contribution to the literature better enables faculty with transformative intent to understand and enact forms of feedback that encourage transformative learning.

I turned to literature on evaluation to help me characterize the types of feedback that might elicit or encourage the discovery of disorienting dilemmas. This research of literature on evaluation led me to Stephen Brookfield’s work. Brookfield’s conceptualization of evaluation most closely complemented the inquisitive, collaborative nature of the feedback I had found in the data. I use Brookfield’s (2006) typology of evaluation to simplify the more nuanced types of responses offered by the faculty. Brookfield identified three characteristics of response: affirming, future-oriented, and educative. Affirming feedback identifies and acknowledges efforts that the student is making to engage with the course content. Future-oriented feedback strives to help the student think about actions they might take toward their goals. And, educative feedback informs or guides the student’s thinking. Providing feedback that recognizes the student’s efforts, prompts ideas for action, and offers wisdom aligns with the aims of the course of heightened self-awareness, intentionality and agency.

While Brookfield's typology is likely sufficient in the workings of a traditional classroom, where the feedback is more task-focused and prescriptive in nature, my research uncovered a more complex nature to the feedback. My research suggests that because the topic being evaluated was the student himself, a more refined set of categories motivated the feedback. For this reason, I take extra care in this section of the paper to offer examples that demonstrate not simply the type of feedback being offered but the language that shapes the feedback.

I begin each section that follows with Brookfield's description of the type of evaluation. Within each section, I then offer my discrete categories that fall within that section as well as examples to illustrate the integration of the content (what) and tone (how). Within each of the sub-types are some examples drawn from the faculty responses, and additional passages appear in Appendix G.

Figure 12. Typology of Evaluation.



### Affirming

Brookfield explains affirmation as “acknowledging students’ efforts and achievements, however slight these may seem to you” (2006, p. 186). I found that affirmation is more nuanced than described by Brookfield. Within the feedback offered by the faculty members, I identified six types of affirming responses. Because I am probing how transformative teaching provides an invitation – which might speak in very different ways to different students at different moments in the course – it seemed helpful to provide a finer set of categories that bring to life the multiple types and strategies for faculty giving feedback and issuing the invitation to the student to continue reflecting. Below are excerpts from the faculty’s feedback to the students that emphasize each of the categories identified.

### Acknowledgement

Acknowledgement is the act of recognizing the student's efforts in engaging with the content of the class. The faculty members understand the vulnerability and potential discomfort the students may feel in unpacking their stories. Therefore, they begin nearly all responses with an acknowledgement for the student's efforts. The excerpts below help to demonstrate the breadth of these responses – from a simple 'thank you' to a deeper witnessing of the student's vulnerability. Notice, as well, the friendly tone with phrases such as "sharing...with me," and colloquialisms such as, "holy chowder."

*Thank you for sharing your pain and loss with me. Putting it "out there" on paper is sometimes a helpful step towards letting it go.*

---

*Thank you for sharing this wonder-filled -- if exhausting! -- reflection with me. I mean holy chowder! I was worn out just reading it!*

---

*Bravo! Bravo! What a remarkable reflection!!*

---

*I love the questions you are wrestling with, and the raw honesty in your answers.*

The import of beginning each feedback entry with a positive, reassuring acknowledgement is that it sends a signal to the student that the faculty member appreciates the student's efforts. The tone and content of acknowledgement feedback expresses gratitude for the student's willingness to engage in the work. Note that any given feedback passage may use multiple of the feedback approaches I have identified. The composite of this typology is not meant to parse feedback strictly into distinct subtypes but rather to highlight the multiple approaches to feedback that are in the toolkit of the faculty.

### *Appreciation for depth of insight*

Whereas acknowledgement simply recognizes the student's efforts in engaging with the course content, appreciation for depth of insight honors the richness and complexity of the student's critical reflection. In these feedback entries, the faculty member echoes back to the student the power of their ruminations. One method employed is to take direct quotes from the student's own writing. The tone used by faculty is one of admiration, as evidenced by phrases such as, "those are powerful questions!," and "when did you become so wise?," and "the rare gift of someone doing real, hard, nuanced, thought-full work."

*"How does one cross the threshold from knowledge of vulnerability to acceptance? Per last week's comments to my first reflection, how does one practice self-acceptance? Would I feel less vulnerable if my partner was also as expressive and could work through these thoughts together? Is this a good thing or a bad thing?" Those are powerful questions! Taking the risk to face them, and to share your vulnerability with me, is an act of courage. It may not have been obvious in class, but you are not the only person thinking about how to turn reflection into action, especially during this stage of life as you are making high-stakes decisions about life directions.*

---

*Wow; so K, when did you become some wise? I mean seriously, the story you share in this reflection is the very definition of wisdom and maturity. Your reaction to S's initial response is incredibly rare -- perhaps not only a testimony of your maturity, but also to the depth of the love share with him. What an incredibly healthy story and reflection K;*

---

*"All he really needs or wants is someone to just hear him -- he doesn't even expect any answers." That is a powerful realization! Taking the risk to have that candid conversation with your friend seems to have opened up more options for you, and released you from some of your own demons and fears. I'm so glad to hear that you found such a positive result, and that your DT was able to support you as you chose to take this important step. You are helping to build a learning community with your peers by listening and reciprocating.*

---

*Admission: I got "lost" in your reflection, --not in a bad way, as in confused/lost -- but in a good way, as in you drew me in and I forgot that I was "at work" reading a student reflection, but instead immersed in the rare gift of someone doing real, hard, nuanced, thought-full work! Thank you C; I learned so much from reading this, I feel unworthy to offer much in return other than my heartfelt gratitude for you sharing these insights with me. But of course I simply cannot help myself.*

By appreciating the depth of insight, faculty are drawing attention to the student's ability to connect to her own wisdom as she pauses and investigates issues through her writing. This noticing acts as a reinforcing mechanism emboldening the student to build trust in her inner voice and critical reflection skills.

### **Recognition of characteristics**

It is not unusual for an individual in the midst of a struggle to be unable to see the tenets that are helping him navigate through it. In these responses, the faculty are holding a mirror up for the student to see the capabilities that they are demonstrating in the context of the entry. The tone the faculty members take is that of a coach helping the student to appreciate the gifts they bring. Faculty use phrases such as, "it takes a great deal of courage, love, and maturity," and "incredibly sophisticated," and "it speaks to your belief in the potential of our species" to illustrate for the student the qualities they bring to the situation.

*This is one of the most nuanced, spot on examples of exactly how this all works that I have read in years. You totally get it S! It takes a great deal of courage, love, and maturity to actually want to understand what was at stake here for E -- the central/essential sign of an adult in the room! Brava! And when the next "Spain" arrives? You'll both be better prepared to handle it.*

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*Some potentially important insights here R: "I suddenly had a sense for what savings meant, and how important it was to support my dad through a very tough time." AND "I realized I always took the path of highest monetary reward or high job security." AND "I think watching my parents through the hardship of navigating unemployment made me realize how important money actually was—in terms of both security and freedom." So, now that you've identified a potentially important pattern, you get to*

*"play" with it a bit; noodle on it; kick it around in your head; share it with others; see if it lasts. Then, YOU get to decide it's impact moving forward -- not all that obvious, yes?*

---

*Framing job interviews as opportunities to practice deep listening and empathy? What a wonder-full idea! Equally fascinating (and rare), exploring a quality/technical problem at work as a motivational one and then entering this issue in a "learning mode" is incredibly sophisticated and in my experience exceeding rare in even the most experienced leaders. Brava on both accounts M!*

---

*I love what learning you found for yourself in it though: "If they're at odds as Brooks frames it, social impact work will always be at the fringes – an after-thought for people driven to achieve. I refuse to believe that's true." That's an important belief, and speaks to your belief in the potential of our species. Bravo!*

Faculty utilizing the approach to feedback of recognizing the characteristics draw the student's attention to the attributes that the student is demonstrating in their assessment of the situation being described in the journal entry. By making these attributes explicitly known to the student, faculty are promoting the student's understanding of these qualities in herself and how these characteristics serve her.

### **Expression of Empathy**

Empathy, as Brene Brown (2013) noted, is "the act of feeling with someone." In this short video, she goes on to list the four qualities of empathy as perspective taking, staying out of judgement, recognizing emotion in other people, and communicating that. As these student's explore their disorienting dilemmas, empathetic responses from the faculty member bear witness to the student's suffering. Faculty use language such as, "right now is the lowest," and, "I can hear your fear and anxiety," and "it saddens me that you feel replaceable, empty, and sad," in expressing their understanding of the student's emotional state.

*Thank you for sharing this very powerful and tender story. I promise that you need not stay with these emotions in your heart. Right now is the lowest. Right now you can't see what I see. You will get through this. Sooner than you think.*

---

*I can hear your fear and anxiety about the choice you made.*

---

*So very sorry to learn how deeply affected you are by the apparent chaos in your parents' relationship K. I cannot imagine the pain and frustration for you.*

---

*It saddens me that you feel replaceable, empty, and sad. These feelings have been communicated throughout your reflections. It warms my heart that H picked up on your feelings and offered you a hug.*

Brene Brown defines vulnerability as “uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure (2012, p. 2).” Faculty, in expressing empathy demonstrate for the student that he is in a safe, supportive environment to process the emotions associated with the dilemma he is facing.

### **Validation**

Validation can be understood as, “the recognition and acceptance of another person’s internal experience as valid (Hall, 2012).” The process of exploring disorienting dilemmas can be unsettling. In these instances, faculty offer feedback that aims to help the student trust themselves. The tone they use is that of a fellow traveler with phrases such as, “when we are in a ‘learning mode,’ we are, by definition out of our comfort zone,” and “all 78 students...were ruminating as you are.” This collegial language is a means to give comfort to the student by honoring her perspective as true for her.

*While you say that you "struggle a lot with [your] number, you then go on to very powerfully, quiet clearly lay out EXACTLY how much is enough for you (even if without quoting an actual number). This all looks pretty healthy to me*

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*This could also be a totally natural (and healthy) artifact of being in school for two years -- that liminal experience I mentioned a few weeks ago. Neither here nor there; betwixt and between; kind of stuck in neutral, not really in any gear -- searching, yes? Add to this your sense that you might be in the stage 3 => 4 transition, and this all feels very natural and healthy to me! Not necessarily "comfortable," -- but hey, when we're in a "learning mode," we are, by definition out of our comfort zone.*

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*Please know that you are not alone here M. Fairhaven has this impact on most people. Not just the quality of your peers, but the case study method, the forced curve grading, the minimum amount of feedback, the equally min amount of objective measures upon which to gauge your...self against, and the constantly shifting goal post (next job, next success, etc.) results in an Fairhaven-induced insecurity that rivals few others.*

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*This may or may not make you feel better. After DT's last night all 78 students in our DLW class were ruminating as you are in your reflection regarding whether they should have shared what they did.*

Through validation, faculty strive to allay the fear that the student's perspective is invalid, or that he is alone in his struggle. Where empathic feedback is the witnessing of the student's experience, validation confirms that this discomfort is true for this student and, in some cases, is a shared experience. As the examples demonstrate, faculty do not seek to justify the student's position, rather they help the student to become more comfortable owning how he sees the situation.

### **Invitation for self-compassion**

Neff asserts that self-compassion, "entails being kind and understanding toward oneself in instances of pain or failure rather than being harshly self-critical; perceiving one's experiences as part of the larger human experience rather than seeing them as isolating; and holding painful thoughts and feelings in mindful awareness rather than over-identifying with them" (2003, p. 223). In the process of self-discovery students naturally come face-to-face

with aspects of themselves that they are less comfortable with. Their reflections portray their disdain for this behavior and, in some cases, for themselves. Faculty responses encourage the student to be gentle with herself through this learning process. Their tone is nurturing, using phrases such as, “be a little more gentle with your...self. It’s the only one you get” “try to be patient as you work on being more open,” “you are where you are,” and “please be forgiving of yourself.”

*PS: Breathe....*

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*Second, to your rich and nuanced exploration of the sense-making of the competing narratives, two thoughts: First, about our relationship to our "positive sides": Why not practice a bit of "appreciation"? Many of us find it difficult -- either we feel guilty or undeserving, whatever -- to fully appreciate the gifts life has offered. Appreciation is a skill. Like any skill it takes practice to both learn and benefit from it. Second, about our relationship to our "negative sides": Why not practice a bit of "self-acceptance"? We are not ALL born in the deep end of the gene pool when it comes to everything. Some things we are naturally gifted at, while others? Not so much. So be it! Be a little more gentle with your...self. It's the only one you get. Finally, comparing ourselves (constantly) to others is not the best metric for measuring our lives. We know this, but still do it all the time.*

---

*A friend of mine always says, "Don't should on yourself." That's a reminder to try to be patient as you work on being more open. You are where you are in the process - try not to be too hard on yourself if you don't make more progress as fast as you'd like, as long as you are working on this skill you value!*

---

*You seem to carry around quite a bit of guilt for not "saving" your mother from years of unhappiness. We often think that we can save our loved ones from pain and unhappiness but the reality is that we can't. We cannot change the past and it is unproductive to berate ourselves for regrets from our past. I think that you and your brother did the best you could at that time. How is your mother doing now? What did you learn from that experience that can help you be an emotional support for your mother now? Please be forgiving of yourself. I'm guessing this is what your mother would want.*

---

*This all sounds so incredibly healthy to me C -- sounds exactly like A described it: "You now finally understand you're enough, but you don't yet feel or believe that you're enough. You know what you want and are passionate about, but external factors are keeping you from trusting yourself."*

Through this course, students identify aspects of their behavior that they do not favor. Faculty invite students to recognize that it is through this awareness that the student can choose a different behavior. Faculty speak of the importance of self-compassion not only as a behavior that supports behavior change, but also as the bedrock for being able to demonstrate compassion for others.

As these excerpts demonstrate, the faculty teaching this course take the concept of offering affirming feedback well beyond the idea of simply acknowledging effort or achievement (Brookfield, 2006). It is important to note that regardless of the content of the feedback, the tenor of each of these responses is intentionally supportive, constructive, collegial, and inquisitive.

### **Future-oriented**

Much of what comprised this category revolved around engaging the students' resources to support them in evaluating and enacting their path forward. These took the form of the faculty offering to work with the student, reinforcing the value of therapy, and championing the significance of an engaged support network. In addition to these external resources, faculty members also recommended students continue the process of reflection and, in some circumstances, encouraged them to consider taking action. Brookfield describes future-oriented feedback as to, "give clear suggestions about specific actions students should take to make progress in the short and long term" (2006, p. 186). Conversely, as

demonstrated in the excerpts that follow, responses from faculty seemed less prescriptive and more consultative in nature.

### **Offer to support**

As evidenced in the excerpts below, faculty were more inclined to offer themselves as a resource or sounding board for the student rather than offering clear direction or answers. Here the faculty demonstrate that agency remains with the student to seek the answers that he needs and offer themselves as one outlet in that exploration. Their language is suggestive rather than directive, using phrases such as, “I am here,” “let me know if you’d like help...,” “I would urge you to email me over the weekend,” and “feel free to reach out to me.”

*I am so excited for you to begin this journey. It will not be easy. Please let me know if I can help in any way. I am here.*

---

*Glad you opened up to your DT and it felt real. Hope you can stay there. Do you have additional support? Given all that you're going through now, it could be helpful. Let me know if you'd like help with finding additional support.*

---

*I would urge you to email me over the weekend and find a time in the first two days of the week to visit with me. You are not alone. I will understand if you don't visit but I feel like we can begin the process of seeing you and your gifts in a more positive light. You are down enough to not want to reach out. But please consider it.*

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*I am so sorry for your incredibly painful loss. I can imagine the mix of intense emotions you are feeling right now. I know that you are managing so much and I hope that when you begin to digest the feelings that you will be able to reach out for support from friends and family....even if it feels counter to what you might normally do. If you are finding that difficult, feel free to reach out to me. Best and you will be in my thoughts*

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Faculty recognize that this self-exploration is new terrain for many of their students and that most students have become accustomed to being given advice / counsel / direction

by teachers / mentors / bosses / parents. The faculty members are deliberate in helping their students to see and seize their agency by putting the onus on the student to determine what support he may need and asking for it.

### **The role of therapy**

The responses below demonstrate faculty's efforts to destigmatize the idea of therapy, and to reinforce the role therapy can play in creating and maintaining a strong sense of self. Phrases such as, "I encourage you to continue...with your therapist," "I applaud you for taking steps to seek counseling," "we are not meant to go through life alone and while friends and family love us, they can't help but be invested in the outcome of our decision," aim to affirm the student's tenuous outreach for help.

*As I read your reflections, I continue to sense such deep pain from someone so intelligent, vibrant, and full of conflicted feelings. Like you, I am thankful for your Mumsie. I encourage to continue to discuss these frustrations, conflicts, and feelings with your therapist. I hope you can figure out a way to disrupt your patterns that have caused so much pain for you. Start small and see what happens.*

---

*First of all, I applaud you for taking the steps to seek counseling. It is an unknown and takes courage to enter a potentially uncomfortable situation. I am glad that you made some self-discoveries and ultimately found it a relief. I believe that counseling can help you to gain self-awareness around your low self-esteem and eventually build some self-confidence. As for managing your anxiety, there are things you can do that can be helpful in both the short-term and the long-term. If you haven't discussed ways to reduce your anxiety with your therapist, I would encourage you to discuss strategies. I am also happy to discuss some with you but also don't want to interfere with your counseling.*

---

*A great therapist becomes a "life coach", someone who helps you see yourself, come up with strategies that serve you better, learn how to heal the old wounds and truly move on. I have been working through a difficult and challenging divorce for the past nine months...I know that my ability to deal with this craziness as well as I have comes in part from all that I have learned working with a great therapist during the*

*big challenges of my life. We are not meant to go through life alone and while friends and family love us, they can't help but be invested in the outcome of our decisions*

---

*While crucibles can teach us a great deal about ourselves, they can also leave scars that might need direct help in order to heal. I think the recent interaction with the woman in the cafeteria is a good example of some scar tissue left from your early experiences with mean girls. You learned that you can survive "mean girls", but you didn't necessarily learn how to take good care of yourself when faced with a mean girl! But that is something you can learn, and there are many people with the skills to help you.*

Throughout the course, faculty emphasize that, given the intimate nature of this course, there may be issues that arise as the student interacts with the course content that would benefit from dialogue with a trained professional. Faculty offer that there are resources on campus poised to support students and, if the student would prefer not to avail herself of these resources, the faculty member has others he can suggest. Feedback in this category is intended to help the student see the role therapy can play, not only as it applies to the current dilemma she is confronted with, but as she faces issues going forward.

#### **Value of a support system**

As mentioned previously, in Taylor's third review of the transformative learning theory literature (2007) his findings included the need for "ongoing institutional support to act on this new understanding" (p. 187), and the significance of the role of relationships in the transformative learning process as, "this... reveals a learning process dependent upon the need for support trust, friendship and intimacy" (p. 187). Faculty appreciate the important role a support system plays in creating the conditions for the student to explore this new territory. Faculty encourage students to build and harness a support network with phrases such as, "what a gift you have given others when you shared all of you

with them,” “to connect with others as you sort out your insecurities and doubts,” and “they will be thrilled...to be asked to push you harder when they think you need it.”

*What a gift you have given others when you shared all of you with them, the unedited version. And notice who reaped the rewards. They did but you did even more. It helped being you to your current state which is a far cry from where you were earlier in the semester. Teaching DLW has been worth it just because of you. If I've helped set the conditions for you to have a better support system then it's been worth it for me. May you continue to grow and develop in the coming months and years.*

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*I am happy that you are having a vastly different experience with DLW and your DT. You are a self-selecting group of students craving similar goals -- in part, to find a safe space to connect with others as you sort out your insecurities and doubts.*

---

*You have done well in building a wonderful network. I think they will all be thrilled to hear from you and also to be asked to push you harder when they think you need it. I have learned that people often need to hear point blank that you want to hear the hard stuff from them, and you won't shoot the messenger!*

---

*I would advise finding people in your support group who are not like you or have similar work situations. The more varied the better. If that isn't possible then stick with those that are in your professional world. But create one. Work to enhance the board of advisors notion.*

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One module toward the end of the semester is spent exploring the concept of building a support network. I refer to this concept as a “personal board of advisors.” The idea is to assemble a small group of individuals who are more invested in the student’s vision of who he is becoming than in who he has been. Faculty use the example of the Development Teams to reinforce the role of a support team in supporting and challenging the student in service of his aspirations. Faculty share with the students that Development Teams sometimes choose to continue beyond the semester.

### **Encouraging continued reflection**

At the core of transformative learning theory is concept of critical reflection (Cranton, 1994, 2000; Cranton & Carusetta, 2004; Mezirow, 2000). These replies from the faculty seek to reinforce the role of ongoing self-reflection in the continued development of self-awareness. Feedback from faculty address the importance of continued reflection during the semester as well as after the course has ended. The tone faculty use in offering this type of feedback is persuasive, using phrases such as, “Just keep asking questions, trusting your answers and see where it takes you,” “You're in just the right place to explore these questions,” and “it's worth paying attention to this dramatic change in your display of personality.”

*I like that you are willing to trust the process and see where it takes you. Just keep asking questions, trusting your answers and see where it takes you.*

---

*I think you will find the next couple of classes helpful in your journey. You're in just the right place to explore these questions and more. I will be cheering you on as you sort through them and hopefully find some answers, and some new questions.*

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*Finally, I think of it like the Knights of the Roundtable. All these different Evans are sitting around the table trying to take center stage and they all play out at certain times in a day, week, etc. So Evan can be evil, manipulative, self-obsessed, kind, caring, humble.. I hope by the end of the semester we feel more comfortable accessing those knights that serve ourselves and others.*

---

*Maybe you are being you because you are just getting to know people. On the other hand, maybe you are editing yourself. You don't want to completely change who you are and put yourself all out there upon first meetings; however, I agree that it's worth paying attention to this dramatic change in your display of personality.*

Faculty shine a spotlight on the student's tentative steps into critical self-reflection both to recognize the student's efforts and to entice him to build that introspective skill.

Faculty remind students that the classroom and the curriculum act as a safe container to foster this inward-looking self-examination.

**Call to action**

Mezirow's theory suggests that transformative learning culminates in "a reintegration into society on the basis of conditions dictated by the new perspective" (Mezirow, 1981, p. 7). Prior to this reintegration of self, the individual must identify and experiment with new ways of being that are aligned with their new knowing. These remarks from faculty can be thought of as controlled experiments where the student is being encouraged to test what they are learning about themselves while they are still embedded in the classroom and have the infrastructure to help them evaluate their findings. The tone the faculty employ is direct and a bit provocative, using language such as, "I dare you," "tell them what you want from them," "how about starting with your own transparency," and "step back and deal with the commitment issue with yourself."

*I dare you to call her today...Tell her that you miss her friendship. And then be quiet...*

---

*First, your parents...Tell them what you want from them...Treat them as if they can deal with what you want. And coach them when they begin worrying. Point it out to them.*

---

*As for your concerns around leadership, it is a delicate balance you are trying to achieve...You asked how you can elicit honest feedback. How about starting with your own transparency in a way that doesn't undermine your leadership abilities.*

---

*I'm most interested in your tendency of not keeping your commitments to yourself. That to me is a bigger deal. You promise not to call and you break the covenant you make with yourself. I am blunt with you because I know you would want that from me.*

*But step back and deal with the commitment issue with yourself and other stuff will fall into place.*

The purpose of call to action feedback is to ignite movement in the student. Faculty compel students to test new behaviors while still embedded in the course. In this way, the student can bring the result of the test back into the classroom, to the faculty member, or to the Development Group to sort through the learning.

Rather than being autocratic in defining for the students how they should proceed, faculty feedback of the future-oriented nature encourages the students to strengthen their habit of reflection, to begin taking action, and to think more broadly in building and engaging their support network. Here, again, we see that the language used in sharing the feedback is informal, emboldening, and inviting.

### **Educative**

Brookfield frames educative feedback as the space where the faculty “keeps asking (themselves) ‘What can this person learn from my comments?’” (2006, p. 187). Again, I expand on this definition as what is evidenced in the responses from the faculty members is not simply what can be learned but also a depth of consideration as to how might the student best take in the wisdom the faculty is offering. I identified four types of educative feedback. These included offering questions for the student to contemplate, sharing a new way of thinking about the situation, disclosing their own story/perspective, and offering additional resources to consider.

#### **Offer questions for the student to consider**

In his review of Dewey’s formative work in the field of education, Hansen (2007) notes “education would only emerge if the person began to think about the new behavior – to

question it, reflect upon it, consider its rationale, and so forth” (p. 25). The excerpts below demonstrate the faculty members efforts to further the student’s thinking by prompting questions for them to consider. Their tone, therefore, is inquisitive, using language such as, “How can you...?”, “first ask yourself...?”, “isn’t it possible...?”, and “how can you...?”

*There will never be a perfect time to risk. It's kind of like when to have kids. I would only admonish you to consider that it's not either or. You don't have to swing for the fences. How can you try something that isn't a huge risk? You took this course. That was a risk. You have it in you.*

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*Another way to frame the lesson learned from your subordinate’s response might be this: Whenever you encounter a "performance problem" with a subordinate, first ask yourself: "Is this a WILL or SKILL problem?" Most of us immediately assume it's an attitude (will) problem and move straight to "jacking them up." Always test this assumption: Perhaps they didn't have sufficient time? Perhaps they didn't understand the standard? Perhaps they simply weren't skilled enough to meet the standard? Based on your assessment of the first diagnosis (will or skill?), you can then apply the appropriate response.*

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*So C, I don't think you have to be prone to OCD to "want to not feel bad" (about our...selves), yes? Thank you for this incredibly thought-full analysis of Stephen's reflection. Not to be overly provocative, but isn't it possible that the reason STEPHEN HAD to tell his fiancée was quite simply that he "didn't like him...self" when he told these little white lies? And, if WE don't like ourselves, who will? Or in your (wise) words: "I'll feel better and he has the right to know." Sometimes "feeling better" is all we want, yes?*

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*How can you lead with intention without divesting yourself of the organic nature of your style? ...I just want to make sure that leading behind the scenes isn't at times a way of hiding behind this armor. Just a question to be aware of.*

Faculty illustrate for the student questions that she may want to ask of herself as a way of uncovering and exploring the assumptions that shape the way she views the world.

These open-ended queries invite the student to pause and get curious about what's motivating their perspective.

### **Offer a new framing**

Another method for helping students to “question it, reflect upon it, consider its rationale” (Hansen, 2007, p. 25) is to offer the student a different perspective that may help the student to see the situation in a new light. Feedback of this sort takes on a mentoring tone with phrases such as, “sometimes the real gift is...,” “while you may not be able to hear this right now...,” “I know this sounds silly, but...,” and, “sometimes you have to do before you can know.”

*I think your relationship with difficult conversations is very normal. And I think that like most people one of the things you are missing out on is the gift you give yourself by speaking up. It is not always about whether or not the other person really hears what you have to say, or is willing to change their behavior. Sometimes the real gift is in valuing your own experience enough to share it.*

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*And while you may not be able to hear this right now, there is a simple and yet profound answer to the central question you raise here: "What's the point in spending two years giving your heart to someone only to be rejected and disposed of?" The point? The point is that THAT (giving your heart to someone) is the only way to love and be loved. Unfortunately, we cannot get the good things (love, belonging, joy, purpose) without risking the bad (rejection, disappointment, loss, pain). This is no longer about Charles, Monica -- we cannot control others -- this is now about you.*

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*First, you are not your mother, right? I know this sounds silly, but ... We all feel so indebted to our parents, especially when they are as incredible as your mothers seems to be. We don't want to disappoint the, to let them down. However, (and it sounds like you are just now starting to become more comfortable with this), you are NOT your mother AND it's you you have to live with the rest of your life. The level of your drive/ambition is the level of YOUR drive/ambition. AND, there is no reason for it match that of your mother's, yes?*

---

*That wisdom from the Torah? In current literature it translates into: Sometimes you have to DO before you can KNOW. The practical implications of this insight can be far-reaching. My favorite one is that quite often we overanalyze our lives and ourselves. In the unrealistic belief that if we simply think long enough about some issue, we'll find the answer. With so many significant decisions in life, the only real way to "learn" as you remind us is to first "do". For most of us this is frightening. We'd rather believe that if we think about it hard enough, perhaps we can squeeze all of the uncertainty out of life and never have to act in the face of such uncertainty -- the very definition of being vulnerable.*

There is more to the art of self-reflection than simply examining how one understands his viewpoint. Faculty offering reframing feedback and prompts are striving to help the student glean the situation from another vantage point.

### **Sharing their personal stories/perspectives**

Both faculty members strive to model for the students the level of vulnerability, openness, and curiosity that will propel their deeper learning (Brookfield, 2013). Faculty set the tone for this deep candor with the very first exercise on the first day of class, demonstrating for the class how to respond to the exercise using their life as an example. In these responses, the faculty share their perspective, wisdom and experiences. Their authenticity apparent in their heartfelt expressions such as, “there is nothing quite so painful...,” “...I have built a level of self-appreciation and love that I would never have dreamed possible...,” and “most of the time I win this battle; sometimes not.”

*There is nothing quite so painful as trying to determine whether to end or stay in an intimate relationship. One thing I will offer you from my years on this planet is this; most of us know in our gut exactly what the truth is about our relationship at any moment in time. The hard part is letting in that truth if it is not the answer we want.*

---

*Reading your reflection brought me right back to my sophomore and junior years of college. Also an RA I as suffering from undiagnosed depression and anxiety...The journey back from that place is a long one, but with each new risk taken, resiliency does build. My life has not turned out at all like I planned and I have built a level of*

*self-appreciation and love that I would never have dreamed was possible at 19. If you create a great support system, then any failure can be overcome and used as a great growth opportunity. I do not say this lightly. I say it from experience. - It is all about the journey.*

---

*I have a chronic condition that I am "reminded" of 8 - 12 times a day, every day. Sometimes I get frustrated with it, but when I do, I am quickly reminded not to "feed the beast" -- letting go is sometimes so very hard to do. I do my best to NOT let it define me; most of the time I win this battle; sometimes not.*

---

*It pains me how self-critical and self-flagellating you are. I am sorry that you felt alone in your fears in your DT meeting but it seems that your feeling of being alone and excluded is something that gets accessed very easily. I used to feel like I needed to solve all of my problems on my own which was an implicit message I also received from my parents; therefore, I isolated myself during hard times. I eventually and gradually pushed myself to reach out to others despite it being completely out of my comfort zone. When I feel the tendency to retreat, sometimes I give in but only temporarily. I ultimately realize that reaching out is comforting and empowering. Those are the times when I feel closest with my husband, friends, and family.*

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*I have lived long enough to learn that plans are great, but life rarely goes as we plan. In order to achieve the deeper, truly important things we do have to have faith and be willing to be flexible. There are many paths to the same destination!*

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Through their own lived experiences, faculty seek to offer hope to their students. They honor the challenge the student is currently facing while aiming to put it in context by zooming out from this moment in this chapter of her life to the broader arc of her life over the course of her story.

#### **Referenced curriculum or other resources**

The faculty members utilized resources in and beyond the curriculum to help the student better understand the dilemma she is facing. As students reveal deeper questions connected to the context of the course, faculty respond by appreciating the student's efforts to grapple with the concept and providing means for them to further their knowledge.

*To this little nugget right here? "I think perhaps the most important of these is the support network. Sometimes asking for help seems like the most impossible thing but it's the gateway to everything else." Stay tuned C; in a few weeks we'll go straight at this wisdom when we ask you to do an audit of your "support system" (I'll even ask you to think of a time when you considered asking someone for help, advice, support, or guidance, ... but...didn't. Why not?)*

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*If you're not sure, I'd recommend StrengthsFinder if you haven't taken it before to help classify this strength/weakness more carefully  
(<https://www.gallupstrengthscenter.com/?gclid=CO27vdjW39ACFZCIswodhXkB-g>).*

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*...have you considered the possibility that you might be an "ambivert"? Much of the latest research in this field suggest a spectrum or range when it comes to this attribute, rather than a binary choice -- either you are an introvert or an extrovert. There are many decent articles online, but you might start with either the Forbes or WSJ article: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/not-an-introvert-not-an-extrovert-you-may-be-an-ambivert-1438013534> Good stuff here A; good stuff!*

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*I believe that you may never find the right balance in a relationship long term unless you deal with inability you describe in receiving care, being dependent on another, feeling helpless. As hard as you try to empathize you won't be the kind of partner you want to be until you can release control and receive with love... Read Adam Grant's book. Read the book I may have mentioned, "A Book About Love" Jonah Lehrer.*

While faculty rely upon a core set of readings to underpin the concepts, theories, and frameworks taught in the course, they realize that students may want to go deeper on a particular topic given their current circumstances or curiosity. These resources are offered to the student in response to a specific issue or question the student has shared in their writings.

Educative feedback may be thought of as how can I bring my wisdom to bear in service of this student's struggle or query? Faculty offered prompts to assist students in seeing the situation from a different vantage point. They offered resources to further the student's understanding of themselves or their dilemma. And, they offered themselves,

sharing personal experiences as illustration. As evidenced in both affirming and future-oriented feedback, educative feedback from the faculty is relational and consultative in nature.

*Response to offer of support from faculty*

While dialogic engagement between faculty and student through the electronic platform isn't typical, there were several entries where the student responded to the faculty members feedback. As evidenced by the excerpts below, these acknowledge and appreciated the faculty members support on the learning journey.

*Thanks a lot for your words, Professor Davidson. There are certainly some deep insecurities that I want to work through, which is why I'm excited to be invested in your class. I'd appreciate to talk more about this with you*

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*Thank you for your words, J. I certainly would like to talk about this with you since I find myself feeling this way constantly these days and it's making me second-guess myself a lot.*

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*One of the greatest gifts I have inherited from DLW was building a support team. I really appreciated Professor Davidson's message urging me to meet with him in person when I had my darkest moment. I was never comfortable asking for help, in both personal and professional lives. The idea of being a burden to others has kept me from asking. I struggled with it during my summer internship and somehow with my relationship as well. I was nervous and did not know what to expect before meeting with Professor Davidson. However, it did make me realize that there could be help and support coming from outside of my family and friends. It was great feeling understood without expecting it.*

The richness of the texts in my sample made it possible for me to distinguish subtypes well beyond the initial three types. This categorization is significant because faculty employ a varied toolkit of skillfully applied feedback to meet the students where they are at. Over the

course of the semester and, indeed, even in any one given feedback posting, the student may experience many of the types of feedback I have elucidated in this chapter.

### *Conclusion*

In this chapter, I have demonstrated the methods faculty employ as they seek to invite students to explore their disorienting dilemmas. Interviews with faculty uncovered not just the curriculum as I was able to witness it over the course of the semester, but the self-reported iterations which saw faculty detecting, fixing, and refining the course over the decade since its inception. Through careful and repeated interrogation of each of the four data sources – faculty interviews, student writings, faculty feedback, and classroom observation – I have extrapolated the following tenets for understanding and practicing transformational teaching. The first tenet is the intentionality with which faculty have designed the course toward the aim of transformative learning. The second tenet is the psychological safety detected by the students such that they engage in exploring their dilemmas. Third is faculty attentiveness to the feedback they offer to each student. And, lastly, it is faculty's use of the classroom to introduce and enact transformative learning. These tenets harken back to the works of educational reformists such as Dewey, Freire, and Makiguchi in their efforts to place the student at the center of the learning (Fishman & McCarthy, 2007; Hansen, 2007; Ikeda, 2001).

While the curriculum for a given subject may be standardized, each professor adapts their delivery of the subject-matter. Teaching philosophy is generally understood as, “the collection of implicit beliefs...that address the role teachers should play in the classroom, what a good class or good student looks like, what it means to have taught well, and what it

means to have wasted time” (Brookfield, 2006, p. 254). Given the intimate nature of this course, it is important to understand the teaching philosophy that each Professor brings to this learning experience. I offer excerpts from the pre-semester interviews conducted with each professor which illuminate their approach to this course.

When asked to describe the purpose of the class, Professor Craig submitted that the aim of the course is to “help students gain greater clarity about who they are.” His response also evidenced his teaching philosophy where he sees his role as that of a guide, and his student’s role as being open, curious, and self-compassionate.

*I really believe the premise is to help students gain greater clarity about who they are. And to the extent that they have greater clarity about who they are, which includes increasing their self-awareness, about their core values, life story, their strengths, their weaknesses, their true north. The extent that they gain some clarity on that, we believe that they’ll be—when the opportunity arises, to lead, they’ll be more likely to step up and lead, do that effectively, too...So, the two shifts are around clarity and intentionality.*

Professor Davidson builds upon the intent of Professor Craig’s perspective, while adding a bit more specificity. He speaks of creating the psychological safety (“a supportive, secure place”) to scrutinize the source of their behavior and the impact that behavior has on others. He is deliberate in emphasizing that the day-to-day decisions are just as impactful to who they are becoming as the big decisions. He sees his role as shining a spotlight for the student to become aware and intentional about what underpins the decisions she is making and thoughtful about the impact of those decisions for herself and the world around her.

*I think the purpose of the course is to allow the students on a discovery, on a journey to discover who they possibly could be. My hypothesis is that if they have a better sense of how others experienced them, and how others experience themselves when they’re with them, then they will do more good and less harm.*

Through the pre-work, the classroom exercises, and the DTs, faculty seek to offer students opportunities to gain insights into how they are perceived by others. In some cases, this insight may be disorienting, particularly when the perception the student has of herself is radically different than what she learns of how others perceive her. Professor Davidson continues on by discussing the student's self-exploration:

*I want them to be more comfortable. I want them to be more at ease with themselves on multiple levels. I want them to be comfortable in understanding their mindsets, their beliefs, their assumptions, and how those dynamics, those constructs inform their behavior, and how that behavior creates certain outcomes...*

*I am concerned that as long as they are living to manage their image, evidenced by their perfect résumés, that they have never been asked in a supportive, secure place to ask, "So what is your essence? Who are you really?" I want to create an environment where they have permission to figure out what patterns in their lives serve them really, really well and which ones are tripping them up.*

On the first day of the class, faculty walk the students through the visual representation they have created of the roadmap of the course, and explain that the preponderance of the curriculum is dedicated toward leader development which they describe as "who are you becoming (as a leader)?" Faculty purport that the course is designed to support students in excavating and exploring the values, beliefs and assumptions that shape their identity. In faculty interviews and classroom observation, faculty contend that that a leader who is grounded in their understanding of themselves will be better poised for the responsibility of leadership which they describe as the act of leading others.

*What I want them to understand is that the course isn't about making what I call cliff decisions, big decisions, jumping off the cliff decisions. But that it's about making wedge decisions and how profound those can be in getting them where they want to be. I think cliff decisions are too overwhelming and they're too frightened. They may get there at some point, but that's not what I want the class to be about...And I really want to emphasize this next semester about the power of paying attention to now. I*

*want them to be able to understand, what they're thinking, and what they're feeling, and what they're seeing, and at the same time, be much more aware of what the other person is thinking, and seeing, and feeling. And also understanding that they need to be aware of what the other person is thinking about them in the present. So those are multiple levels that are going on.*

Both professors see the purpose of this course as creating a safe space and structure where the student can begin defining her sense of self. The premise is for the student to be able to tease apart *her* ways of viewing the world from the views that have been imbued in her. While faculty intimate that this course helps to prepare students to be better leaders, it is impossible to tell what the long-term impact of the course will be as this study did not extend beyond the semester. However, over the course of the semester, I was able to garner how the student's took up the invitation to engage in this deeper learning. I detail this participation in chapter 5. The process by which the faculty enable this deeper learning follows.

The following excerpt clarifies how Professor Davidson views his role in supporting the transformative learning process throughout the semester. He believes that this course fills a critical void in enabling students to develop the ability to engage in mature, intimate dialogue. Further, he sees this skill as essential in engaging in healthy relationships and in leading organizations.

*They're scared....they know it's a completely different way of learning because what I am asking them to do is rather than privatizing their emotions and their feelings, that they reconnect their head, heart, and soul. And that's not the modus operandi around here. That's not how they have experienced it. So that's my goal. Again, I think we have privatized our emotions and we have said, "The only time we're going to talk about those, you're in therapy." I had a long conversation with a student about how disconcerting it is to me when after we have talked like this, they'll get ready to leave and they'll go, "This felt like therapy." And I tell them, "That's my worry is that all that we've done is that we've had a mature, intimate conversation." And humans in organizations, in relationships are dying for it. They're dying for it. So my view is that if I can give them the courage to be maturely vulnerable, that it will free them up*

*and it will also actually in a counter-intuitive way make them more powerful, if that's what they're into.*

Here, again, I employ excerpts from the faculty interviews to illuminate their perspective on the import of the design of the course. While Professor Davidson's remarks focused on the importance of the course and his approach to teaching it, Professor Craig offered insight into how the faculty prepare to teach the course. There is a norm at Fairhaven University that faculty teaching the same course meet weekly to calibrate their classes. This course is no different. Professor Craig and Professor Davidson met regularly to discuss what was happening in each of their sections, what their planned approach was to that week's curriculum, and to review the notes they had written to themselves the last time they had taught that particular lesson. Beyond the tactics of teaching the class, Professor Craig spoke of the importance of the faculty doing the exercises, each experiencing their own transformative learning journey as integral to being able to effectively teach the content.

*The first year, we definitely got together for two-three hours every week. And the first thing we would do is debrief the previous week: What'd you get in your reflections? How did the class go? "Well, I'm never going to do this again" and "try to start with this." We'd share what we did in the last class and how it worked out. And then we'd look at the next class and say, "Here is what the lesson plans are. Here is what we did last year. How did it work last year? Do we want to try this next year?" In the first couple years, we would all do the workbook exercises and we would start our faculty Development Team meetings with sharing the exercises that we ask our students to go through. Believe me. You have to go through this experience yourself or some form of it before you ask someone else to do it. I think it is critical...*

Professor Craig expresses the faculty's perception of the importance of being able to model the behavior for the students. Just as the pair shares and the DTs are important to help the students do the work in context with the support of others, so the faculty echo this aspect of the course in their own shared practice.

*We're a support group for each other. We look at any research we have heard, any feedback we're getting from our students and then sort of commit to, "Here's what we're going to try."*

Overall, from the several sources of data that I consider in this chapter, I find that the faculty have demonstrated a sustained and multi-faceted method of supporting their students in the exploration of disorienting dilemmas over the course of the semester. First, is the deliberate design and delivery of a curriculum attentive to human development. Second, is the establishment of a series of reinforcing learning mechanisms that begin with pre-work, move into the plenary session, flow to the Development Team discussion and culminate with reflection. Finally, it is in the way that the faculty attend to the students both in the classroom and in offering individual feedback. It is in the conversational tone of their comments and exchanges – and their honest and direct humanity – that the faculty members create the space for the students to explore. These professors illustrated, in their interviews, in the classroom, and in their written dialogue with the students, their willingness to be on their own transformative learning journey. While literature from adult development and teaching for transformation suggest that each of these components is considered best practice in the traditional classroom, much of this research focuses on either teaching or learning. In my study, I was able to investigate the intersection between the two as they occurred over the course of the semester and I found that it is the interweaving and overlapping of these components in their totality that enables this deeper learning in the classroom. I am left wondering, though, are each of the components equally important, or do some have more impact than others? And, might that weighting vary based on the student they are engaging in

the learning process? While outside the scope of this dissertation, these questions warrant further study.

As I continue to reflect upon the intentionality with which faculty have designed the course toward the aim of transformative learning, I am aware that literature on triple-loop learning might help to interpret my data. The course materials, faculty interviews and teaching meetings offer insights into how the faculty think about teaching as a practice. Within these various datasets, I see parallels to the triple-loop learning literature. For example, the design of the course curriculum could be seen as single-loop thinking. Single-loop thinking is generally understood to be centered around the idea of improving performance (Nicolaidis & McCallum, 2013). Whereas, the discussions the faculty have about the nuances of what they see happening with a particular cohort of students may indicate double-loop thinking. Double-loop thinking tends to be more strategic in nature (Nicolaidis & McCallum, 2013). The course does not just reproduce the ways in which a course is offered at Fairhaven but rethinks the nature of what a course can be. Finally, faculty's decision to enact their own transformative learning in service of the learning of their student's offers an illustration of triple-loop thinking. Triple-loop thinking is the "alignment of being, knowing and doing" (Nicolaidis & McCallum, 2013, p. 252). Interrogating transformative teaching practices through the triple-loop learning literature offers an opportunity for future research.

The second component is the establishment of a series of reinforcing learning mechanisms. The process of the learning cycle is meant to introduce the student to a framework or theory in the classroom, have the student wrestle with it with a small group of

their peers in the Development Group, and then journal about what they think it means for them. However, because in this class, the student is the protagonist (the student is studying themselves) care must be taken to create a sense of psychological safety to enable the exploration. In addition to the structure of the curriculum, it appears from my probing of my multiple sources of data that the keys to this exploration include: (1) strong, honored class norms, (2) faculty who are transparent about their own transformative learning journey, and (3) feedback that is nonjudgmental, nurturing, and curious in nature.

For these students who have been heralded for their accomplishments and intellectual acumen throughout their lives, this course, which encourages them to explore their fears, weaknesses, failures and vulnerabilities may feel like foreign territory. When the campus culture of impenetrable bravado is layered on top of the individual's persona, it becomes even more surprising that students would voluntarily agree to step into their vulnerability not only with the faculty but with their classmates. And yet, the school cannot offer enough sections of the class to admit all of the students who want to take it.

## CHAPTER 5

### STEPPING INTO VULNERABILITY

As evidenced in the last chapter, faculty created the conditions to encourage students to engage deeply with the content of the course, but would they? This is an elective class and so, one would hope that the student had, having read the course description, chosen to participate in this learning. At the same time, this class is situated in an entrenched campus culture that recognizes and rewards demonstrations of mental strength and rigor – focusing on outward manifestations of leadership such as bold, decisive action and, in so doing, neglects the inner core of the leader, that of self-awareness. As one student framed it, *“It seemed that everyone else was adapting well to business school, going out to parties, making new friends and doing well in class. I must be the only one. I do not want to be vulnerable. I could not open up about my fear. I have never shared this part of my Fairhaven experience to anyone, not my friends and definitely not people from my section. Even when I did, I would sugarcoat and frame it as ‘a challenging and transformational experience.’”* The pervasiveness of this aspect of the campus culture was a recurring theme that appeared in interviews with faculty, classroom discussions, and other students’ writings. The environment elicited a caricature of the self, one resembling that of a superhero with no known weakness. This student’s reluctance to disclose his insecurity, which he had *“never*

*shared.. (with) anyone, not my friends and definitely not people from my section*” and his perception that, *“everyone else was adapting well to business school,”* offer insights into the sense of invulnerability that pervades the campus culture.

It is against this impervious backdrop that this course invites students to bear witness to their whole self, strengths and weaknesses, and to share that self with others. One student described the juxtaposition as, *“This sense of trust is a unique feeling at Fairhaven since we often hide behind facades of our true selves making it difficult to discern our perceptions from reality.”* As students navigate this new terrain of inner work and disclosure, it would be reasonable to assume that they would proceed with caution, tempering themselves and assessing the trustworthiness of their classmates and the process. One would expect the students to share dilemmas associated with their life stage (such as choice of career), associated with their current context (such as issues with roommates or coursework), or as a response to a prompt from the class. And, while all of these were present in the data, what might not have been expected was the breadth of the dilemmas the students chose to reflect upon or the raw vulnerability they demonstrated in their writings.

As explained earlier in this text, the transformative learning process begins with a disorienting dilemma. I have expounded upon the definition of a dilemma and how transformative learning theory describes what makes a dilemma disorienting. I begin this chapter by clarifying the difference between an ordinary dilemma and a disorienting dilemma using an example from the data. I contrast this student’s dilemma with my own metaphor for disorientation. I’ll then turn our attention to the role values play in disorienting dilemmas and the values conflicts that surfaced in the students’ writings.

*What is a dilemma?*

Before discussing what makes a dilemma disorienting, it is important to make the distinction between an ordinary dilemma and a disorienting dilemma. An ordinary dilemma is generally understood to be a situation involving a difficult or undesirable choice. In the literature review chapter, I expound upon the definition of a dilemma. I employ Sletteboe's (1997) definition of a dilemma as it clearly and concisely lays out the dimensions of a dilemma. The author identified five components to a dilemma: (1) the individual is invested in the dilemma. This is labeled as, "*involvement, engagement, or commitment*," (2) compulsion to make a decision. This is labeled as "*need to make a choice*," (3) comprehension of the available options. This is labeled as, "*an awareness of the alternatives*," (4) neither option appears advantageous. This is labeled as "*equally unattractive alternatives*," and, (5) the reticence to choose a direction. This is labeled as "*uncertainty of action*." In this next passage, I offer an example of a student facing a quandary, an ordinary dilemma, to illustrate how dilemmas appeared in the students' writings. I begin by sharing the full excerpt from the student's journal entry. Next, I share how I coded the journal entry against the components of a dilemma to indicate the aspects of a dilemma that are present in this journal entry.

*As far as the questions on leadership (being feared vs. loved) go, I kept coming back to a few questions. Surely I agree with the chronology we all teased out with Professor Craig's guidance (that it's possible to go from fear to love but love to fear is much more difficult... the idea that fear can grow into love but it's less realistic to expect that love can grow into fear) - I certainly lived this as a teacher! Sometimes I needed my students to fear me in order to be able to teach them more, but it felt too late... and this brings me to another type of unique fear that we talked about in class - perhaps an ideal fear to instill in your peers, followers, team, etc. - fear that they don't want to let you, their team, and even themselves, down. When I was thinking*

*about what leader/boss got the most out of me, it was definitely my second school Principal... I both loved and feared her. But when I think about it more, I really feared letting her down - because I respected her and her opinion so much - and I knew she was a reasonable, fair person. So I think the question for me becomes: how do you get people to respect you in a way such that the fear isn't of you or surface-level (transactional?) consequences (perhaps an extrinsic fear) but is of letting themselves down, letting you down - letting a team down. Is that perhaps realistic and healthy? I think that's fear I can make room for - whether on the receiving or the instilling end.*

Passage	Interpretation	Explanation
<i>As far as the questions on leadership (being feared vs. loved) go, I kept coming back to a few questions.</i>	<b>(INVOLVEMENT, ENGAGEMENT, or COMMITMENT).</b>	The student is invested in delving into the question posed by the professor as to whether it is better to be loved or feared as a leader.
<i>Surely I agree with the chronology we all teased out with Professor Craig's guidance (that it's possible to go from fear to love but love to fear is much more difficult... the idea that fear can grow into love but it's less realistic to expect that love can grow into</i>	<b>(NEED TO MAKE A CHOICE)</b>	The student is contemplating the two options – between being loved and being feared. While the student agrees with the professor's explanation that moving from fear to love is easier than moving from love to fear, there is still a tension as they think about how they will lead.

<i>fear) - I certainly lived this as a teacher!</i>		
<i>Sometimes I needed my students to fear me in order to be able to teach them more, but it felt too late... and this brings me to another type of unique fear that we talked about in class - perhaps an ideal fear to instill in your peers, followers, team, etc. - fear that they don't want to let you, their team, and even themselves, down.</i>	<b>(EQUALLY UNATTRACTIVE ALTERNATIVES).</b>	The students speaks of their own experience having attempted to navigate these alternatives.
<i>When I was thinking about what leader/boss got the most out of me, it was definitely my second school Principal... I both loved and feared her. But when I think about it more, I really feared letting her down - because I respected her and</i>	<b>(AWARENESS OF ALTERNATIVES)</b>	The student uses a model (that of her principal) to clarify the alternatives for herself.

<i>her opinion so much - and I knew she was a reasonable, fair person.</i>		
<i>So I think the question for me becomes: how do you get people to respect you in a way such that the fear isn't of you or surface-level (transactional?) consequences (perhaps an extrinsic fear) but is of letting themselves down, letting you down - letting a team down.</i>	<b>(UNCERTAINTY OF ACTION)</b>	The student expresses their indecision as to what course of action they might take and whether it would have the intended impact.

While the student is clearly wrestling with the construct offered in class, there is nothing in this entry that connotes the sort of “internal/external personal crisis” that Mezirow predicted as a disorienting dilemma (Edward W. Taylor, 1997). As this entry illustrates, the student is facing a challenge but there is no evidence that it is causing them to question a value or belief they hold to be true. Therefore, while the student is facing is a dilemma, it is not what the transformative learning literature would recognize as disorienting. As such, it is a common dilemma and not a more profound, disorienting dilemma.

Having established a common understanding of what constitutes a dilemma, and that not all dilemmas are disorienting, it is important to consider what features might distinguish those that are disorienting. As I have explained elsewhere in this text, given that disorienting dilemmas are described as “an acute internal/external personal crisis” (Edward W. Taylor, 1997), my first round of querying the set of texts I had collected was to look for negative emotional cues. I then reviewed the potential cases to determine whether the context that surrounded the keyword was reflective. In other words, did the negative emotional cue surface a dilemma that elicited deep critical reflection? Of the 212 students participate in in the research, 94 (or 44%). By coding only those students that had 4 or more references, I coded 6 students from class 1, 5 from class 2, and 10 from class 3. Given that the same professor teaches classes 1 and 2, this gave me a fairly even distribution across the two teachers. A full description of my methodological techniques can be found in Chapter 3.

While I have unpacked the term, dilemma, above and in the literature review, I found that I needed to pause to clarify the second part of the phrase, that of disorientation. The term disorienting denotes losing one’s way, being confounded, or becoming unsettled. It is not hard to imagine that the realization that one has become disoriented would elicit an emotional reaction. As I grappled with how to describe a disorienting dilemma, I wrote this metaphor to help me synthesize my thoughts:

*A simplistic way to think about this is to put yourself in the situation of having traveled to an unfamiliar location, it’s dark, there are no street lights or people nearby, your cell phone and GPS have no signal, and you grasp that somewhere along the way you have taken a misstep in the directions toward your intended destination. How would you describe your feelings at that moment? Scared? Panicked? Worried?*

Evidence of emotion as an indicator of a disorienting dilemma is alluded to in transformative learning literature (John M. Dirkx, 2001, 2006; Edward W Taylor, 2007).

This also bore true in the entries from the students in statements such as,

*This statement shocked me a great deal and definitely made a strong impression.*

*When I found out what had happened with my girlfriend, I was devastated.*

*I've felt lost and unsure where to go next. I've been very conflicted, and to be honestly I still am.*

*My initial thoughts are a slurry of fears.*

However, not all uses of emotion associated terms actually indicated the trigger of a disorienting dilemma in the data. In some circumstances, the language indicated a simpler dilemma. To clarify, I offer two examples using the same emotion associated term, sad. Sad was one of the ten emotion terms that I coded for in the data. A Boolean query of sad\* against the dataset returned more than 100 instances. The two examples below illustrate how the same term, sad, can indicate a simple dilemma or a disorienting one. In the first, the trigger that raises a dilemma is a classroom exercise where the student is asked to interview someone they do not know in order to learn their life story.

*...it occurred to me that I know the life story of a stranger but not that of my parents, or even my best friends...My mother is the most important person in my world, yet if I really think about it, I only know bits and pieces about her life before kids. And if we're being honest, I'm sure there is much of her life after kids and even today that I am oblivious to or never took the time to know either. I'm **saddened** by this realization.*

It is evident that the exercise has surfaced a dilemma for the student in her identification that there is an opportunity that has yet to be explored in understanding her mother's life story. There is nothing, though, that suggests that the student is distressed by

this realization. With this awareness, the student is able to make deliberate choices about how she wants to proceed in either exploring her mother's history or not.

In contrast, in this second example, the student is reflecting on a video that was shared in the classroom highlighting the concept of vulnerability.

*I remember periods where I saw so much suffering and death without having time to emotionally digest it. My protective mechanism was to try to block the **sadness**. This works to some extent, but over time I found that by doing this I reached a point where I wasn't deriving joy from any part of my job...Often I find that I revert to numbness and have to actively work to combat it.*

My coding considered the context surrounding the emotional cue to determine whether the dilemma appeared to be disorienting or ordinary. The student in this entry describes his disorientation when he says, "I saw so much suffering and death without having time to emotionally digest it." For him, this is the moment of recognition that the image he had created of what he thought his job to be, and how he expected he would be in the role, were unhinged by the reality he faced. He grapples with how to bear witness to the trauma he encounters while not having it traumatize him.

Transformative learning theory literature points clearly to the fact that transformative learning begins with a disorienting dilemma (Cranton, 1994; John M. Dirkx, 2006; J. M. Dirkx et al., 2006; Mezirow, 1978). However, little has been written about dilemmas as a phenomena. As explained previously, Mezirow (1981) describes the moment when the individual "becomes critically conscious of how and why our habits of perception, thought and action have distorted the way we have defined the problem and ourselves in relationship to it," (p. 65) as a disorienting dilemma. Similarly, Cranton (1994) suggests that,

“transformative learning occurs when, through critical self-reflection, an individual revises old or develops new assumptions, beliefs, or ways of seeing the world” (p. 4).

Each of these authorities refer to the variant having something to do with values and beliefs. The conceptual model of values that follows lends clarity to how terms such as beliefs, ways of seeing the world, and behaviors are underpinned by a values construct. “Values (1) are concepts or beliefs, (2) pertain to desirable end states or behaviors, (3) transcend specific situations, (4) guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events, and (5) are ordered by relative importance” (S. H. Schwartz, 1992, p. 4). Individuals do not hold a single value but rather a collection of values, known as a values system. Rokeach (1973) explains this as, “A value system is an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance.” (p. 5). In other words, an individual’s value system is comprised of a myriad of beliefs, some beliefs being held more strongly than others. This next quote, taken from one of the textbooks for the course, helps situate how the faculty see values playing a role in the more challenging dilemma the students engage with in their coursework. “Some of our most challenging moments occur not when we are faced with violating our own core values; rather, they appear when two core values are in conflict.” (George et al., 2015, p. 87). Within the construct of the curriculum it is intentional that students begin to explore and understand the values that they hold.

### *Values and Beliefs*

With both the transformative learning literature, and the faculty being researched, pointing to values and beliefs playing some role in the transformative learning process, I

turned to the works of values researchers to help clarify what, if anything, values had to do with a dilemma being disorienting. Rokeach (1968, 1973, 1979) laid the foundation for how we understand human values and beliefs. He illustrated the interconnectivity of concepts of self-conception, beliefs and values as,

*“Certain contradictions within the cognitive system are more likely than others to implicate self-conceptions and thus be more important as determinants of cognitive and behavior change. Contradictions involving values are especially likely to implicate self-conceptions, since values are employed as the standards for evaluating oneself as well as others. Contradictions involving a person’s more important values should implicate self-conceptions more than those involving less important values. The more a contradiction implicates self-conceptions, the more it produces tension and, consequently, the more it should lead to efforts to reduce the tension.”*  
(Rokeach, 1973, p. 226).

This tension is the crux of Mezirow’s disorienting dilemma. How then does one understand the interplay of these values?

Schwartz first defined a set of ten universally held values. In the ensuing years, Schwartz and others have tested this theory (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003; Fischer & Schwartz, 2011; S. H. Schwartz & Boehnke, 2004). This work has led to a refinement of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values (S. H. Schwartz, 2017; S. H. Schwartz et al., 2012). The refined theory has expanded the original ten values to nineteen discrete, culturally universal, values. The definitions he offers for each of these values can be found in the table below (S. H. Schwartz, 2012). I use this validated theoretical framework to guide my research.

Figure13. Values and Beliefs as defined by the Schwartz et. al (2012)

Value	Definition
<b>Self-direction-thought</b>	Freedom to cultivate one's own ideas and abilities
<b>Self-direction-action</b>	Freedom to determine one's own actions

<b>Stimulation</b>	Excitement, novelty, and change
<b>Hedonism</b>	pleasure and sensuous gratification
<b>Achievement</b>	Success according to social standards
<b>Power-dominance</b>	Power through exercising control over people
<b>Power-resources</b>	Power through control of material and social resources
<b>Face</b>	Security and power through maintaining one's public image and avoiding humiliation
<b>Security-personal</b>	Safety in one's immediate environment
<b>Security-societal</b>	Safety and stability in the wider society
<b>Tradition</b>	Maintaining and preserving cultural, family, or religious traditions
<b>Conformity-rules</b>	Compliance with rules, laws, and formal obligations
<b>Conformity-interpersonal</b>	Avoidance of upsetting or harming other people
<b>Humility</b>	Recognizing one's insignificance in the larger scheme of things
<b>Benevolence-dependability</b>	Being a reliable and trustworthy member of the ingroup
<b>Benevolence-caring</b>	Devotion to the welfare of ingroup members
<b>Universalism-concern</b>	Commitment to equality, justice, and protection for all people
<b>Universalism-nature</b>	Preservation of the natural environment
<b>Universalism-tolerance</b>	Acceptance and understanding of those who are different from oneself

Schwartz (2012) states, “values are beliefs linked inextricably to affect. When values are activated, they become infused with feeling” (p. 3). Values, Rokeach posits (1973), “have more implications for self-conceptions because they are the standards employed to evaluate oneself as well as others. Moreover, values determine attitudes as well as behavior.” (p. 231).

### *Value States and Traits*

Current research being done helps to further our understanding of values by distinguishing value traits from value states (Skimina, Cieciuch, Schwartz, Davidov, & Algesheimer, 2018; Skimina, Cieciuch, Schwartz, Davidov, & Algesheimer, 2019). The authors define value traits as being, “similar to personality traits—their role can be discerned in patterns of behaviors aggregated over time and occasions” (Skimina et al., 2019, p. 3). This may be thought of as the general importance one attributes to a value or the stasis point an individual returns to in relation to a value. Another way to think about this is, whether focusing on personality or values traits, it is the position we maintain when not under pressure.

Whereas the authors explain value states as, “goals that vary in importance as guides to single, specific behavioral acts in a real-time context” (Skimina et al., 2019, p. 3). In other words, value states are the temporary manifestation of value priorities as behaviors in response to a triggering event. As an example, an individual may hold deeply his public image (FACE) and being a trustworthy member of a group (BENEVOLENCE-DEPENDABILITY) and, under normal conditions, both of these value traits co-exist. If, however, an event occurs which has the group calling his trustworthiness into question, he may feel betrayed by, and vehemently defend himself against, his accusers. In this case, the pressure of having been accused by his ingroup, causes him to prioritize between these two values. In his chosen response, he has given priority to the value state of FACE. Had he, instead, chosen to shrug off the questioning and allowed the ingroup to assign blame to him,

he would have been giving priority to the value state of BENEVOLENCE-DEPENDABILITY.

This construct of value traits and states offers further clarity to the concept of the disorienting dilemma. Value traits remain in stasis until there is a conflict among them. Seminal authors in transformative learning theory point to an ‘activating event’ (Cranton, 2002), “disequilibrium...in beliefs” (Edward W. Taylor, 1997), or “certain challenges...that cannot be resolved by the usual way we handle problems” (Mezirow, 1978) as being the catalyst for initiating the transformative learning process. A disorienting dilemma occurs when value traits conflict. It is through this conflict that an individual’s values can be explored and evaluated.

### *Conflicting Values*

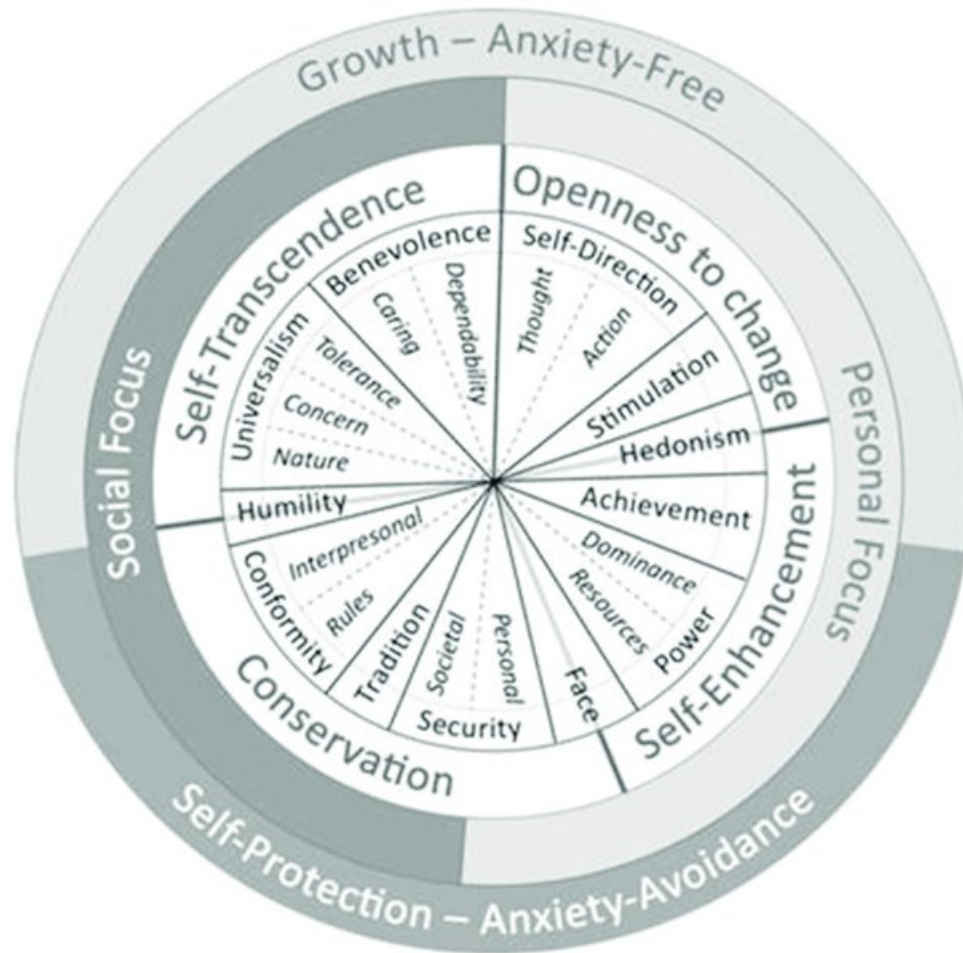
What Schwartz (2012), building upon the work of Rokeach (1968, 1973, 1979), illuminated and he and others have gone on to refine (S. Schwartz, 2013; S. H. Schwartz et al., 2012; S. H. Schwartz et al., 2017; Skimina et al., 2019) is that these values behave as a continuum, where values that are closely correlated may serve to reinforce behavior while values further away in the continuum may serve to impede behaviors. An example from his text clarifies this as,

“One basis of the value structure is the fact that actions in pursuit of any value have consequences that conflict with some values but are congruent with others. For example, pursuing achievement values typically conflicts with pursuing benevolence values. Seeking success for self tends to obstruct actions aimed at enhancing the welfare of others who need one's help. But pursuing both achievement and power values is usually compatible. Seeking personal success for oneself tends to strengthen and to be strengthened by actions aimed at enhancing one's own social position and authority over others” (S. H. Schwartz et al., 2012, p. 8).

The image below shows the nested structure of the continuum and depicts each of the nineteen values based on their place on the continuum. At the center of the image are all nineteen values. The closer in proximity two values are to one another, the higher their compatibility. The further in proximity, the lower the compatibility of the two values. Hedonism and achievement are generally compatible values, while hedonism and humility are typically in conflict.

This visual representation makes it easier to name the conflicts that may be triggering the disorienting dilemma. This continuum depicts how certain values support or complement each other, while other values seem to contravene each other. The multiple layers of the nested structure offer a number of focal points through which to understand the conflict. Beyond the nineteen discrete values, it is easy to see how, for example, conservation and openness to change, personal and social focus, or growth and self-protection concepts might clash with one another. These classifications enable the individual to put language to their feeling of disorientation. While my research does not investigate the particular value conflicts at play, focusing instead on the impetus of the conflict, this display enabled me to anticipate where conflicts might arise.

Figure 14. Research with Refined Values Theory. Shalom H. Schwartz. Excerpted from ResearchGate profile.



*What do disorienting dilemmas teach us about our beliefs?*

One way to understand what makes a dilemma disorienting to the individual is that it violates a value (or set of complementary values) that he or she holds or it sees competing held values coming into conflict. In other words, these dilemmas are either triggered from with-out, where the individual encounters an externally held value that contradicts his or her own values, or an event causes the individual to have to navigate among his or her own held values.

While it would have been expected for students to explore challenges typical at this life stage (for example, issues with roommates, problems with classes, contemplating job offers), it was surprising to see students in this elite business school pouring out deeply personal struggles. Through multiple readings of the 282 entries of the 21 students that were the focal point of this research, it struck me that the way in which they spoke about the dilemma seemed to take one of two viewpoints. I saw terms like “feeling stuck” about choices and decisions as they intersected with others expectations, as well as passages that seemed more like feeling caught between two aspirational identities or ways of being in the world. I observed that these passages might be well characterized by using a distinction between external and internal. The Schwartz value theory and continuum helped me to understand the more complex dilemmas I was seeing in the data. The student’s entries clearly exhibited both types of conflicts identified in Schwartz’s theory, conflicts where the student’s values were challenged by an external force and where an event caused conflict among the student’s held values. I offer next a sampling of student entries that exemplify the two types of conflicts identified in Schwartz’s theory. The first set of writings demonstrate where a held value (or set of complementary values) are activated by an external opposing set of values. The second collection of reflections reveal the student’s internal conflict among their own set of held values.

### **Exogenous Values Violation**

One way for an individual to become aware of the values they hold is to have those values confronted by an external situation. These exogenous values violations create tension or dis-ease for the individual as they encounter values different from those they embrace.

These violations bring to the individual's attention that their value priorities are not universally-held.

Students wrote about the ways in which external events, whether triggers from coursework, discussions with their DT's, or events happening in their life, caused them to pause and take stock of the ways in which their worldview may be different from those of others. In this section of the paper, I offer a few examples from the students' writings to demonstrate that the disorientation comes from an internal/external debate where the student becomes aware of the ways in which the values they hold as important may be different from the values held by others.

There are times when one's intentions and their impact may differ. This is because intentions are based on the individual's beliefs and values whereas impact is rooted in the recipient's worldview. In this example, the student is surprised to recognize that their actions may have been perceived radically differently than their intentions.

*...one of my core values is "progress," which I define as continual learning/taking on new responsibilities/the feeling of moving forward and being acknowledged for these achievements... In high school, I became head of community service... I was motivated less by the good impact I would have and more by the position that I could add to my resume...It scares me that that my decision to become head of community service may have seemed to be a selfless one from an outsider's perspective when, in reality, my motivations were mainly personal progress. Is it possible to be truly selfless, or if a value of mine is progress, will I ever be able to help move others forward while keeping myself behind?*

Here, the student's actions and attitudes were based upon a strong affiliation with values comprising self-enhancement. He is struck by the sudden realization of how others might view his efforts as motivated by self-transcendence. The incongruence between how he views himself and how his actions may be interpreted by others surfaces a disorienting

dilemma for him. In his final sentence, we see him struggling with what this realization means for his leadership of others.

While the last excerpt illustrated the disparity between how one sees themselves and how others see them, this next entry points to our expectation that in intimate relationship others mirror our values. In this example, the student comes to recognize how differences in values contributed to issues in a relationship.

*I also think I defined the core of my issue with Brenda. Fundamentally, Brenda is a taker....Any time I would give an inch, she would take a foot. If she paid for dinner, she would expect three back, and count them. Being in that relationship made me a less generous person. I know that I am the happiest when I am a giver, yet in that relationship I constantly felt taken advantage of and became more and more selfish.*

Specifically, this passage highlights the conflict between the student's value of benevolence and their partners value of power. The disorienting dilemma embedded in this excerpt is the discomfort at the detection of his having become selfish, in juxtaposition to his more generous nature.

Societal events are another vehicle for highlighting value differences. Field research took place during the fall of 2016. This coincided with the presidential election year that saw Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump vying for the post. This is one of those rare opportunities in field research to have the serendipity of being on-site during as a significant issue in the field unfolds. I offer here two examples from the myriad in the data that demonstrate the utter disbelief as these student's became aware that significant portions of their country had dissimilar lived experience, and with that, a distinctive worldview from their own. It was extraordinary not only that they chose to use this course as a place to explore their disbelief

in the outcome of that race but the wisdom with which they viewed their role as a leader in addressing the issues this race surfaced.

*I think the most important thing I take away from yesterday is that while there are ~60 million people in this country who probably share some version of my perspective, there are ~60 million people who don't. And those are the people I have the most to learn from individually and the most to learn from if I'm to understand what led to this outcome, and what is most broken and in need of fixing in this country.... I thought I'd be angrier today. Instead, I've been overwhelmed today by this enormous curiosity and desire to hear directly from the people who elected our next President... and simply ask them: Why did you vote for Donald Trump? And then just listen... without passing any judgement.*

This student reveals his recognition of the underlying assumptions that had informed his worldview. This aha illuminated for him the fissure between the way he sees the world and the way others might see the world. He expresses his choice to acknowledge the disorienting dilemma and engage in transformative learning, when he says, *"I've been overwhelmed today by this enormous curiosity and desire to hear directly from the people who elected our next President... and simply ask them:*

*Why? ... And then just listen... without passing any judgement."* As we see from this excerpt, as well as the one that follows, these disorienting dilemmas occurred real-time in the classroom and the students were able to navigate them in their reflections

*Then I realized in asking myself this, there is actually a more fundamental problem – I'm out of touch with the majority of average Americans and their unconscious biases, fears and needs. While it seems we are making progress at the top, I admit today that I am unaware of what all this progress is doing to those feeling left behind. For example, what have been the impacts of globalization and technological advances to the average American? In a place where we only look towards the future, I've neglected to look behind to those we are dragging along the way. This election has made we realize no one has been listening to the average American, and the results are a plea to be heard. I'm motivated now more than ever to do something about this divide in our nation, and to address this step back for women... My eyes*

*and ears have been opened – I’m listening. I’m listening with an open mind and heart to find a way forward together with no one feeling so left behind.*

This excerpt makes explicit the link between self-exploration and other-directedness. In particular the student’s revelations, “*I am out of touch...*” and “*I admit today that I am unaware of what all this progress is doing to those feeling left behind.*” offer insight into her own burgeoning awareness as well as how she situates herself in the world around her. It is as if she is saying, “I assumed my beliefs and values were similar to others and I now better realize that I don’t know and that’s disorienting.”

The students' sophisticated reactions stand as exemplars in this research for several reasons. First, the fact that this event showed up in the students’ reflections at all speaks to the strong class norms that the faculty had established, norms that encouraged the students to bring whatever was top of mind for them into the space. Second, the way that they unpack the dilemma illustrates the beginnings of Mezirow’s process of transformative learning. Stages of the process that are particularly evident in these entries include self-examination, critical assessment, and recognition that the process is shared. In some instances, the students offered glimpses of beginning to explore options and formulate a plan for action. Finally, and most encouraging for me, is that they recognized their agency – as individuals and future leaders – in seeking to address the issues surfaced through this campaign.

These selections from student entries demonstrate the disorienting dilemma that is evoked by an exogenous values violation. When an individual is confronted with worldviews that differ from their deeply held beliefs and values, the distress of this discrepancy offers an opportunity for one to engage in the transformative learning process.

### Internal Values Conflict

The second way in which values act as a mechanism for disorienting dilemmas is when value states held by the student come into conflict with one another because of a current context. As an example, if an individual who holds both benevolence and conformity as value states is faced with having to break driving laws to get an ailing loved one to the hospital, they will need to choose among held beliefs. The disorienting dilemma in these instances is an intrapersonal one where the student is faced with the need to prioritize among held values.

As this student prepares to marry, she is wrought with emotion as to what this pact will mean for her identity. This reflection, while written as a letter to her mother, sees the student wrestling among their attachment to values of benevolence, security, tradition and conformity. The struggle, in this instance, is less with anything the mother may have said and more about how those words triggered tensions she was already feeling.

*I am using this reflection to write (my mom) a letter. I haven't decided whether I will send to her...*

*Throughout this process, you have accused me so many times of putting Brian's and Brian's family's preferences above yours. I hate this accusation. I know that sometimes, this statement is deserved. There have been times when I been inconsiderate of your and dad's wishes. I am sorry... Judging by the fact that I haven't yet been able to decide whether I am going to take Brian's last name, I am obviously struggling with this idea of creating / joining a new family. It's weird. Don't get me wrong – I am incredibly excited to marry Brian. But I have been a Sampson for 29 years of my life. I love being a Sampson! You all are my tribe, no matter how crazy you are. And now I have to leave that behind in some sense? It feels like a betrayal of sorts – perhaps to my own identity, perhaps to our family... I guess I am writing this to explain myself and perhaps give you some more insight (and myself some more insight) into why I have acted and reacted the way I have throughout this process...*

The tradition of taking the husband's last name acts as the coagulant for this student as she navigates this foreign territory. Her sentence, "It feels like a betrayal of sorts – perhaps to my own identity," is an exquisite expression of this internal values conflict where she reckons with having to identify, articulate and prioritize her held values while recognizing that these values may not mirror those held by her mother.

Similarly, this next student illustrates the process of examining and adapting the values that have been inculcated in them from their parents. This reflection demonstrates the student's commitment to values of tradition, conformity, and benevolence clashing with the student's devotion to values of self-direction and achievement.

*As a first-generation American and daughter of immigrants, I knew from an early age the type of sacrifices my parents made to come to this country with nearly empty pockets in search of a better life for their future children. As a result, I've always felt a tension at every stage of life to make sure I kept them happy as a form of paying them back for endless sacrifices they made...To be honest, I never questioned why I chose to make these decisions—in fact, I always subconsciously wanted to make them happy so at the time the decision was never difficult...As I began my career, I started to question whether it was the right path and would actually bring me personal happiness day to day... I have realized over the course of this semester that it is important to put a stick in the ground in terms of what guides my decision making. I want to do things that create value for everyone, but I want to be the one to set the terms around what that 'thing' specifically is, because ultimately I have to live with myself and make sure I'm happy.*

In this excerpt, the student asserts that he has demonstrated his values by "mak(ing) sure I kept them happy," and apprehends that his life may become untenable if he continues to sacrifice his happiness for the perceived happiness of his parents. While I didn't code the student entries for specific values, as this was beyond what could reasonably be construed from the data, this entry seems to signify a conflict between benevolence and self-direction.

In recognizing this tension, he has begun the process of identifying and reordering his value priorities.

As these students were entering the final year of their MBA program at the time of this research, ruminations about the job search appeared in many student's entries. This student eloquently shares how the two paths he sees before him are defined by the dissonance they carry between his held values of self-direction and security.

*Throughout this semester, I've been struggling to figure out what I should do after school. I've felt lost and unsure where to go next. I've been very conflicted, and to be honestly I still am. I find myself torn between two paths. The first path is the path of security and stability – a return to the company where I worked before school. I didn't love the firm but it does a lot of healthcare work, pays well, comes with status and prestige, and keeps me on the "high achiever track". Essentially, it speaks to my mind but not my heart. The second path is the path of creativity and potential – joining a healthcare startup, which would be far more volatile and likely less lucrative. But, this would provide an opportunity to build an organization and shape the future of healthcare, which speaks to my heart.*

One can almost feel his vexation at the idea of having to choose one of these two paths. While he uses the language "head" and "heart" here, what he is clearly describing are his competing values. The verbiage he uses to define each path "security and stability" versus "creativity and potential" are readily apparent as divergent values on Schwartz' values continuum.

And, finally, an argument with a loved one offers this student the opportunity to explore how their affiliation with values such as self-direction, conformity, power and benevolence wreak havoc on the student's understanding of themselves and, therefore, how they are perceiving the disagreement.

*My feelings in these fights are a lot more complex than I had initially comprehended. Usually, hurt and shame eclipse all other feelings in the heat of the moment, but re-examining the conversation showed me that there is a lot more going on. There is also quite a bit of anger (why doesn't he own any of the parts that he played in this?), self-doubt (am I so selfish that I would put my own needs before those of someone whom I profess to love?), fear (am I going to lose him?), jealousy (why is his business so much more important than my needs?), and sadness (why can't he see how much I love him?). I don't know how to express them yet, and some of them I might want to negotiate away, but there is a lot more going on within me than I had initially realized.*

It is in the student's meta-analysis of the fight that they are able to begin to discern the values and beliefs directing their behavior. Her candor in wanting to "negotiate away" this new insight she has into herself is an honest reaction to a disorienting dilemma where one might ignore or avoid the dissonance rather than having to do the internal excavation work called for in transformative learning.

As evidenced in these writings, the dilemma the student faces is one of having to prioritize amongst their own held values. While the context that raised the awareness of the conflict may have come from outside, for example an argument with a loved one, the dis-ease is an internal one. It is the individual awakening to the collision of opposing values. Transformative learning, then, is the process of reintegrating these values in an order that resonates for the individual.

### *The Courage to be Seen*

Within a strong institutional setting that does not encourage vulnerability, it would have been understandable for students to maintain a layer of emotional armor as they tread carefully into this course. One student described the culture as, "*Fairhaven is a place where insecure people who are honest about their insecurities become more insecure and where*

*insecure people who claim to be “super confident” become arrogant because they are better at faking confidence than the rest.”* The premise behind this student’s comment is that Fairhaven is not a place to share vulnerability.

Yet, it is amid this backdrop that students chose to have the courage to be seen. It is interesting to see students electing to share and explore such intimate, complex issues with faculty and their peers. An entry from a student after their first *DT* offers a glimpse into the juxtaposition of this class within this setting, *“Our conversation today got very deep very quickly – deeper than some relationships I have developed with classmates I have known since the first day of first year. At first I wasn’t sure if I was ready to share such raw truths (my secrets) with complete strangers. But listening to others in the group fully open up and trust gave me the confidence that I could do the same.”* Faculty have carefully curated a classroom experience which encourages the student to engage deeply with the course content and with one another.

### *Conclusion*

There are dilemmas, or challenges, that arise in the course of everyday life. Many of these, as Sletteboe (1997) points out, are able to be resolved by identifying the issue, assessing the alternatives, and determining a course of action. In some cases, however, the dilemma is integrally connected to one or more held values or beliefs. These are the disorienting dilemmas that are believed to be the impetus for transformative learning (Cranton, 1994; J. M. Dirkx et al., 2006; Mezirow, 1981).

While the structure, content, and process of the course created by the facilitator served as a container that allowed the student to contemplate these experiences within a campus culture

which typically frowns on such demonstrations of vulnerability, it was the students who chose to use this space to dive deeply into discovering who they are and the impact of that on others. This work, as one might expect, had them surfacing and questioning long-held worldviews and beliefs.

As was expected, given the focus of the course, personal dilemmas surfaced in the classroom. It is important to note that these are not contrived dilemmas elicited through a theoretical exercise, such as asking the student to defend or refute the position of the protagonist in a case study. Rather the dilemmas are those that the students have experienced, or are experiencing, in their life.

As evidenced by their entries, these more complex dilemmas may “come from outside the person, throwing them off track and reordering their world” (Clark, 1993, p. 83) or they may “originate within the person in that their conscious or unconscious desire to find something that’s missing from their life opens them for change” (Clark, 1993, p. 83). As I have noted elsewhere, this awareness may arise out of an exogenous shock or a more subtle, perhaps subconscious, internal disharmony where the individual can’t quite reconcile how they feel about something (DeAngelis, 2017).

While this chapter has established that dilemmas are being explored in the classroom, it also highlights that these dilemmas are more complex and intrapersonal than would have been expected in a traditional business school classroom.

Upon continued review of my data, I see that identity literature might further explain what makes a dilemma disorienting. In particular, Herminia Ibarra’s work on provisional selves (1999) and her co-authored work on possible selves (Ibarra, Snook, & Guillen Ramo,

2008) would seem to have application to extend my line of research. Provisional selves are “temporary solutions people use to bridge the gap between their self-conception and...what they believe is expected of them” (Ibarra, 1999, p. 765) whereas a person’s possible selves are “the images one has about who one might become” (Ibarra et al., 2008, p. 3). As revealed in this chapter, student reflections allude to these identity conflicts as they try and negotiate who they are amidst the roles that they hold (sister, brother, spouse, parent, child, student, employee, manager, etc).

Analysis of the student’s entries reaffirms that conflict with and among held values are triggers that make a dilemma disorienting. Using the constructs provided by Schwartz and his research partners (1992, 2012; 2012), I have begun to refine the amorphous label of ‘values and beliefs’ that seminal transformative learning authors have associated with disorienting dilemmas. This clear approach to using values gives language to those experiencing a disorienting dilemma and to those seeking to support the individual as they explore the dilemma.

## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION

The question I investigated was how the aim of transformative teaching enables the exploration of disorienting dilemmas. My intention, through this research, was to contribute to two bodies of knowledge. First, I am contributing to the transformative teaching literature by advancing the understanding of how transformative aims in the classroom support the student's exploration of the disorienting dilemma. Second, I am contributing to the transformative learning literature by delving into the disorienting dilemma as a construct. In this chapter, I share my concerns as I embarked on the research, implications of the findings, limitations of the study, and thoughts on future research.

#### *Anticipated Impediments*

I had expected three possibilities that might have proven to be obstacles to this research even with the wide net I cast through my research design. First, despite the professors' instruction that the writing the student does throughout the semester is for themselves, to deepen their learning, this remains a graded course. While I take up grading again in the Limitations section of this chapter, here I attend to the student's engagement in the process. Because these students have arrived at the University having excelled

academically, demonstrating confidence in their ability to arrive at the ‘right’ answer, there was a concern that the students would write what they believed the professor wanted to hear. In fact, both students and faculty address this during the second class of the semester when faculty share excerpts of initial journal entries and student’s, in response to seeing the depth of candor acknowledge their initial entry as having been an attempt to figure out what faculty were looking for.

As witnessed in the excerpts offered throughout this text, the depth of feeling and vulnerability displayed by the students made it evident that they were not writing simply to fulfill a course deliverable. Additionally, the nature of the course, which saw the student’s engaging in exercises and reflections every week, would have made it incredibly challenging for the student trying to game the system to sustain such efforts. Thus, I was glad to see the raw honesty and emotion in the student’s writings. It is important to note that through my research design I was focused on those students who had experienced a disorienting dilemma in the classroom. Therefore, it is highly likely that among the 234 students in this research sample, there were those who were simply trying to do what they thought would get them the best grade.

Second, I wondered how the development team (DT) component of the curriculum might enhance or impede the student’s engagement with the work. These development teams are comprised of, and facilitated by, peers. While the student might be willing to be vulnerable privately – on the safe space of the page and in ongoing dialogue with the professor – it is another matter entirely to expose oneself in this way with those in their peer group. By design, the DT’s were not the focus of this study – I address this in the Limitations

section of this chapter. However, it is one of the nested levels referenced in my research design. Evident in a few of the student's writings were illustrations of how the DT supported their exploration and how they may have hampered it. Where it seemed a student may have had a negative or unexpected reaction to dialogue in the DT, I observed the facilitators urging the students to stay engaged, not assume the worst, and to use the facilitator and the DT to explore the reaction and possible steps forward. I discuss this intermediate level of the DT in my future research below. It is a level of engagement that is clearly present but did not appear to impede the student's ability to be vulnerable.

Finally, I had expected to see clear evidence linking a class activity to the student's reflection for that particular week. In other words, when a framework for assessing conflict was discussed in session seven, the reflections written by the students that week would demonstrate how the student was connecting this concept to his life. There are a few such mentions, such as the self- and DT-assessment using a self-awareness framework . However, some mentions occur quite some time after the class exercise. One example of this is when a student shared in his week eleven reflection that he had used the conflict framework to help understand and open a dialogue with his spouse about tensions they were experiencing in their marriage. This highlights the value of sustained reflection over the course of the fourteen-week class, where students are drawing upon something they have learned earlier in the class to help them navigate a situation they are currently facing. Literature on pedagogy often hopes to find a cause and response kind of relationship. What this study points to is that there may not be specific prompts or triggers that elicit awareness of specific disorienting

dilemmas, but rather that the interweaving of prompts and reflection throughout the course enables the student to draw upon the learnings in their own timing.

### *Implications from the Findings*

In chapter four I illustrate how faculty create the conditions that enable students to explore disorienting dilemmas and, in chapter five, I offer evidence of how the student's take up the invitation from the faculty member. As the semester starts, the faculty member models the expectation for the student and offers instruction to guide the learning. The student then takes their first tentative steps, testing their comfort with the process and learning to trust the faculty and their fellow students. Throughout the semester, the faculty member supports the student's learning by offering inquisitive feedback to the student's work and layering on the next piece of curriculum.

This research offers an important contribution in that I have been able to study transformative teaching and transformative learning as they emerge in the classroom. While these two concepts are related, they are often studied separately. Additionally, by analyzing the students' written text over the course of the semester, I was not biased by how these students self-proclaimed their learning process rather, their learning was deduced from their writings. In this section of the chapter, I share key insights about transformative teaching and transformative learning.

### *Key Insight on Teaching for Transformation*

There is not a simple checklist that faculty can follow to become transformative teachers. While I have articulated an eight-part process below, this can be thought of like a recipe where it is the combination of these ingredients that creates the feast. In the case of

transformative teaching, it is the embodiment of these elements – the doing and the being – that seems to support this deeper learning for the student. I offer the concept of ‘interconnectivity’ as a lens through which to understand this phenomenon.

### *Interconnectivity*

Through this research I have endeavored to investigate how facilitators enable the exploration of disorienting dilemmas in the classroom. An initial finding of this study is how the multi-faceted, sustained attention to the individual student’s personal development created the space for the student to identify and explore disorienting dilemmas from their life. That this work happened in the unexpected setting of an elite business school is, itself, an exemplar. The findings from this study suggest that enabling the exploration of disorienting dilemmas in the classroom involves an intentional interconnectivity of the following elements by faculty:

1. designing a curriculum that attends to adult development;
2. surfacing dilemmas for the students to explore;
3. creating a psychologically safe environment where students feel secure to explore their dilemmas;
4. engaging in their own transformative learning process;
5. willingness to be vulnerable and transparent in modeling the behavior for the students;
6. eliciting or inviting students to bring their lived experiences to the coursework;
7. continual partnering with the student on their journey of self-discovery;

8. and, offering ongoing, timely feedback that is more inquiry than advocacy-based.

I define interconnectivity as each part of the system relying on and supporting the other parts such that the entire integrated system makes a stronger whole. The concept of interconnectivity has roots in the social sciences and specifically in the field of human resource management, which is the professional field I have come from. As organizations have sought to foster more inclusive cultures, increase employee engagement and become more innovative, they have come to recognize that these will not be accomplished through a single practice but, rather, require a cohesive cluster of practices. In the area of high-performance work systems, the “complementarities” among practices are often noted. A few examples from the literature include the ways in which human resource practices interact with one another and effect organizational performance (Delaney & Huselid, 1996), the individuation of job assignment on engagement (Butler & Waldroop, 1999), and impact of high-performance work organization practices on employee welfare (Osterman, 2000). For example, it is not enough simply to establish work teams (a single practice). The organization must also prepare the team to address team dynamics, determine processes and policies afforded to the team, address the individual and collective compensation structures, and attend to the implications of the team on the larger organization and vice versa. My notion of interconnectivity shares a legacy with this notion of practices working together in mutually reinforcing and synergistic ways.

While the pieces I found seem to be a whole greater than the sum of its parts, I recognize that I have studied the totality of moves and not tested it against a setting in which only a few ingredients of the recipe were used. There is a well-articulated logic to the interconnectivity of the parts which arises in my data as a finding and gives me confidence that they form a whole. My study, though, was designed to begin to elicit such a portrait of how to do this transformational work, not to test a competing hypothesis that some parts alone would do. My study was exploratory, and as such, it discovered a lot. It was not designed to be a final word, but an opening to further exploration.

### *Key Insights from Investigating Disorienting Dilemmas*

In this research I heeded Davis' (1971) guidance that *interesting* social theory must confront the "taken-for-granted world of their audience" (p. 311) and offer "practical consequences of these new propositions for his imagined audience's" (p. 312). Within my original research question, there was a second embedded research question: what makes a dilemma disorienting? Through this study, I have been able to unpack the concept of the disorienting dilemma as it is revealed in the classroom. While much work has been done to refine Mezirow's theory (Cranton, 1994; Daloz, 2000; John M. Dirkx, 2006; J. M. Dirkx et al., 2006; Sharan B Merriam, 2004; Snyder, 2008; E. Taylor, 2000; Edward W. Taylor, 1997; E. W. Taylor, 2000) and to look at the outcomes of transformative learning (Badara, 2011; Brock & Abel, 2016; Ciporen, 2008; Haber-Curran & Tillapaugh, 2015; McCusker, 2013), the dynamics of disorienting dilemmas has been undertheorized.

I endeavored to make two essential contributions. First, I offer empirically rooted specifics of an array of feedback techniques that transformative-minded teachers use.

Second, among the various known indicators of disorienting dilemmas, I looked at values in depth and, in doing so, identified two forms of values conflicts (internal and exogenous) that may have both diagnostic and theoretical value as a vision of transformative teaching is more refined by future scholarly work. What follows is an explanation of both of these aspects of the research.

Through the careful reading of the faculty feedback to the students weekly entries, I have derived a typology of feedback that supports transformative learning in the classroom. This typology is not a simple checklist where the professor can look at the list and select a combination of feedback types for expediency sake. This form of feedback asks the teacher to be thoughtful about what form and tone of feedback will best support that student's learning. Because the feedback faculty are giving are not about a case or a problem set, but about the student himself, it is about understanding and employing the combination of refined types of evaluation that will encourage the student's continued exploration. This compels the faculty member to provide personalized, nuanced, authentic feedback that integrates multiple forms of feedback.

The design of this study enabled me to capture disorienting dilemmas as the students described them, to illuminate what was causing the issue for the student, and to identify ways in which the faculty enabled student's exploration of these dilemmas. Synthesizing this research has allowed me to demonstrate that one explanatory mechanism for what makes the dilemma that the students surfaced disorienting is values conflicts. Values conflicts may arise from interactions with others whose values differ from one's own or when an emergent issue causes discord among an individual's held values.

In codifying the entries of the students within known and validated values structures, my intention is to be able to give the student and faculty member a way to conceptualize the student's attachment to the dilemma. I view this as similar to the work that has been done around feelings whereby it is more productive for an individual to be able to process a feeling when they are able to name it (Willcox, 1982).

Based on adult development literature (Rokeach, 2008), it was not a surprise that certain values and beliefs, such as achievement, security and self-direction played a more prominent role in the students' reflections. Given that these students are in their second year of their MBA studies, their focus on the implications of the choices they are making, such as career, weighed heavily on their minds. The predominance of the value of benevolence seemed to be, in part, driven by their ruminating on who they are becoming as a leader.

### *Summary*

Teachers seeking to create a transformative experience for their students need to be able to support the exploration of disorienting dilemmas. As Tennant (2007) and others suggest, "By scrutinizing their psychological 'world views' practitioners are better able to recognize and appreciate the world views of others and they are in a better position to articulate their goals and purposes as adult educators" (p. 140). Through this research I have offered numerous examples of how professors use disorienting dilemmas to evoke deeper learning in their students. Through the sharing of these stories, one can enable teachers whose intention is to create transformative learning experiences for their students to see how they might apply these concepts in their classroom. Both professors remarked on the profound impact that teaching this class has had on them,

Professor Craig reflected:

*It's the most meaningful teaching I have ever done. And I mean that in the literal sense of it: meaning-full. I mean I was actually an engineer by training and education and I love teaching engineering and I love the beauty of engineering. But then I got in the Army and it was all about people, and organization, and culture. And then I got here and I was teaching leadership and I thought, "Wow, I really get to know my students teaching a leadership course" versus a finance professor who doesn't really—they get to know their students a little bit as they talk about accounting and finance, but leadership because around the topic, you get to know your students. The incredible privilege of people letting you inside their lives every week just changes you. It can't help but change you. And you have a real sense of where they are developmentally, with the material, but also just their struggles, their fears, their anxieties, all their worries and concerns. I mean you can't help but be moved.*

*It's also—Professor Davidson and I talk about this—I mean it's incredibly emotionally draining. Think about it you're only teaching one class a week. But it's a course you live with every day because reading the reflections takes a week and the course never lets you go. And you get feedback and it's not all good. So it's emotionally draining and writing—engaging in a meaningful way with those reflections is just hard work. It takes a lot of time and it's not like grading where you can quickly get a sense of the work. I mean you have to read what's really going on to be able to provide a useful response to a reflection. And that's hard work, so it's draining.*

Professor Davidson answered this same question with:

*I think I have more love in my heart for the students. I have more empathy for them. I think I have more understanding for them. Sometimes I think I care too much about them. I have become so connected with them. I think I am more understanding. I think I am much less judgmental. I think I am more self-accepting. I think reading all the reflections and responding, there is a dimension of humility and even a bit of spirituality involved with that.*

While transformative teaching is profoundly impactful, these faculty also offer a cautionary tale in their remarks. As demonstrated in the text, transformative teachers are on their own transformative learning journey with the student. Modeling the behavior involves re-opening and re-exploring their own disorienting dilemma. Because this form of teaching requires the faculty member to be transparent about their own transformative learning

journey, and to be able to support and honor each student as they traverse the process over the course of the semester, it can be arduous. These faculty discovered the importance of crafting their own support structure to enable them to sustain their engagement with the students. As noted elsewhere, this support structure included weekly teaching meetings with one another and the assistance of skilled teaching assistants. I explore the impact of this further in the Limitations section of this chapter.

Paolo Freire (2004) implored educators to be mindful that students were not empty vessels but rather had rich lived experiences to lend to their learning. I believe that faculty who are seeking to create transformational experiences in the classroom are best served by understanding the types of dilemmas students face. In this way, not only are faculty better able to elicit and respond as the students encounter these dilemmas in the course of the semester, but they are able to introduce dilemmas in ways that cause students to conjure up or draw upon, consider, and learn from their lived experience.

I believe that facilitators can play an important role in the transformational learning process and it has been my intention to begin demystifying how that relationship functions. I have offered concepts, tools, and insights that may support facilitators as they endeavor to engage students in the exploration of disorienting dilemmas. Therefore, I illustrated the findings through the sharing of stories, conveying the data in a manner that makes it accessible and relatable to the reader (Stake, 2010).

Through my research, I shed light upon how the theories of transformative teaching and transformative learning interact in practice. Therefore, my findings have focused on illustrating examples of this interaction. Logically, then, implications attend to things for

facilitators to consider if they are attempting to create an environment that supports transformative learning.

Knox (1977) posits that “an understanding of these antecedent-consequent relations in the lives of adults can increase the ability of practitioners to predict trends and to assist adults in their efforts to learn and change” (p. 9). My hope is that further research will help to clarify the trends that enable the exploration of disorienting dilemmas in the classroom. Before sharing my thoughts on future research avenues, it is important to recognize the limitations of this research.

### *Limitations*

One limitation of this study is my inability to interact directly with the students. While I was granted tremendous access in observing both the classroom setting and the faculty meetings, the school is diligent in restricting direct access to the students themselves. Therefore, I was unable to introduce pre- and post-semester surveys that measure the students’ ability to engage in the exploration of the disorienting dilemma aspect of transformative learning; nor was I able to interview students to clarify the attributions I have made about the incident being a disorienting dilemma for them or their ability to realize learnings from the exploration of the dilemma.

A second limitation of this study was the inability to observe the Development Team discussions. This would have allowed me to more fully understand both how the students are internalizing the topics of discussion as well as how fellow students in the Development Team influence each other’s learning. The focus of this study was primarily the dyadic

interaction between student and faculty member, setting aside this mediating force in the learning process.

Conversely, my inability to interact with the students over the course of the semester aided in them putting the study out of their mind. Therefore, any influence I may have had in their engagement with the course content was mitigated. It is reasonable to assume that the students written entries were not manipulated for the benefit of this study. Consequently, I was able to analyze their unbiased text.

A third limitation of this study lies in the relative homogeneity of the two faculty members. This lack of diversity mitigated the ability to see how difference such as gender, ethnicity, marital status, tenure, and so on, may have influenced their approach to supporting the students on their learning journey. Interestingly, given the popularity of this course, the school has attempted to solicit faculty to teach the course. Unfortunately, these attempts have, to now, been unsuccessful. When asked why this might be, Professor Craig said:

*I think for the same reason's students aren't developmentally ready to take the course. Faculty aren't developmentally ready to teach it. I mean why should anybody—I mean somebody shouldn't expect me to teach a third-year elective in finance if I've not been studying finance for a while. We shouldn't expect someone to be good at being vulnerable in class or try to facilitate this kind of work if they have never tried it before. It's a very different kind of teaching. When the teacher is not in the center, the student really is the center of the process.*

*When we teach case study method Fairhaven, the teacher is the orchestrator or the maestro leading this incredible discussion. And so there is a real high at the end like, "That was great. You're done." And in this class, there is a lot of quiet time in class, it's not really about you. It's not about you at all. And that's hard to do sometimes for some faculty.*

This, coupled with the emotional toll on the professor that was explained earlier, offers two possible insights into impediments of transformative teaching. The first, as noted

here, is that the faculty member himself needs to be comfortable stepping into vulnerability, both in terms of being transparent about their own learning journey and in setting aside their assumptions about the traditional classroom structure (where the faculty member is the sage on the stage and the student is the empty vessel). The second impediment may lie in faculty being unable to sustain the emotional investment necessary to engage in this form of teaching semester after semester.

This leads to a fourth limitation, that of the intention of the faculty. It is clear through this research that both faculty members are highly invested in their students navigating the transformative learning process. What, though, would be the result if the faculty member did not embody this perspective?

Finally, the very fact that this course is an exemplar in normative higher education curriculum represents yet another limitation. We do not know how the disorienting dilemma is enabled, if at all, in a more traditional classroom. Nor, as we think more broadly about the generalizability of this work, do we understand how this translates to ungraded contexts (such as organizational learning and development environments), to non-classroom contexts (such as executive coaching), and to growth unrelated to leadership/personal development.

#### *Future Research*

As noted in the introduction, my exploration of the literature suggested that this is among the first works that seeks to demonstrate how transformative teaching enables transformative learning as it occurs in the classroom. I have worked here to begin mapping the terrain so that the research that follows may add detail, refine, and redirect these initial findings. I liken this to the identification of a new land mass. I've identified that the mass

exists, offering initial insights into the topography. Future exploration will clarify the topography, explain the flora and fauna and species indigenous to the land, and demarcate ways in which this land is similar and different from other lands. In this section, I offer suggestions to begin that work.

This study focused on a small, targeted sample within the classrooms. There are a myriad of potential expansions of this work. First, research could be done looking at the influence of teams on the exploration of disorienting dilemmas. Second, a study could be done to look at implications such as gender, nationality, marital status, sexual orientation, on the exploration of disorienting dilemmas. Third, a different sample could be taken to investigate ways that facilitators impede the exploration of disorienting dilemmas in the classroom. Fourth, a study could be done within the context of a traditional (versus transformational-focused) classroom. Fifth, this study could be replicated in an environment that does not have an explicit transformational intent. These examples focus on the transformative teaching aspects of the research. Next, I offer additional thoughts on each of these potential research streams.

A key facet to the Developing the Leader Within class is that of the Development Teams. Equal time is given to classroom instruction and meeting time for the Development Teams over the course of the semester. And, from an instructional design perspective, much attention is given to the team formation, both in terms of faculties attempt to ensure that the team members have little prior exposure to one another and in the establishment of a group contract at the outset of the semester. Much has been written about the impact of team dynamics on learning (Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007; Jones, 1996; Kayes, Kayes, &

Kolb, 2005). Given that the learning here is about oneself, it would be valuable to understand if and how the theories perform in this context.

As noted elsewhere in this text, the composition of the classroom is diverse across a number of dimensions such as gender, race, nationality, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation. It would be valuable to understand how each of these aspects of identity influence the individual's exploration of disorienting dilemmas in the classroom. Research suggests that student's sense of belonging and performance increase when they can relate, on an identity-level, with the faculty member (Benitez, James, Joshua, Perfetti, & Vick, 2017) and diverse faculty employ a broader range of pedagogical techniques (Umbach, 2006).

Mezirow speaks of the difficulty of transformative learning. Two studies that may uncover this would include investigating ways in which the faculty are impeding this exploration and factors that may preclude the student from engaging in this exploration.

The subject of this study was a class that had, as its intention, transformational learning. The nature of the instruction and norms of the classroom would be important to understand in a course that did not have transformational learning as its aim.

Through this research I have expanded upon the link between values and beliefs and the disorienting dilemma. There is much work to be done to begin to build a nuanced understanding of the relationship between values and beliefs and the transformative learning process. Examples of types of research questions might include, are certain values and beliefs more or less likely to change when confronted with a disorienting dilemma? Does understanding, and being able to name, the value or belief that is being challenged help

support the exploration process? Is there variation in the efficacy of an intervention based on the value or belief that has been triggered?

Fairhaven University is a conservative, well-resourced, institution. In some ways, this offers a strong litmus test in that if transformative learning can be fostered in this environment then it is likely that it can happen elsewhere. At the same time, it would be beneficial to understand how transformative teaching and learning are advanced in less-resourced settings, and where the issues the student's face may be more precarious.

Additionally, there is much value to be gained in understanding how this research translates to ungraded or non-classroom settings. Are students more invested, less invested, or similarly invested when the sole motivation is their personal development and not an external reward such as a grade? And, does grading introduce the possibility of the student trying to "game the system" by responding to the course prompts with what she believes the faculty member is seeking rather than genuinely engaging in the learning?

We cannot attend to transformative teaching without attending to the transformative teacher. As evidenced throughout this paper transformative teaching is a non-traditional form of teaching and does not, therefore, systemically enjoy the rewards or support established for traditional teaching methods. How might academia recognize and reward transformative teaching where the acquisition of knowledge by the student may be less clear cut?

Furthermore, the embodiment required of transformative teaching, both in being on the transformative learning journey themselves and in supporting students on their journeys, suggests the need for the faculty member have his own support system. In the case of this research setting, the faculty members used weekly teaching meetings to dialogue about what

was happening for them, in their classroom, or with their students. This forum enabled the faculty member to situate themselves on the learning journey and identify how best to be in service of their students' journeys. It would be valuable to investigate the mechanisms necessary to effectively support the transformative teacher.

Identity literature might further explain what makes a dilemma disorienting. In particular, the work of Herminia Ibarra on provisional selves (1999) and her co-authored work on possible selves (Ibarra et al., 2008) would seem to have application to extend my line of research. Provisional selves are “temporary solutions people use to bridge the gap between their self-conception and...what they believe is expected of them” (Ibarra, 1999, p. 765) whereas a person's possible selves are “the images one has about who one might become” (Ibarra et al., 2008, p. 3). As revealed in this research, student reflections allude to these identity conflicts as they try and negotiate who they are amidst the roles that they hold (sister, brother, spouse, parent, child, student, manager, employee, etc).

Finally, as this was an exploratory study, much more needs to be done to vet the concept of interconnectivity. Research questions might look at, would employing some, but not all, of the dimensions still enable the exploration of disorienting dilemmas? And, are some dimensions more important than others to this exploration?

### *Conclusion*

As I have expressed elsewhere (DeAngelis, 2017), “Transformative teaching enables learners to discover themselves and continue the inquiry outside of the classroom where new experiences are viewed as learning opportunities. Therefore, it is important to structure courses that foster an environment where students feel safe to explore, try on, struggle with,

and consider the topic being discussed. This deepens student comprehension of how course material might enable them to interact with their world in a more meaningful and effective way” (p. 1098). These are good teaching practices irrespective of transformative aims.

Entries from the student’s themselves, paint a compelling picture of this impact,

*I remember having great compassion for the others when I heard the self-doubt stories shared by my DT members. However, I did not have the same level of compassion for myself when I am in doubt. I was trapped with shame and regret. In the last few weeks, I have gradually learned to accept myself with compassion through practicing cognitive reframing and meditation. Instead of avoiding vulnerability, I have learned to recognize the pattern and embrace vulnerability as a strength. We are facing the choice of being honest with ourselves or not every day. I have had the most empowering experience telling others that I was struggling when they asked me how my semester had been. I did not choose to lie, which I usually would. We create the strongest emotional bonds with people when we embrace our vulnerabilities together.*

---

*I feel this incredible gratitude for the luxury of this semester’s period of reflection. That said, the various doubts, concerns, etc. are hardly ironed out or tied up in a nice bow, and I am concerned about how to continue this practice going forward in the absence of structured class and DT time...*

---

*I wanted to thank you for such a great semester in DLW. Looking back at this class now, I’m realizing how important it was for me to take this during this hard time with my family. I’ve learned how to cope, support and reflect in ways I couldn’t have imagined without this class. I know DLW is one of those classes that will continue to teach me things as I get older and move up in management.*

By creating a learning environment in which the student can begin to understand and explore how their decisions are shaped by their life experiences, values, beliefs, and external influences, faculty give the gift of learning how to learn to these students (DeAngelis, 2017). In other words, as illustrated by the excerpts above, “through this journey of self-discovery, students become more attuned to the journey of others. Therefore, they are better able to

approach areas of difference from a position of open curiosity, seeking to appreciate how these differences can create an opportunity for greater learning. Students are able to apply these lessons in their communities, workplaces, and families” (DeAngelis, 2017, p. 1099).

The need for the faculty member to have traversed his own transformative learning journey and to be vulnerable and transparent in sharing his experience of the process is integral to engaging students in this deeper learning. The ability and desire to reopen and re-explore his own disorienting dilemmas in service of the students learning requires introspection and self-compassion. Simultaneously, to offer nonjudgmental, supportive, inquisitive feedback that encourages the student to remain on the learning journey demands self-awareness and empathy. The transformative teacher embraces their role as that of a guide, supporting and fostering the student’s understanding of herself.

“The goal is not to make the case study be all things to all people. The goal is to allow the study to be different things to different people” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 238). In following Flyvbjerg’s (2006) guidance regarding case study research, my intent has been to give the reader the ability to come to their own understanding of the exploration of disorienting dilemmas, and the facilitators’ role in enabling it. My objective was to offer a description that “provides a sense of what it is like to experience that setting” (Schutt, 2009, p. 321) and “interpretation of the phenomenon from the perspective of participants, researchers, and others” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 240). In doing so, these case studies provide the reader with the ability to glean insights that may influence their ability to enable the exploration of disorienting dilemmas in their unique setting.

## APPENDIX A. OBSERVATION GUIDE

These guiding questions will channel my attention throughout my fieldwork.

**Question 1:** How are learning concepts introduced to the students? How are they explained?

**Question 2:** How do students engage with the concepts? What evidence of learning is being demonstrated?

**Question 3:** How are students not engaging with the concepts? Is there evidence that learning is not taking place?

## APPENDIX B. INTERVIEW SCRIPT

I will begin by thanking the professor for making the time to speak with me. I will then explain that the purpose of this research is to better understand the conditions under which facilitators enable transformative learning in leaders. I will go on to say that the intention of this research is that it culminate in a nested case study, seeking to offer insights at the course, section, *Development Team*, and student levels.

I will address any questions the professor may have before beginning my line of questioning.

**Question 1:** How long have you taught this class? At this University? How did you come to teach it?

**Question 2:** Tell me about this class. Walk me through it's purpose, goals, and design.

**Question 3:** How do you define transformative learning? Are you able to offer examples from prior classes without breaching confidentiality?

**Question 4:** How would you describe your role in the transformative learning process of your students over the course of this semester?

**Question 5:** Tell me about how the design of the class supports your learning outcomes. Talk to me about the specific assignments, classroom exercises, readings, DG prompts, etc.

**Question 6:** How do you assess and grade the student's development?

**Question 7:** How do you know when you have been successful teaching this class?

**Question 8:** What do you see as enablers of transformative learning? Disablers?

## APPENDIX C. SCRIPT TO INTRODUCE RESEARCH TO STUDENTS

Hello. My name is Lisa DeAngelis and I am a PhD candidate at UMass Boston. My area of concentration is transformative teaching. In other words, how do professors create environments that enable students to engage in deeper, more meaningful learning.

I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to act as a coach in Professor Craig's Developing the Leader Within course for three semesters. He has subsequently agreed to join my dissertation committee.

The research I am hoping to conduct with this class is to explore the connection between transformative teaching and transformative learning. In non-academic terms, this means I'll be looking at how Professor Craig / Thomas creates the conditions that enable you to really engage in the learning.

I'm going to guess that you've all had classes and teachers along the way that have had very little impact on you – “just let me get through the class and get the grade.” And, hopefully, you've had some classes and teachers that have had a profound impact on you; getting you to see something in an entirely new way. My research is trying to unpack the latter. How can we more consistently create classroom experiences that enable that deeper learning to happen?

Your participation in this research will advance our understanding of how professors might make learning more meaningful for students. It is my hope that this research has broad impact on how we approach classroom learning.

Ideally, after today, this research will be invisible to you. I'll be observing the classes and reading the written materials you are submitting throughout the class, but the focus of my research is not on you, it is on the faculty. The reason for reading your assignments is two-fold. First, I'll be looking to identify that transformative learning is happening – meaning that you are engaging with the content that is being taught. And, secondly, I'll be looking at how Professor Craig / Thomas responds to you – both in the classroom, and in your written submissions - in an effort to deepen your learning.

Because of my time as a coach, I am very sensitive to the type of work you'll be doing in this class, and the need for trust and confidentiality in what you'll be sharing.

All of the data I collect will be de-identified. This means that if someone were to somehow gain access to the data, there will be no way for them to attribute it back to an individual person.

Other than signing the consent form, this research will not take any effort on your part at all. I won't be asking you to interact with me. I'll simply be looking the work you are already submitting as part of the class, analyzing it for evidence of this deeper learning and then looking to connect it to the work of the professor.

While Professor S will be overseeing this research, I will be the only one who knows which students are included in the research, and I'll be the only one looking at the data. Only aggregated, de-identified data will be shared with Professor Craig, and that will only be as part of the dissertation process.

Whether you agree to participate in this study or not, this research will in no way impact your grade for this class. I will not be discussing my analysis of the work with the professors during the semester.

The release form that has made its way around the room reiterates what I've just shared.

Obviously, the more data I am able to collect, the better I am able to understand how Professor Craig / Thomas is contributing to your learning. So I would greatly appreciate your support in enabling me to conduct this research.

In order to ensure that Professor Craig / Thomas not know who is, and is not, included in the study, I would ask that all of you turn in your forms to me, whether you've chosen to participate or not.

If you would, please print your name in the top right hand corner; take a few minutes to read over the form and, if you are inclined to help with this research, please sign the back. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Please send your forms to the end of your aisle and I'll come pick them up.  
Thank you very much.

## APPENDIX D. CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS IN PROFESSOR CRAIG'S CLASS

### **Participation is voluntary**

It is your choice whether or not to participate in this research. If you choose to participate, you may change your mind and leave the study at any time. Refusal to participate or stopping your participation will in no way impact your standing or performance in the course.

### **What is the purpose of this research?**

The purpose of this research is to investigate how faculty teaching the Developing the Leader Within course enable transformative learning in the students enrolled in the course.

While Professor Craig will be overseeing this research, only Lisa DeAngelis will work with the data collected in the course for research purposes and, only aggregated findings will be reported to Professor Craig.

### **How long will I take part in this research?**

Your participation will last for the duration of the semester.

I may be interested in re-contacting you for additional information or clarifications after the semester ends. If I do, your participation would be completely up to you. If you would prefer that we refrain from re-contacting you, please initial below:

*Please do not re-contact me following the study:* \_\_\_\_\_

### **What can I expect if I take part in this research?**

As a participant, you will allow me access to all written materials submitted as part of the course. This includes, but is not limited to, the pre-course essay, weekly writing assignments, and end of course personal development plan.

Additionally, information from your Fairhaven student biographical sheet will be included in this research.

### **What are the risks and possible discomforts?**

If you choose to participate, there is a chance that the confidentiality protections for the information you provide could be compromised. Precautions will be taken to ensure anonymity of participants.

### **Are there any benefits from being in this research study? –if applicable**

We do not expect any direct benefits to you from your taking part in this research. This research will further existing knowledge about the intersection of transformative teaching

and transformative learning. Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute to the understanding of how we might leverage transformative teaching and transformative learning more consistently in business schools in order to better prepare leaders.

**If I take part in this research, how will my privacy be protected? What happens to the information you collect?**

Each participant in the study will be given a unique identifier. The data will be stored on the University of Massachusetts Boston Xythos server in encrypted files. Prior to being saved, all materials will be stripped of identifying information and replaced with a unique identifier. The file containing the list of unique identifiers associating each student's name with their corresponding materials will be stored as an encrypted file on Dropbox. This identifier will be accessible only to Lisa DeAngelis.

Identifiable data will be analyzed by the researcher and may be reviewed by people checking to see that the research is done properly.

**If I have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research study, who can I talk to?**

The researcher for this study is Lisa DeAngelis who can be reached at 617-287-3893; UMass Boston, Center for Collaborative Leadership, 100 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125; [Lisa.DeAngelis001@umb.edu](mailto:Lisa.DeAngelis001@umb.edu). The faculty sponsor is Professor Craig who can be reached at XXX-XXX-XXX. If you have questions, concerns, or complaints,

- If you would like to talk to the research team,
- If you think the research has harmed you, or
- If you wish to withdraw from the study.

This research has been reviewed by the Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research at Fairhaven University. They can be reached at XXX-XXX-XXXX for any of the following:

- If your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team,
- If you cannot reach the research team,
- If you want to talk to someone besides the research team, or
- If you have questions about your rights as a research participant.

**Statement of Consent**

I have read the information in this consent form. All my questions about the research have been answered to my satisfaction.

**SIGNATURE**

Your signature below indicates your permission to take part in this research. Upon request, you will be provided with a copy of this consent form.

---

Printed name of participant

---

Signature of participant

---

Date

## APPENDIX E. CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENT'S IN PROFESSOR DAVIDSON'S CLASS

### **Participation is voluntary**

It is your choice whether or not to participate in this research. If you choose to participate, you may change your mind and leave the study at any time. Refusal to participate or stopping your participation will in no way impact your standing or performance in the course.

### **What is the purpose of this research?**

The purpose of this research is to investigate how faculty teaching the Developing the Leader Within course enable transformative learning in the students enrolled in the course.

Your professor is in no way involved in this research. Only Lisa DeAngelis will work with the data collected in the course for research purposes.

### **How long will I take part in this research?**

Your participation will last for the duration of the semester.

I may be interested in re-contacting you for additional information or clarifications after the semester ends. If I do, your participation would be completely up to you. If you would prefer that we refrain from re-contacting you, please initial below:

*Please do not re-contact me following the study:* \_\_\_\_\_

### **What can I expect if I take part in this research?**

As a participant, you will allow me access to all written materials submitted as part of the course. This includes, but is not limited to, the pre-course essay, weekly writing assignments, and end of course personal development plan.

Additionally, information from your Fairhaven student biographical sheet will be included in this research.

### **What are the risks and possible discomforts?**

If you choose to participate, there is a chance that the confidentiality protections for the information you provide could be compromised. Precautions will be taken to ensure anonymity of participants.

*Are there any benefits from being in this research study? –if applicable*

We do not expect any direct benefits to you from your taking part in this research. This research will further existing knowledge about the intersection of transformative teaching and transformative learning. Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute to the understanding of how we might leverage transformative teaching and transformative learning more consistently in business schools in order to better prepare leaders.

**If I take part in this research, how will my privacy be protected? What happens to the information you collect?**

Each participant in the study will be given a unique identifier. The data will be stored on the University of Massachusetts Boston Xythos server in encrypted files. Prior to being saved, all materials will be stripped of identifying information and replaced with a unique identifier. The file containing the list of unique identifiers associating each student's name with their corresponding materials will be stored as an encrypted file on Dropbox. This identifier will be accessible only to Lisa DeAngelis.

Identifiable data will be analyzed by the researcher and may be reviewed by people checking to see that the research is done properly.

**If I have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research study, who can I talk to?**

The researcher for this study is Lisa DeAngelis who can be reached at 617-287-3893; UMass Boston, Center for Collaborative Leadership, 100 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125; [Lisa.DeAngelis001@umb.edu](mailto:Lisa.DeAngelis001@umb.edu). The faculty sponsor is Professor Craig who can be reached at XXX-XXX-XXXX. If you have questions, concerns, or complaints,

- If you would like to talk to the research team,
- If you think the research has harmed you, or
- If you wish to withdraw from the study.

This research has been reviewed by the Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research at Fairhaven University. They can be reached at XXX-XXX-XXX for any of the following:

- If your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team,
- If you cannot reach the research team,
- If you want to talk to someone besides the research team, or
- If you have questions about your rights as a research participant.

**Statement of Consent**

I have read the information in this consent form. All my questions about the research have been answered to my satisfaction.

**SIGNATURE**

Your signature below indicates your permission to take part in this research. Upon request, you will be provided with a copy of this consent form.

---

Printed name of participant

---

Signature of participant

---

Date

## APPENDIX F. CONSENT FORM FOR FACULTY

### **Participation is voluntary**

It is your choice whether or not to participate in this research. If you choose to participate, you may change your mind and leave the study at any time. Refusal to participate or stopping your participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

### **What is the purpose of this research?**

The purpose of this research is to investigate how faculty teaching the Developing the Leader Within course enable transformative learning in the students enrolled in the course.

### **How long will I take part in this research?**

This research will begin with the preparation for the fall Developing the Leader Within class and continue through the culmination of faculty related efforts associated with the class.

I may be interested in re-contacting you for additional information or clarifications after the semester ends. If I do, your participation would be completely up to you. If you would prefer that we refrain from re-contacting you, please initial below:

*Please do not re-contact me following the study: \_\_\_\_\_*

### **What can I expect if I take part in this research?**

As a participant, you will be interviewed on two or three occasions. Each in-person interview will be conducted at a time and place convenient to you. The interviews will ask about your approach to teaching this course, curriculum design, and anticipated student outcomes. With your permission, I will make an audio recording of the interview.

Additionally, this research will require access to all faculty meetings associated with the course, classroom observation, and written materials submitted as part of the course. This includes, but is not limited to, the pre-course essay, weekly writing assignments, correspondence with students regarding the course, weekly grading tracking, and end of course personal development plan.

### **What are the risks and possible discomforts?**

If you choose to participate, there is a chance that the confidentiality protections for the information you provide could be compromised. Precautions will be taken to ensure anonymity of participants.

**Are there any benefits from being in this research study?**

We do not expect any direct benefits to you from your taking part in this research. This research will further existing knowledge about the intersection of transformative teaching and transformative learning. Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute to the understanding of how we might leverage transformative teaching and transformative learning more consistently in business schools in order to better prepare leaders.

**If I take part in this research, how will my privacy be protected? What happens to the information you collect?**

Each participant in the study will be given a unique identifier. The data will be stored on the University of Massachusetts Boston Xythos server in encrypted files. Prior to being saved, all materials will be stripped of identifying information and replaced with a unique identifier. The file containing the list of unique identifiers associating each student's name with their corresponding materials will be stored as an encrypted file on Dropbox. This identifier will be accessible only to Lisa DeAngelis.

Identifiable data will be analyzed by the researcher and may be reviewed by people checking to see that the research is done properly.

**If I have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research study, who can I talk to?**

The researcher for this study is Lisa DeAngelis who can be reached at 617-287-3893; UMass Boston, Center for Collaborative Leadership, 100 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125; [Lisa.DeAngelis001@umb.edu](mailto:Lisa.DeAngelis001@umb.edu). The faculty sponsor is Professor Craig who can be reached at XXX-XXX-XXXX. If you have questions, concerns, or complaints,

- If you would like to talk to the research team,
- If you think the research has harmed you, or
- If you wish to withdraw from the study.

This research has been reviewed by the Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research at Fairhaven University. They can be reached at XXX-XXX-XXXX for any of the following:

- If your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team,
- If you cannot reach the research team,
- If you want to talk to someone besides the research team, or
- If you have questions about your rights as a research participant.
- 

**Statement of Consent**

I have read the information in this consent form. All my questions about the research have been answered to my satisfaction.

**SIGNATURE**

Your signature below indicates your permission to take part in this research. You will be provided with a copy of this consent form.

---

Printed name of participant

---

Signature of participant

Date

## APPENDIX G. DT Contract

### Development Team Contract (Group \_\_\_\_\_ )

Following are a set of possible norms that might be discussed by each group and incorporated in whole or in part into their DT Contracts:

#### **1. Openness**

To be effective, open sharing with group members is essential to learning. If individuals are not sharing openly with the group, it is the responsibility of group members to raise this with them for discussion within the group. However, it is important that group members not push individuals beyond their comfort zone on personally sensitive matters.

#### **2. Trust**

For the DTs to be effective it is essential that group members trust each member of the group and the group as a whole. Trust is built through honest, open communications and the sense that individuals care about the other members of their group and sincerely would like to help them in growing into effective leaders.

#### **3. Confidentiality**

A firm agreement should be reached that nothing said within the group is discussed with others outside the group.

#### **4. Differences**

The group should allow for individual differences and make accommodations for what each member would like to get out of the group experience.

#### **5. Tolerance**

There are no “right” answers when priorities/values are discussed, nor should group members make judgments about others in the group.

#### **6. Feedback**

Group members offer and receive constructive feedback from each other on their ideas, leadership traits, and communication styles. There will be two opportunities to receive formal feedback during the course: the first of them will come during DT #6 and the final feedback during DT #12 at the conclusion of the course.

#### **7. Challenges**

Challenges by other group members are considered to be healthy, if expressed in a respectful manner in which individuals do not engage in personal attacks. If managed well, respectful challenges can contribute to meaningful learning for all.

Signed by (name and date):

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## APPENDIX H. FACULTY RESPONSES BY SUBTYPE

### TYPE: Affirming

#### Subtype: Acknowledgment

*Thank you for sharing this nuanced exploration of your experience of the "competing narratives" with me N. I hope you learned as much from writing as I did from reading it!*

*But you should indeed be "proud" that you've taken the first steps! I am proud of you not only for taking them, but so very appreciative of your sharing this experience with me. Brava C! Brava!*

*You are a marvel. You've been through so much in your life. Your parents may not be worthy of you.....*

*"I couldn't even name a dream job / firm / role if I wanted to." That is an important insight! Taking the risk to share about your doubts and insecurities in this reflection was an act of courage.*

*Wow, C, thanks for your honesty here. This isn't an easy one.*

*Thanks for sharing so much of yourself with me, M.*

*Thank you for re-visiting (and sharing) this deeply painful memory with me C.*

*Thank you for this fascinating and nuanced exploration of the role that confidence plays in your self-presentation.*

*This reflection is amazing because of the clarity of your confusion.*

*I'm humbled you are in the class.*

*Thank you for your candor and vulnerability and trust in sharing it.*

*I applaud you for the way you took responsibility for your behaviors and openly discussed them with your girlfriend.*

*Wow N; you nailed our dream outcome for DLW: "knowing who you are, and being at peace with it"*

*I can feel your energy and enthusiasm bursting off the page!*

*I couldn't hope for anyone to get anymore out of this lesson than you did!*

*The honesty you shared with yourself and me in this reflection is a great place to start DLW.*

*What a healthy outlook on life you chose for yourself! I am impressed with your clarity and what you learned at such an early age.*

*You are one of the few students in this section that has mentioned having a dream job offer in their pocket. You created this and I truly hope you will let yourself have it.*

*I hope you will check back in with your hypothesis at the end of the term. I will be interested to see how it plays out. You made many great observations in this reflection and asked some excellent questions. It is a privilege to have these 12 weeks to take the time to look inward in a culture that rarely makes the time for such an exercise. I look forward to sharing this journey of reflection with you.*

*So many great realizations this week. I hope you keep a copy of this reflection to read at some point in your future when you feel the need to get grounded in what is important to you. Good work*

*Thank-you for sharing so honestly and openly this week. It doesn't feel disjointed to me.*

*This is a thoughtful analysis of your experience. Thanks for sharing! I appreciate how you're thinking about the feedback your DT members gave you, and about the feedback experience itself. I'm glad to hear it was more positive than you expected.*

*Thank you for sharing what sounds like an important, deeply affirming experience of who you are with me.*

*Oh, man, your mom's insistence on never hating is inspiring. I hope you've shared with her how important it sounds like that was to you. She's inspiring me!*

*Wow; this all sounds incredibly healthy to me.*

*"I'm afraid of putting my career as a top priority in such a way that I delay getting pregnant and then experience pregnancy issues when I finally feel I'm ready."  
Thanks for deciding to share this more vulnerable fear in your reflection.*

**Subtype: Appreciation for depth of insight**

*This realization about how you see the world and best operate is huge! I'm glad you are starting to define what that looks like for your leadership.*

*Aha! Such wisdom here in one short sentence: "Spain was Spain." It never is S; it never really is, is it?*

*Your conversation with your dad stirred up such hope in me. It made me feel the possibilities that have begun to open up in your relationship with your dad, as well as with you. It is amazing how we can hold onto judgments before we even being to ask questions. As for your girlfriend, I also sense hope that you will figure it out now that you looked at yourself and realized how you got in the way of intimacy. I hope you feel proud.*

*Whether you are indeed enabling some of this or not doesn't really matter. What seems so clear from just reading this reflection is that you actually DO GET IT. Count the number of times (and ways) -- just in this short reflection alone -- you tell yourself that this is NOT YOUR PROBLEM; you can't change your parents and you certainly can't change THEIR relationship. As much as you so dearly would like to solve all this, you scream it right here: "Its' not my problem to solve!!!" And yet it sure feels that way, doesn't it*

*"I end up being full of self-doubt and fear until I receive some sort of external validation – praise from a manager or hitting an objective metric. This shouldn't be the case." Wow. This is a valuable insight! I hear your frustration with yourself about wanting to move past this stage in your life, or way of approaching leadership.*

*I love your purpose statement and the vision of you on the playground leading the group of rock carvers. Don't lose that belief in magic and witches, you will need it to accomplish your huge goal. I love the lightness and energy your purpose speaks to. Great work!*

*Thank you for sharing the insight you had from listening to a different perspective on the role that race plays. I too learned something here. Wish I were in your DG!*

*What an astute self-observation: yes, if we tend to focus on the negative in ourselves, we will do the same with others.*

*I am so impressed with your decision to dig for a hidden adjective rather than ride the good feeling you had leaving DT. AND, the maturity you dug into after asking your fiancé for his feedback.*

*"I took a step back and thought about how your response brings agency back into the situation" Wow. That is a profound realization! Taking the risk to share your vulnerability about your fears of lack of agency in this reflection is an act of courage in itself.*

*What a wonder-filled, nuanced analysis of integrating the beauty and wisdom of the Jewish New Year with your current the current uncertainty and anxiety of career decisions. Thank you for sharing this K -- I really learned something from this.*

**Subtype: Recognition of characteristics**

*I am truly impressed with your honesty and self-awareness. It is not easy to look in the mirror and see what is there rather than what we want to see there. I hope you will keep a copy of this reflection and read it at least once per year as a way to check in and see how you are doing. Remember that there is no right answer here! There is only self-awareness, honesty with self, and the opportunity to use the information to make changes.*

*Right here is a small example, yes? "It took being physically incapacitated for me to finally take a step back and say no to things." And what an incredible insight this is: "I also realized my struggle might be rooted to the overemphasis I've placed on basing my happiness on positive emotions and achievements."*

*What a brave and thoughtful decision you made. It is wonderful that you have experienced two disparate leadership styles and recognized the effectiveness of them. It is amazing how effective leadership can be so inspirational and even awe-inspiring. Reading your reflections and hearing your comments in class make me think that you also have that potential. You are so thoughtful, analytical, and transparent (this is not an exhaustive list) that others will be able to relate to you and be inspired by you.*

*I'd like you to consider living more with those adjectives present in your heart and attitude. That is you.*

*I am proud of the steps you have been taking: opening up to your DLW and opening up to your friends at dinner. I also noticed that you spoke up in class last week. These are the daily acts of courage to which I was referring.*

*Given this reflection I have confidence you will make choices that will serve you. My worry is that you are too hard on yourself. You've listed quite a few questions which are answered in the no. Let's see what we can do to reduce your list and have you realize how your self awareness is something you should be proud about*

*I applaud your grit, resilience and survival instincts.*

*Finally, please don't lose these insights along the way -- it seems like you value: creating social impact, faster impact, monetary stability, quality of your team and company culture, and continuous learning. These values are sprinkled throughout this reflection. Hang onto them, they will become very important when we ask you to pull together your "purpose" in a few weeks.*

*I appreciate how you're thinking about making promises, empathy, and your brothers. I'm so glad you were able to be there with your brother in his crucible moment. How painful that must have been - and must be - for all involved.*

*I'm glad you had the chance to reflect on your complex feelings about the choices your parents made, and to hear the story your dad shared. It sounds like in many ways you've come full circle and are now appreciating the choices you once took for granted. It is a constant juggle, and no easy answer, but it does sound like you've invested some time in defining your values.*

*Your story about encouraging your friend to the end sounds like a show of perseverance to me. You seem to like rallying others to finish something they think is unlikely to be possible.*

*Finally, I really like where you landed with all this: "I definitely don't need/want my OCD to play a role in framing everything in DLW this year, but I know it has to be part of it, because it's definitely part of my self-doubting narrative." So much wisdom and courage in this statement C: "it's always going to be there, I'm always going to have OCD and it may always play a role in framing, but I'm also working towards not having it define me." Thank you again for sharing this struggle with me. I learned a great deal; I hope you did as well. So very glad you decided to join us in DLW. Onward, yes?*

*I am deeply impressed with the transition you have made in such a short number of hours. It is so hard to believe that the way we see the world isn't the right way, and that everyone else should see it the same way. I love the sense of compassion I hear in your words when describing the other "50%" of Americans.*

*S -- not everyone was born in the deep end of the gene pool when it comes to everything! It sure sounds like you know who you are and what you care about, AND live a life pretty consistent with most of those things you "value". As for your challenge with "commitment & communication," this sounds like sounds more like a pattern of small "habits" that you "might" tackle over time. I say "might" because if they were truly as IMPORTANT to you as "hard work, grit, kindness, fairness, standing up for what is right, uncovering biases, and search for truth" THEN you would be doing less "double-booking" and "returning more emails." But you are not, so perhaps these habits are really NOT as important to you as you think they are.*

*Perhaps? Or perhaps you are correct: "...you can't have it all with it comes to values" -- so why not take a shot at prioritizing them, whittling down that long list from the fieldbook and asking yourself: What is my central, animating CORE value? Whether or not you can actually narrow it down to one, I've found there is great value in the act of trying. Good stuff here S!*

*It is clear that you care so much about others. I can even sense it in class when I see your facial/emotional responses to certain topics and readings in class. We of course all search for happiness but if that's the only thing we pursue, it's not as fulfilling as the search for meaning. You already know this. I agree that we can value happiness as well as meaning.*

*You may tend to be judgmental of others but you are the one you judge the most.*

**Subtype: Expression of empathy**

*What an incredible challenge you faced at what is already a difficult age. It sounds like you were deeply affected by the experience in Louisiana and you discovered your "grit" and your ability to persevere in really challenging situations.*

*It's heartbreaking to even hear you describe your experience, so I can only imagine how daunting and heartbreaking it must be for you.*

*I can only imagine how hard it must have been to leave your fiance in New York when you returned here this fall. But I'm glad you're feeling more optimistic this year!*

*You are a person who feels so deeply which is evident in your reflections. There was so much up and down (and actual flying) in this reflection that it brings me back to the escapism to which you referred. Your "manic" moods and flying to various places feel like an escape from the depths of your isolation and depression. It is wonderful to be able to travel the world and to feel so deeply but it also sounds so painful and lonely.*

*Self-awareness is key.....applying what you know to your life doesn't necessarily always follow. You have suffered through so much pain and disappointment that it has been a defining characteristic of your relationship with your father. It is extremely difficult to let go of what we ultimately crave from our parents/caregivers: unconditional love, understanding, and acceptance. When we don't receive those, we try to get them in different ways until unfortunately, it can sometimes become self-destructive.*

*You have worked so hard to try and convince him that you were worthy of him. The irony is that you now are taking the time to realize that you are worthy enough to be loved by your self and others. I think it will take some time to get over his abuse. That*

*is what I would call it. You were in a destructive relationship. You are now free. Now let's make you free in every dimension of your life. Be patient with yourself. I have so much admiration for you.*

*I am sorry that your first experience with openly connecting with others ended up as the butt of a joke.*

*I can see how much pain you are in. I am sorry that you are so conflicted and haven't gotten over T.*

### **Subtype: Validation**

*As for the angst I sense in your second and final paragraphs (surrounding tech and Colin), this too seems totally natural. Both issues center on "commitment," yes? Sometimes we can't "think" our way out of these puzzles (Will tech be right for me? Is Colin the one?). Sometimes we can't KNOW before we DO. Of course this drive (control freaks) crazy! I don't want to commit to TECH (or Colin) unless I'm sure it's right for me. Unfortunately, many decisions in life are like this: We won't really know until we do [commit].*

*It's actually quite common to find yourself having to reassess your balance on this sort of thing in either direction. Especially during this time of life, when emerging adulthood is crashing into adulthood. This is a time of change for many, and change is usually pretty difficult.*

*But of course you are not alone in experiencing the Fairhaven bubble this way -- the entire experience is designed to generate social comparison (and it's accompanying pressures). So, please know that you are not alone in experiencing this: "It's a bizarre feeling to enter second-year with this way since you supposedly should have a group of best friends at this point." Once again, you are NOT alone here. Most of your classmates feel the same way right now. Which means that most of them are looking around to find "new friendships," perhaps ones based more on a deeper set of connections than the random 90 Fairhaven admissions jammed you into last year.*

*With family, years and years of following those familiar scripts with each other makes it increasingly difficult to go "off script," yes? And yet, you did. You did it S. Perhaps one of the lessons from this is that we have the power/authority to set the level of intimacy (and connection) in ANY conversation, even those with our closest ... strangers (family!).*

*Of course the reason it had such a lasting (and negative) impact is because your "friend's" response was a classic, deep attack straight at your identity -- your self-worth. Nothing is more painful than hearing someone else (someone whose opinion we value) tell us that they in fact do NOT value us, yes?*

*I started to copy and pasted a few sentences from your reflection onto my slides for next week, they so beautifully captured what so many of your peers are experiencing that I wanted to share your wisdom with them. And then I quickly realized that I had copy and pasted the entire reflection!*

*I love this statement: "One thing I want to accomplish/explore in DLW is how to better accept that I can't change my past, but I can control how I do (and don't) let it hold me back in the future." We all have a story. What really matters is how you use yours. I think that the point you made in #3 is a very common one. Many of us are more motivated to succeed as part of a team than as an individual. One of the reasons group weight loss programs work. One way to look at this is that we are relational beings. We do not become our best selves alone or in a vacuum. We need other people to discover who we are and what our best is.*

*For most of us, we have some version of a love-hate relationship with our doubts. On the one hand, as you suggest in your response to a few others in your DT, wouldn't we love to be more confident in our...selves? And yet, on the other hand, perhaps our doubts push us to continue to work hard and account for some of our accomplishments. Can't it be both? Over time, each of us learns to navigate these twin horns of positive and negative narratives. Remember, we're just getting started here and this is life-long work! And finally, what's wrong with embracing "hard work" itself as a potential competitive advantage?*

*Please don't beat yourself up too badly here K; we ALL want to be "in control," yes? We want to control everyone around us -- our friends, our partners, our teachers, and yes, even our parents.*

*And by the way, you pretty much nail the solution to having a successful difficult conversation in your letter. It's always ok to share the impact the "other" has on you. It's incredibly mature to explore the impact that YOU have had on the current situation. It's critical to enter these conversations not in a "telling," but rather a "curious" mode (as you've already demonstrated here). And finally, reminding the other how important this relationship is to you solidifies it and increases the likelihood that you will move forward in a positive way.*

### **Subtype: Invitation for self-compassion**

*The greatest gift you have the opportunity of giving yourself at this point in your life is the one of self-knowledge. The better you know you and accept yourself, the better equipped you will be to make decisions that honor who you are. Remember very few gravestones say "I wish I had spent less time trusting my heart and spending time with my family so that I could make more money." This is YOUR journey.*

*Please, please be patient (and gentle) with your...self C, it's the only one you've got! Truly accepting that you are indeed enough is a life-long journey; fully moving from a stage 3 - like sense of self overly defined by what others think to a more self-authoring worldview is also a slow, long, and for most life-long process. Learning how to benefit from quality meditation also takes time... But isn't it refreshing (and at times frustrating) knowing the direction you're headed? AND, that you'll get there? Good stuff C; good stuff.*

*Be patient with yourself. It may feel like you take one step backwards for each two steps forward.*

*Do what you need to do to like yourself better. I want you to do whatever you need to do to be more self accepting. I know it will be scary but you are holding back which will inform the nature of the trust you want to build long term.*

*I urge you to notice if you fluctuate between polarities....manic back to sadness, etc. I'm not suggesting any label for you. But if you notice it and make it part of your thinking you will find yourself less judgmental and more accepting.*

*I get the feeling that you don't allow much room for "mistakes" and that you weigh decisions with much deliberation. It makes sense that you are moving back to NY and it doesn't seem like you need to defend this decision. One concern I have is whether you'll ever really accept yourself. I, too, worry that you may burn out and miss some of the emotional joys of life.*

*As I read your reflection it was replete with examples where you were influenced by how others might feel about you. It's only natural but it is part of the way you make meaning. Don't be so harsh on yourself, whether it be regarding your relationships or at Fairhaven. You are a gifted, smart, kind person. Your mother is a Saint. You are going to do so much good during your lifetime. That is all you need to remember for now. I won't ever forget your story.*

*What a heartfelt and touching letter. How did it feel as you were writing it? Did you find it difficult, easy, or a little of both? It seems like you have accepted the imperfections of your parents and I hope that means you can begin to do the same with yourself. Thanks for sharing this letter.*

*As you mentioned, part of the reason you push people away stems from your own difficulties with self-love and self-acceptance. Why do you think it is so difficult to accept yourself? How can you get to that place so you can accept other people's love? I wonder what your parents would have to say about that.*

*This is what I promise. The more you accept the fact that you aren't perfect the more you will let go of the thoughts that come to mind that you are an awful person. I feel*

*like most humans have the characteristics you describe in your reflection. It just depends on how much we dwell on our blessings or on our faults. Believe what others think of you. It's more accurate than what you think about yourself.*

*I think you should give yourself permission to worry less about that and to yes, put more trust in humanity and trust that you are doing your best.*

*I am so proud of you. We can find you a job. I want you to accept yourself as a very talented, caring, smart, individual. You are so clear about what you want. I think you are still in the mourning stage of your former relationship. You had visions of what it could be like. I promise that you will find the right person in time and the right job. Please don't lose faith. I'm never going to lose faith in you.*

*2) Feeling not smart enough is so common here, and so familiar to me as well. It hurts! Treat yourself with love and tenderness and try not to be too hard on yourself about it. Also remember that there are people who let that feeling prevent them from chasing their dreams, which you're not doing. And people who don't know what they want who feel not focused enough. You are who you are, and that's a pretty darn good person. Accept yourself the best you can. So you were waitlisted. What does that mean, in the end? That one tiny bit of merit or luck could have bumped you in or out of your class? Another 5 hours of practice for the GMAT, or losing focus and flubbing one more question on the test because something you ate that morning didn't digest well? A relative who donated to the school? An application reader who was more or less sympathetic to your story? Though we work hard to get here, I'm a firm believer that some of how we end up here is just straight up luck. You're more than this experience. For every one of us here there are hundreds of good people who worked really hard and did everything they could but just didn't have the luck part right, so they'll never walk these halls. Hope that helps a bit with perspective.*

*In the meantime, please be gentle with yourself. This stuff isn't easy, and you deserve some TLC.*

*One request I have for you is to not be too hard on yourself for not getting where you want to go fast enough.*

*I applaud you for wanting to seize the opportunity to be honest with yourself. Many of you at Fairhaven have not experienced failure and that's why in your mid-to-late 20's, it is easy to experience it as a total character flaw. I am glad you are recognizing that what matters is how you deal with and what you do with failure and disappointments rather than the failure itself. How will you be honest with yourself as well as be forgiving of yourself? You deserve both.*

*You are worth so much more than he has seen in you. He was so narcissistic and obsessed about himself that he couldn't see the gifts you brought to the relationship. You have worked so hard to try and convince him that you were worthy of him. The irony is that you now are taking the time to realize that you are worthy enough to be loved by your self and others. I think it will take some time to get over his abuse. That is what I would call it. You were in a destructive relationship. You are now free. Now let's make you free in every dimension of your life. Be patient with yourself. I have so much admiration for you.*

*As for self-acceptance, it is the only way we can be our authentic selves. It is also the first step in attempting to change ourselves. Beating it out is less effective. I think you already know this. Question is, how do you understand this "selfish streak?"*

*You are terrific. Please don't doubt yourself. You spend way too much time in the minds of others when you could be enjoying the present.*

**Type: Future-oriented**

**Subtype: Offer to support**

*Baby steps. One step at a time. Given the fact that you are courageous I for some reason worry about many others but not you. Even though you haven't learned how to confront some of these issues don't let your overwhelmed feelings inform how you are going to live. I'd look forward to chatting with you off line about some of these issues. The more you impose pressure on yourself the harder it will be to explore different ways of interacting and growing in relationships. And yes, you should consider at some point the whole arena of parenting. Let's talk more.*

*We should talk at some point individually about the feeling of not being heard. I promise to figure out with you how to feel heard.*

*If you feel like you would like some support, please let me know and I can discuss options with you.*

*I'm not sure how to respond other than to add my support in your efforts to be more accepting of yourself. Fairhaven is a tough place. However, I think there are enough wonderful students who are willing to reach out and help you and others. Let me know if there is anything else I can do as you continue your efforts of growth and development.*

*Let me know if you'd ever like to talk.*

*Even though you haven't fully figured out your career anchors, I think it's okay to still let the world see what potentially excites you, albeit a bit daunting. We can discuss this more in person as well as your first question.*

*We are indeed our own worst enemies but we can also be our best champions. Let me know if you'd ever like to discuss any of this.*

*If you feel like you are panicking or getting stuck at some point, feel free to reach out to Professor Davidson or me.*

**Subtype: The role of therapy**

*I am sorry about getting turned down by a fourth consulting firm. You've been fielding a lot of disappointment and much uncertainty about the future. I applaud you for seeking help and seeing a therapist. I hope you can make some important realizations and connections in your life. It seems like when you react to the anxiety of ambiguity, it may not always work out for you. Hope you can begin to slow yourself down and work on being patient and figuring out helpful strategies.*

*It is a big step to accept that you have a constant, lingering pain dealing with your mom's cancer. I am happy that you are working on this and setting limit for yourself with your therapist.*

*I hope in some way, by writing it down, getting it "out there," you remove some of it's hold on you. Second, so heartened to learn that you have sought professional help for this. OCD "can" be quite debilitating and it really is good to have an expert holding your hand while you do your best to manage it.*

*Make sure you have a good counselor. Go with your partner as well to this person. The other person is typically not the real problem.*

*It is very brave of you and your fiancé to enter couples counseling at this time. I do hope you find there what you need to clarify the issues and create a path to solution.*

**Subtype: Value of a support system**

*I applaud your positivity and wanting to try your best. You have a lot weighing on you -- wish to remain and work in the US, fear of disappointing parents, feelings of rejection. I worry that you're carrying around so much pressure. I am happy, though, that you felt relieved when your DT members were able to observe what is going on with you. That must have felt a little less burdensome. Hope you can use your support system for your current struggles and if not, please let me know.*

*And yes, you gotta love what your DT-mates saw in you, the real you! They GET you. Apparently, you've been living your purpose for/with them all semester.*

*If so, I hope you will use your DT and the rest of your time at Fairhaven as a practice zone for your new behaviors.*

*And yes, I love the idea of asking your DT to share their strategies at increasing positivity in their lives.*

*If you falter, all the better. Now is the time to try as you have your DT; Professor Davidson and I are also here if you'd like to talk.*

*Trust your family and friends. They know you well and can tell you what they saw in you during your relationship.*

*I hope you realize that you don't have to do this all on your own. If you get stuck again, look to those who can help you (or even those you haven't considered before).*

*Your grandmother has meant so much to you all along, and now you're facing a painful and possibly short road forward. I'm glad you're connecting with the rest of your family during this time. What might it look like to offer support to your mother even while she's supporting you?*

*In the meantime, how might you manage your stress around your next career move? And, how can you ask your girlfriend for support? I am guessing that she sees how stressed out you are and would like to be a source of support but may not know how.*

*There are some people who struggle with maintaining relationships during times of competition, as you mentioned. That doesn't mean they can't support you in some ways, but it might mean that you want to broaden your support team so you have support when you're in competition with those you mentioned. Some information exchange is more like intelligence gathering for the sake of prioritizing and setting strategy for their own job search and career planning. There's no rule that says you have to share any information, but you'll feel more pressure to if your entire support team is looking for intel.*

**Subtype: Encouraging continued reflection**

*Great work this semester! The pieces to the puzzle continue to fall into place over time, sometimes (in my case) many years! But it doesn't matter how long it takes. It is not a race, but instead a growth process and that takes place at its own pace.*

*Any lingering feelings after crying and letting your guard down in your DT meeting? I hope you are proud for pushing yourself and allowing yourself to be vulnerable and open. You may not have leveraged your section experience last year but you are doing it now. I hope you continue to do so and are able to find more answers to, "Why am I not feeling happy while I am achieving things?" That is such an important question.*

*Just a few thoughts: First, there is not ONE single sweet spot out there. In theory, we all might have an infinite number of sweet spots, yes? Second, (and the flip side of #1 above), very, very few people ever land in a "perfect" sweet spot and stay there for long. We don't have to find/live our sweet spots ONLY in the professional bucket. Finally, sometimes we have to DO before we can KNOW. You are young C; you have your entire life to experiment, or to apply your CURIOSITY (as Jean-Claude Biver screamed) towards finding a passion, towards finding multiple sweet spots along the way. This framework is no magical answer -- however, (as with many suggestions in DLW), it does force us to ask some of the right questions, yes?*

*You have such a big heart and thoughtful and analytical brain. This combination will enable you to offer hope, remove barriers, create progress, move mountains, listen to others.....You just have to find a way to understand the depths of your emptiness.*

*Despite your fear of judgment, you continue to churn out one application after another. Luckily, the application process has worked out for you and your accomplishments can shield you from judgment...to a point. You are quick to judge yourself before anyone else can judge you. Like you astutely pointed out, you reject intimacy out of fear of judgment. You are not alone in these feelings but I hope that you can figure out a way to acknowledge and understand your feelings of judgment and shame -- something we all have to some degree -- and learn how to not let them paralyze you.*

*As for your vulnerability armor, I can see the conflict around maintaining some privacy vs. building closer relationships. I look forward to learning more about your feelings on this.*

*If it looks more like a pattern like that (versus doubting yourself all the time on every level of existence to the point that you can't make decisions or commit to a direction), I think you may not be as poorly positioned as you fear. Either way, you might want to sort through whether you're dealing with perfectionism (i.e. not meeting your relentlessly high standards), deliberation (i.e. spending a lot of time thinking through to the point of decision paralysis), or something else. Also, remember that self-awareness (which you have demonstrated you have in abundance) drives improvement and growth. So even if you find you need more self-assuredness to lead, you may find that you grow and grown and in time feel ready to lead. You might surprise yourself once you have some time in the right environment.*

*I think one of the keys for you will be to ask questions and learn about your co-workers. Be curious. You will find that you are building up emotional capital, building trust because you are genuinely interested in them and not focused on what they think about you. Regardless of motivation level, educational level, social status, you find yourself thriving in all parts of your life.*

*As for the difficult conversation, I don't know if you are rationalizing as you mentioned that you don't typically shy away from difficult topics. Clarifying your feelings can only lead to a more fruitful conversation. Having said that, I would pay attention to any other emotions that may feel like you are "rationalizing" avoiding this difficult conversation.*

*As for finding a thread of wanting to be liked in your workplace as well, it's interesting that you didn't want to push your team member out of your fear of being disliked and yet, you want E to push you. It kind of reminds me of what E noticed about the similarities you have with your mom. It sounds like you have been reflecting a lot and building self-awareness. If you begin to excessively worry, notice that too and move on. That is a big part of being self-aware.*

*We sometimes need to disengage before engaging. Working through your anxiety through hard exercise is a good coping mechanism. As you know, it shouldn't be the only way of coping and I believe that you have been practicing at allowing yourself to be vulnerable, to disengage a little less, to connect some dots....Your purpose is genuine and driven by your personal narratives. As for something missing, keep digging and I hope you figure it out. I, too, want you to feel comfortable in your own skin. Accordingly, you'll be able to empower others.*

### **Subtype: Call to action**

*In sum, it IS a process; a life-long process. If you continue to "experiment," learn, and adjust along the way, every year could get better and better, yes? Time to get started?*

*So, how about channeling at least some of that incredible passion and creativity into crafting your own statement? My promise to you? If you get something even "close" to right for you, it will help with both your first and last paragraphs here. Not a bad start: "creativity, stories, behind the scenes, stage, organizing / navigating chaos, differences" You seem to have most of the pieces on the table in front of you, now comes the fun part! Be the director and producer of your OWN show. Unleash your purpose (who you ARE) onto the task of crafting a few magical words that simply RE-MINDS you of what you already know, deep down -- your essence. Sleep on it; noodle on it; play with it! I look forward to seeing what you come up with O!*

*I think you would do well to use the book as a workshop for this specific conversation. It's worth the time to go through the book and use each suggestion to prepare what you would want to say.*

*Yes, avoidance is more exhausting and time-consuming than people realize. It is also counterproductive. That said, it is very difficult to break out of this cycle that seems to have worked somewhat for many. But it never goes away. It's always lurking. You will be reading about difficult conversations for DLW which may help you make an active -- not passive -- decision about whether to pursue certain conversations. Being an active participant in your life will empower you and give you a greater sense of control. Let's see if you can take a small step toward that.*

*As for your values, you raise a good question. I think you will know in your heart when "doing good" feels genuine and on par with "being good." Practicing is a start and if you make it a habit, I believe that you continue to engage in such acts not only because it makes you feel better about yourself but also because it is a part of your value system. It is okay to feel better about yourself, though, as long as you are not manipulating or hurting others.*

*A couple of thoughts come to mind here. 1) How much are your criteria limiting your options? Meaning, by being very specific about both the city and the fund type (down to \*growth\* equity), how much has that cut down the number of firms on your spreadsheet? I'm not saying you should broaden your criteria - it's great that you know what you want. I just want you to be honest about how that level of specificity affects your search. It probably helps not to be grasping for any offer anywhere, and makes the search less overwhelming. But maybe it also sets you up for more no's, especially if most in your narrow job market segment aren't hiring. In which case, your results don't speak to your value, but your self knowledge, specificity, and unwillingness to compromise. So if you're okay with that, tie up your tennis shoes and get ready for a long, pavement-pounding search. Decide to enjoy the exercise as much as you can. You'll know someone at every firm by the time you're done, and you may have a sense of the overall environment in your field, which can be very useful later on down the line. You may also want to give yourself a deadline. For example, "If I haven't landed a satisfactory offer by X date, I'll expand my search slightly by including X city (Newark?) or funds including X focus area." Then put it to rest until that point. Knowing you have a deadline may help you keep moving, and give you the peace of mind that you won't end up with no job.*

*Can you learn and change given what you are learning about yourself in the current relationship? I have no clue if she's right. I appreciate the fact that you know you fight being all in. Exciting and humbling and something that you need to continue pressing forward. If you solve this issue it will be worth every minute in DLW.*

*I remember you said during our meeting that you worried that you'll just never like yourself. I picked up on that insecurity as soon as I sat down with you but I believe that with your persistence, you can overcome that. Yes, easier said than done, but I challenge you to take more emotional risks. Allow yourself to say "stupid" or "silly" things without immediately obsessively replaying the interaction. Offer others a hug*

*and comment on how it's perhaps a new thing for you but wanted to let them know that you noticed something. Hope this is something you are continuing to discuss with your DG.*

**Type: Educative**

**Subtype: Offer questions for the student to consider**

*I do wonder why you can't ask your husband whether or not your communication pattern bothers him or not. Why wonder? He sounds awesome. There is no need to wonder given how you feel about one another. It's laughable to see you as a bad person. You are trying to live life in a pure way, trying to do what is right. I hope you are giving yourself credit for the kind of person you are.*

*You gave the interview a try and you met your parents where they were at. Perhaps, you were planting the seeds for breaking down the wall. You mentioned that your dad was uncomfortable and anxious about the assignment. That was a great observation. Did you notice how you were feeling during your interview? I applaud you for continuing on your goal and not giving up.*

*I love what you wrote: "The more you hide a story, the more power you give to it." That said, what does make you really uncomfortable? You seem like a passionate person especially when it comes to wanting to be loved and connecting with others. However, I wonder where this tendency toward self-destruction comes from when you feel alone.*

*Can you imagine how different the world would be if everyone shared your perspective? (a learning one v. "I'm right and you're wrong!") "We owe Donald Trump an open mind..." Don't we owe that to ... everyone? As you suggest, how can entering ANY conversation that way, "do anything but benefit us and the world?" You give me hope C! (and, you've got my vote -- as a fellow independent)*

*I am curious what kind of changes you were envisioning for yourself -- whether you expected dramatic shifts or not. Can you think of subtle ways in which you may have grown this semester? You say that you worry you'll feel very lost when the safe space and schedule of Fairhaven end in May. Do you feel like you have been all in this semester? I hope you feel like DLW, and in particular, your DT is a safe space. This is where you I encourage you to take risks because if you can do it there, it'll give you the courage to do it out there.*

*I am happy that your DT meeting went so well. You said that it got very deeply very quickly. You also mentioned about your DT that, "I had this feeling that I didn't want to let the others down." Again, your fear of failure taking over. Did you feel like*

*pressured to share or did you feel like you wanted to reciprocate what your DT mates had offered? Maybe both. Just something to notice as you weave your way through DLW and your DT meetings...and through life.*

*Here is a question for you to consider when you are ready. You said, " From Columbus Day until last weekend, I was focused on being very relaxed, diffusing any tense conversation, and presenting a happy and delightful version of myself to Charles to make sure our relationship was going as smoothly as possible. I thought I could turn things around." How authentic were you being during that time? Is that who you want to be with Charles? There is no easy way through the end of a relationship, but there is great value in being as honest with yourself as possible.*

*So bullet for bullet, here you go K: - "a fully realistic assessment of the difficulty of the challenge and at the same time an unrealistically optimistic belief in your ability to overcome it" --cognitive dissonance? Self-delusional? Faith? Arrogance? Confidence? Commitment? I suspect one never REALLY knows... But I tend to agree with you, without an ability to hold both of these truths simultaneously, our chances at transformational growth diminish significantly... -*

*So K, am I being a "hypocrite" if I have a set of "aspirational values" -- a clear statement of what's important to me, how I WANT to live my life -- all the while KNOWING that I am human and will undoubtedly NOT live up to them ALL the time? Hmmm.... Isn't how you experience Andrea's upbringing exactly the point Brooks was attempting to make? (Perhaps your point about his rif, yes? Lost some of it's punch through the sarcasm?) And isn't it ironic that those "paragons of higher education" asking Andrea to write something personal and meaning-full in her college applications are also the very same institutions that attract, select, socialize, and educate "admitted Andrea's" based mostly on how "industrious & ambitious" they are, even while asking them to write about examples of when they were "idealistic & resilient"? Just wondering... Having fun yet K?*

*Some great learning opportunities here! My question for you is this, what do you get out of overextending? What is the positive benefit to you? I ask this because I have learned the hard way that I have to understand the positive benefit of my negative habits in order to begin to change them. Good luck keeping your head above water the next two weeks.*

*You ask a really good question at the end of your reflection that I think might deserve more thought. Why does their exclusivity bother you so much? I think there is some good self-knowledge available to you in the answer. "These egomaniacs need to know that they're not special, they're not that great, they're not entitled to jack, and they need to get over themselves. No one cares." If this is true, is it possible they will*

*get what they deserve from the Universe? Usually those things that stir up the greatest reactions in us, are great sources of learning.*

*Combining your insight here (about how systems 1 & 2) influence your response to others with the foundation of what we learned from reading the book, "Difficult Conversations," (DC) do you see any parallels? System one is tied closely to our identities (DC) & emotions, while engaging system 2 is a prerequisite to conducting a successful DC, yes?*

*As for your support team audit? This all sounds pretty healthy to me -- and that one gap you identify? Good for you; that's also a fairly common one for most people at this point in your professional careers. The real challenge is: "Will you actually do it?" Will you take any concrete steps to increase the "diversity in your personal board of directors"? There are many reasons, MOST of us never get around to doing this. At least you've clearly identified it as an option. Good stuff R!*

*Were you happy? What have you learned from all this about your own values? What balance will make sense for you? Another way to think about leading an integrated life in the future is to look for a collection of role models, who each manage one aspect of things in a way we can learn from. Have you seen anyone else who might be a different sort of role model for you in terms of how they lead an integrated life? What can you learn from them? It is a conundrum, no easy answer, but it does sound like you've invested some time in defining your values.*

*To your friend's important question here C, do truly YOU believe, deep down, that living your purpose (somewhere near the intersection of humility, balance, and curiosity) will "lead to terrible consequences" like the ones they pointed out?*

*I wonder about the definition of self-assurance. Believing that you will succeed in a task is different from making the tough decision to go for it. It seems to me like you had enough self-assurance to study for the college entrance exams and to apply to Fairhaven. Is it possible that you have self-assurance underneath your performance anxiety? Do you generally believe yourself capable, but doubt that at times?*

*Question: What about making promises terrifies you? What might you lose if you make more promises? What about making promises intrigues you?*

*I'm hearing that you've been focused on eulogy virtues, but are not feeling reciprocation from some of the people in your life on that. I have a few questions for you is this: Is everyone in your life not reciprocating? Or are certain people? And are they not focused their on relationship with you at all, or only in some of the ways you want them to be? And for the people you see who are entirely focused on resume virtues, how happy do you think they are?*

*I am curious how you're thinking about the number exercise. Which number is \$10 million for you? The number it would take to stop working and pursue your dreams full on? What it would take to retire? How much you would need to feel stable financially? And don't forget about the second part of the exercise in which Professor Craig asked what you'd do if you had your number. How far off is your tech career plan from what you'd do if money wasn't a factor? How much do you really need if you go this route?*

*A couple questions: How do you know he was a successful giver, as in, what distinguishes him from a doormat? And how do you ensure that you're successful in your giving now that you're making a point to help those who are "weak ties" as you mentioned?*

*How does your belief in human's good nature affect your leadership style?*

*Interesting thoughts about values. It sounds like these entrepreneurs have you feeling inspired. What values specifically do they speak to? Is it the general idea of living your espoused values, of giving back to the community, of work-life balance? Something else? When have your values been in conflict? How did you respond? How will you respond when they come into conflict in the future?*

*What bothers you about the idea of yourself or others thinking of you as "sad?" It seems like you may find some interesting fodder there.*

*Do you find that you are not being authentically you during early encounters? What do you notice about how you feel in your skin when first meeting people? What will feel genuine for you when first getting to know others?*

*What would it take to start giving yourself time for meditation? What makes you most nervous about sharing negative emotions with the friends who already share their negative emotions with you?*

*For example, you might start by digging deeper to narrow down what specifically bothers you about your brother acting miserable and moody. Get fact-based. Is it a sense of pride? That you feel hurt? That you're worried about him?*

*What do you think the likely outcome will be? Which criteria are you holding onto for whether to have a difficult conversation (even a small one, as a test) going forward?*

*What would it mean if you found out you were a burden on your friends or family for some reason (like your negative feelings)? Is it possible that at some times NOT sharing your negative emotions creates a burden on them?*

*So what do you do when your values conflict but you have to make a choice? Spend time with family or work on something that will advance your career? When has this happened? How have you handled it? What will help you handle it better in the future?*

*What is that fear of not measuring up about?*

*Did you decide to work in the US post-Fairhaven just to make your parents happy or is this what you want? Just curious.*

*Do you tend to be the pillar of strength for your family during challenging times?*

*And yet, after opening up to your friends at dinner, you still worried that you alienated or underappreciated them. What did it feel like while you were expressing your feelings? I think their response attested to the fact that they value you and that you deserve their support. Through all of this, I can't help but wonder why you are so afraid to show anger and share your pain. You mentioned during our meeting last week that you are afraid that you will never like yourself. How do you understand this about yourself? You wrote that you have to remind yourself that you are doing your best and that you should probably try to trust more in the humanity of others while also be sensitive to signals others are giving off. You always worry about how your actions will affect others.*

*You need to identify your strengths as well as your passions, along with your fears. Why are you so unsure of yourself? What are the things that make you most afraid? And, when you have overcome obstacles, did you feel like you courageously confronted your fears or simply did it to gain approval?*

*At some point, wouldn't it be fascinating to be able to follow-up with that interviewer in a non-threatening (e.g. job interview) setting -- to learn what her "real intentions" were in heading down that path? So, empowering AND eye-opening? I'll take that any day.*

**Subtype: Offer a new framing**

*Thank you for sharing such an intimate, important story. I don't think anyone was judging anyone else in class or in the . It's that we are judging ourselves and projecting those feels and emotions onto others. Thus, the judgment. I'm inspired by your courage. I'm also impressed that you have the faith in your family to either sooner or later embrace all of you. I have no doubt they will. However, that means you need to embrace all of you. Good luck this weekend. Let me know how it goes.*

*Please realize that family doesn't have to be covenantal. Most families are sort of covenantal. But think of your friends as the place where you gain real sustenance. I also think you could have a conversation with your brother by asking him the questions we had for interviews last week. Disrupt the communication pattern with brother. Be more empathic of him. Being dad and brother is an impossible task. Soften your views of him.*

*Whichever way you go in the end (I realize it feels like you're stuck, but maybe all that's decided is that you're not going back to finance?), I'd encourage you to find the specific tasks within the job that are "sweeter" than others. You may love researching and hate running the numbers, or vice versa. You can totally be passionate about tasks like that, even if your life's purpose doesn't feel as clear - you'll know when your heart starts to race and you get lost in your work and come out with a smile on your face.*

*I am so happy to hear about your connection with your DLW classmate. As for the particular feedback in Johari's Window, maybe it's something to think about.....maybe your DT mate was just off. If you find that it continues to bother you, pay attention to it and explore why that may be. It can be a sign that there is some truth to it or maybe it drums up feelings from the past of feeling misunderstood, mislabeled, etc.*

*You do need to take care of yourself....always. You say that being with friends, exercising, being in therapy, drawing, reading all help to distract you while you deal with uncertainty and anxiety in your life. I would say that these activities help you to cope more than to distract. I wonder if you can find the calm in the chaos, then maybe you can figure out how to live your purpose even in seemingly small ways with regularity, rather than feeling like you need to put it off.*

*When it comes to finding your sweet spot, generally, once you give something an earnest try and cross it off your list, you can celebrate and move on until you find something you love. Congratulations for crossing off chasing money for its own sake so quickly! You have more freedom to chase passion and strengths when the amount you need in compensation is more reasonable. You can't know it all right away. Some of this work is iterative. You keep trying things, and migrate in a direction over time, hopefully toward your sweet spot.*

*Given your worries about financial history and current worries, I think security plays a central role in your thought processes. You seem sensible to catch yourself when you get sucked into the comparison game. The pain of not having enough money is motivation enough from what you have written. Most important, I think you are wise. You'll know. You may need to delay achieving your perfect sweet spot. As long as you know it you will gauge what is making you happy.*

*What will eat you alive is to compare. You have your incredible gifts. We are all on different paths with different time lines. If you only think about something big in which to reach it may just be too overwhelming. Don't sabotage your efforts before you begin. Whatever you do it will be the right thing to do at that moment.*

*Please don't feel guilty if you find that others might be more obsessed with achievement. It's not good or bad. Only in your brain. You sound sort of wise. Not as wise as mom. I can't wait to meet her. Follow your path. You have a number of areas to explore. But you are clearly on your way*

*One potential lesson from this experience might be that YOU really nailed your purpose; you deeply understand who you are C. If this is true, no wonder it felt like being stabbed. Each comment from you DT was a direct affront on your identity, on who you are, on your ... self. While they may have been "well-meaning" (in that Sandbergian way you describe), they also might be terribly wrong, yes? Based on my experience, if you truly are defined by "humility, balance, and curiosity," who WOULDN'T hire you? The brief description of your job history you share here further reinforces my confidence not only that you know who you are, but equally important, when you actually have lived it? It works! So sorry to learn of your DT's reaction to what sounds to me like incredibly healthy and solid work.*

*You will find over time that your parents are indeed heroes and imperfect. But their trial with your mother's mother was a significant test that humbled your mom. She sounds remarkable. And by the way, you are as well. I do think you are too hard on yourself. I promise that you will continue to thrive and achieve without being so tough on yourself.*

*Your final sentence gives me pause because as you look back on your third bullet point in the reflection, I don't hear you mention about whether or not he deserves you. It's all about you losing him or fears about your inadequacies. But I am biased. I think you are fabulous.*

*You are very wise. In your last sentence you question which version is real. They are both real. They are both true. Remember, it's the narrative that is important not what the truth is.*

*There is so much to cover in your reflection. First, bring up in your DT how you are feeling about the evolution of the group. Just be vulnerable and be honest. Second, did you learn the lessons you needed to learn from your ex? If you have then move on. Let it go. Put it behind you. And to think that others experience you as loving. I'm not sure it gets any better. The key is whether or not you are secure enough to hear that word and own it and know that you will bless others because of how others experience themselves when they are with you. Rare indeed.*

*I think you know that it's not in you to just give up. However, there needs to be something in between. I tend to see black/white thinking among high achievers -- this all-or-nothing mentality. How might you continue to be ambitious while allowing yourself to relish accomplishments as well as slowing down to experience the moment? Your confidence shouldn't be based entirely on your accomplishments but rather on a sense of agency and self-love.*

*Your gifts (which you know are many) can turn and bite you. You are now seeing how you can manage your environment to get what you want. But is that really what you want? I do think you can have that vulnerable experience with someone. For sure. But I do think you may need to come clean with yourself before it will happen. You are right. Being vulnerable 80% is easy. It's sort of like acting. thanks for being pretty close to 100 % in this reflection. But the next step is the most exciting.*

*One way to frame (understand) what you are experiencing right now is LOSS. In a short period of time you lost Christian and your image of the country you live in, and everything that goes with that (hope, your future, fundamental beliefs, sense of safety, identity, worth, etc.) When we experience deep loss our entire world turns inside out; we become disoriented; time inverts; our sense of purpose and daily routine slip away. In 1969, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross published her now famous essay "On Death and Dying." Over the past year I have reacquainted myself with its underlying logic and wisdom. Unfortunately, there are no short-cuts to moving on. Sometimes the best we can do - or at least the first step - is to understand what's happening, to appreciate that these cocktails of emotions we experience are actually normal. Not in the sense that we should BE this way our entire lives; however, normal in the sense that this is how we deal with loss. Here is a brief summary of her work - you might know it as the Five Stages of Grief: As individuals work through grief over negative events in their lives, the theory suggests that they go through five stages. First, they deny that the event happens. Then, they feel angry about the event occurring and may express their outrage. Next, they begin to bargain with a higher power, the universe or an unidentified entity in an effort to return life back to the way it was. They then may experience a period of depression before finally accepting that life has been forever altered. A common misconception is that everyone must pass through each stage of grief before the process is considered complete. However, Kubler-Ross stated that the stages were not meant to be an all-encompassing model of the grieving process. In reality, individuals may experience many emotions as they grieve. They may feel multiple emotions at once, work through the stages out of order or skip a stage entirely.*

*While going it alone seems safer, it eventually gets very lonely. There is true magic in vulnerability, asking for help, and letting someone else experience the gift of giving to*

*you. I hope you will let yourself expand to let in the people already in your life, and others you have yet to meet*

*It doesn't have to be a "dreary" picture! Once you know and own the truth about your values, priorities, strengths and motivations it actually gets much easier to make the decision on where and how to put your time and energy. The challenge comes if you try and make more than 1 thing your #1 priority. What I have learned is that you can have only one #1 priority. Most people, especially high achievers don't accept that fact. They have to learn the hard way.*

*As for the tension between entertainment and healthcare, and more directly to this question: "How can I value the passion aspect where I have two passions that are so vastly different?" You almost stumble on it right here: "I think the strength bucket is very dependent on the specific function or job". Yes, yes, yes. The sweet spot framework is most useful when applied to specific tasks/activities -- NOT to industries (as you suggest here). Why? Because you could land in any number of job/roles in either healthcare or entertainment (or even finance!) where there is almost no overlap between how you actually spend your hours in the work day. For example, you could do finance in either of these industries, yes?*

*What you so beautifully (and painfully) and powerfully describe here is what it "feels" like when transitioning into adulthood: "I've had to look within for affirmation instead. The truth is I am terrified and have a lot more to do in terms of self-discovery this semester but I am looking forward to the growth experience and feel proud that I've taken my first steps." Most theories of adult development describe this movement from: a stage of life when we are largely defined by what others think, measured by concrete markers of measurable success relative to others, to: a stage of life when we become more "self-authored" === as you so wonderfully describe here, we start to "look within for affirmation instead." Any significant transformation in life (and this is one of the biggest!) can be truly frightening! Becoming "comfortable" with this new you, the more "self-authored" you will take time.*

*The path ahead is not linear either professionally or personally. It isn't for anyone, and the energy wasted trying to guarantee it will be is lost forever. What an opportunity you have to use that energy in such a different way. - enjoy the ride, it has moments of magic in it.*

*Ironically enough C, it's when our "worries are minimal" when we find it most difficult to say, "NO". During times of crisis, priorities become clearer and we actually find it easier to know how to live that integrated life we all want. Why? Because crises focus the mind. The "RE-mind" us about what is truly important and what is less so.*

*It's built into the very nature of "hedonic experiences" (pleasure) that we have to continuously "chase" them to attain more. These "drive-reduction," fun times require another kick and then another, and another... Adding some "meaning" and "relations" (peRMa) into the mix can really help. Brilliant C; simply brilliant! S PS: Oh, and while it might feel like you are being "selfish," that's not really what's going on here is it?*

*One of my all-time favorite HBR titles: "Why should anyone be led by you?" The working title of my upcoming article? "Not everyone should lead, and That's OK!" If you're not clear on your answer to the first one, then at least consider the second. - There is NO "proper management technique" when it comes to this truism: Under stress we DO revert to our dominant response. The first step is to KNOW what our dominant response is. Then, and only then, can we consider whether or not our dominant response matches the relevant variables in the situation. If not, then we need to develop alternative strategies to counter/support our natural tendencies under stress. Self-awareness first, then self-regulation.*

*Large scale personal change is a huge undertaking. Very few people are able to create a blueprint and stick with it. Life doesn't work that way. If you are committed to self-awareness and surround yourself with a trusted network whose input you value, you will have the necessary information to make adjustments as you go along.*

*As you suggest, it's not that we don't KNOW how to better engage in these moments, but rather it's just that we are human and often get caught up in the emotional (and identity-driven) issues of the moment and then, well... we engage for all the wrong reasons. The conversation ends poorly and we (mistakenly) vow to never "confront" someone again. If we frame engaging in a DC as a confrontation, we just increase the likelihood that it will end badly.*

*Wow! A I am a little dizzy after reading your reflection. In a good way! I love how clearly you have looked out at the future and how honest you are about what you want and what the challenges will be. I only want to challenge you on one point. "I recognize that I will first drop the "me" ball followed by friends and then health." I hope you will reconsider this. In my experience, the "me" ball is the most important one of all. Like it or not, the mother is at the center of most families. If you don't value yourself, who will? If the mom goes down, the whole train comes off the tracks.*

*The path of increased self-awareness is the biggest determining factor (in my opinion) of achieving an integrated life, or as Brene Brown describes it, an whole hearted life.*

*M, thanks for sharing this. I appreciate how you're thinking about your crucibles, and your focus on resilience. Not every crucible is on the epic proportion of some of the*

*cases we've read. What matters is what we do in the moment we fall, even if that fall seems small from the outside. If it shaped who you are and your path, it matters tremendously! Sometimes a "small" crucible can have a big impact. And it sounds like your time at UBS definitely gave you plenty of fodder for reflection and growth.*

*The dimension that makes "vulnerability" so difficult for most of us is the "loss of control" -- to really put ourselves "out there" without knowing the outcome. It's our inability to control others or the outcome that strikes such fear into our hearts. And so we dive in and do everything we can to "make others" do what we want.*

*When your friend mentioned she had shallow connections you tried to fix it. It seems like she wanted to vent. Another approach would have been to ask, When did you begin to feel like it was a mistake or when did you feel like relationships began to feel superficial? Those are empathic and curious statements. But you took the position of the person who defends Fairhaven or wants to make it all better. You don't need to fix anything. Just appreciate how competent and insightful you are.*

*Thank you for sharing. I'm intrigued why you find the story embarrassing. I think it's pretty profound. At first blush I would say that it was important because you didn't get what you wanted. And that is rare for you. She was in control. She made a very courageous decision and you haven't quite got over it. You didn't win. What a thrilling realization that you don't need to always get what you want.*

*I don't know if I agree that you are taking a step backwards when you are inconsistent in your life. I'd say it's more a step sideways. More important, how many steps and how long do you step sideways? You also need to factor in whether you are spending enough time caring about your self. Not selfishly but caring for yourself as you are in DT. If the self caring goes away there is little to no chance you will achieve alignment with eulogy and resume virtues.*

*For most of us the number seldom goes down only up.*

### **Subtype: Sharing of personal story/perspective**

*I have lived long enough to learn that plans are great, but life rarely goes as we plan. In order to achieve the deeper, truly important things we do have to have faith and be willing to be flexible. There are many paths to the same destination!*

*When I reflect on how badly we've (my generation) have managed to "lead the world," I am buoyed to hear that there are people like you who might, just might have the vision and maturity to repair all the damage we've done.*

*You have put it perfectly into words and fear is the wrong word. I agree with you that it is all about respect and fear of letting down the person we respect, AND the person*

*(that person) sees in us. I think you become this kind of leader by being an authentic human being, living up to your own standards and expecting the most out of the people you are leading. The key is in not demanding "the most", but in getting the people you are leading to want to give more than they think they can (or have).*

*I think your main point; teach versus change is a huge one and often the biggest stumbling block I have noticed/experienced. The only time that I think teaching works is when one is in a direct supervisory role or mentor/parent/coach. If both parties are relatively equal; siblings, coworkers, friends, partners in a romantic relationship, the assumption that the other person is willing to learn from you is a big one and usually backfires. I think the intent and assumption of the best is great. I would like to hear how it works for you.*

*It is unfortunate that our education system builds in no place for reflection. We all end up so geared to getting grades and earning the approval of others. I am pleased and excited for you that you have learned so much about yourself during your time at Fairhaven. You have taken full advantage of who you came in as and what was available to you. I can assure you that building a life around your own "gut" and "heart" is amazing and scary. But I wouldn't trade it for all the safety in the world. - great work!*

*I for one don't think bad feelings are a sign of weakness, but a sign that you're alive. If you didn't care about anything, it wouldn't hurt so much to question your beliefs and re-assess your values.*

*Whatever happened this election, we have a lot of work to do in this country. I hope we do start to listen to each other more carefully. Our difficult/learning conversation skills couldn't be more important than they are now, and yet we will need to balance that with advocacy to protect the most vulnerable members of our society. How we respond in the coming years will not only have real implications in our daily lives, but will define the trajectory of our democracy.*

*At least based on my humble reading this important reflection, it sure sounds like you as close to cracking this one as anyone can hope to be --incredibly self-aware, at peace with your strengths and weaknesses, AND still able to hold onto a "growth mindset" in areas where you'd like to make some progress. Throughout our lives, we all struggle with maintaining a healthy relationship to one or another of ANY of these three dimensions.*

*As someone who is coming through her second divorce, I would like to pass on a little of what I have learned. The only way we truly learn about ourselves and create opportunities to grow is through relationship. I don't regret either of my marriages. They were the men I needed to be with based on who I was at that time. I would not*

*choose either of them at this point in my life. Why not? Because I have spent my entire adult life committed to growing and healing so that I would never again look for someone outside of me to fill me up and make me whole. I think I am finally there!!!*

*First, we all have potentially an infinite number of sweet spots, not just one, so the likelihood of finding a few in a lifetime goes up dramatically. Second, few of us ever land squarely in OUR ONE sweet spot, and stay there, yes? For example, I love my current job -- Fairhaven Professor. But even here, I still have to grade (which I hate), attend boring faculty meetings, manage 400 emails a day, etc. However, each year I have been able to make adjustments (some minor, others more dramatic) to my professional and personal lives that result in me spending more and more time at or near a sweet spot AND less and less time engaged in energy-sapping activities with people I don't like.*

*In my experience the value of being honorable (to my values) in a dishonorable world is that I am able to live an authentic life. The question we each have to ask ourselves is whether or not the value of living an authentic life is greater than the cost of living an inauthentic one. And, I mean the cost to self, not the "material" cost of lost jobs, lost friends, etc...*

*I love Brene Brown. Professor Craig also introduced me to her about a year ago and since then I have read several of her books twice and always have something on Audible I can play in the car. After reading her first book, I said to myself "I am done with shame and fear." About a month later, I realized I needed to end my marriage. The path of vulnerability is one I have been traveling since I first discovered it in my early thirties.*

*The rubber band does break! Mine did when I was in my early thirties and I had what the psychiatrist called a "psychic implosion" that landed me in very deep depression for 1 year. My life until that moment had been as you describe yours, completely driven by the approval and acclaim I needed to receive from others. The last 26 years of my life have been spent creating a life built "from the inside out", where my approval and acceptance are more important to me than anyone else's. It can be done and it takes committed hard work to change the wiring that you have been running on all your life to date*

*I carry my purpose inside me into every aspect of my life; motherhood, friendship, work, volunteering, being a sister, etc. I recite my purpose statement each morning (I actually cross-stitched and framed it!) as it grounds me in who I am and what really matters to me.*

*It took me along time to learn this. I have several birthday entries in journals from my early twenties where I write "maybe by this time next year I will be perfect." Looking back from today, I would say this to my younger self; 1) You are enough now and always will be 2) There is no where to "get" to 3) The magic is in the journey 4) And the journey never ends. My level of self-awareness grows and deepens with each life lesson.*

*I agree that passion can easily get lost in affirmation and approval. My problem was that I was capable enough to be good at many things and earn the approval and applause of others. It took about 10 years for me to realize that was not enough. It took another 10 years to find my "sweet spot" and realize there are many ways for me to be in my sweet spot while also achieving my extrinsic goal of financial stability and independence.*

*I used to have a similar reaction when re-reading my early journals. The poetry was the worst! Over time, I have come to love and embrace that younger, tormented version of myself, because I had not yet developed the part of me that has grown into my "knowledgeable bystander". I also think of that part of me as my "good mother". Growing up requires learning how to parent oneself!*

*I am totally with you about family. Ironically enough, I find it most difficult to be vulnerable with members of my own family. Those "scripted conversations" you mention?*

*My father did something very similar to your father at the age of 40. His choice was a very clear example for all his children of the power and freedom we have to create our own lives. If we don't, who will?*

*Ordinarily I suggest couples BOTH read this book --however, given the stress and constraints on Eric right now, it might not be the best time to offer this suggestion. In the long run however, Chris and I have found it incredibly helpful to BOTH be at least working off of the same conceptual playbook whenever our "Spain" come up; and they do! We have 36 years of "Spain," some handled better than others; but at least we now both use the same language and strategy to deal with them -- at least when one of us is an adult in the room (which, even at our age, is NOT a given).*

*I teared up as I read about how deep your relationship with her is, and thought about how I felt when my mother was in a near-fatal accident this summer. It's terrifying and so painful to know she's in pain, and I feel helpless and want to make it better.*

*I hear you on the "what I'm good at" conundrum. I've been wrestling with this for the past year. I've noticed that some of the things I'm really good at are things I get frustrated with others for not being good at, automatically doing, or understanding in*

*me. For example, I ran into persuasion and advocacy as a strength when I realized others around me saw the same situation differently - they saw a dead end and I saw a near-certain "win."*

*My purpose this time last year was a long, convoluted statement that meant very little because it was trying to accomplish so much. I've since revised it several times, and have landed on something that works for me. It frees me to do the work the way I know I best can. People who know me know they won't get away with surface-level ideas, I'm going to dig deep and challenge them to analyze the problem until we find the root causes. So now I know to message that clearly up front as a strength instead of hiding it as if it's a weakness to be ashamed of.*

*I have seen the pattern you mentioned - the ways I'm not empathetic toward myself also affect my ability to empathize with others. For example, I have a strong value for getting back up and fighting another day when things are hard, and when I see others who are not able to do that, it's harder for me to empathize. It sounds like this is true for you in general with negative emotions.*

*I think of my own experience of growth as a spiral. I pass by the same places every so often as I travel up the spiral, and each time I pass the same issue - caring for friends, feeling understood, feeling like I am enough etc. - I find new insights, and a deeper appreciation for my self.*

*I'm not sure I would have the courage to do what you did going around the world. I'm serious. I've done many tough things but that feels huge for me. True confession.*

### **Subtype: Referencing of curriculum or other resources**

*In a few weeks, I'll share Kegan's theory of Adult development as an alternative explanation as to why you sometimes might feel torn -- when it comes to living your own life v. living up to your mother's expectations/role model.*

*Aha! Daniel Kahneman would be proud S -- so very proud. If you haven't seen it yet, Michael Lewis has just finished a fascinating book about the lives of Kahneman & Tversky. It's titled, "The Undoing Project" -- fascinating stuff. I think it comes out next week.*

*A classmate of yours in our other section came up with an idea that I found incredibly mature and hopeful. I have asked if it's ok to share his response with everyone -- hopefully, you'll see it soon.*

*I know this won't make the fear go away, but I was surprised to see this recently:  
<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/06/29/the-crumbling-post-35-pregnancy->*

*myth.html I think you will find the next couple classes helpful as you think about this issue.*

*I included an attachment to a deeper explanation of Kegan's theory below this in case you find that helpful.*

*It sounds to me like you have a few possible motives for reaching out to your friend. Could you use the book as a guide to sort through your feelings, what you're hoping for, and plan for what you'd like to say if/when you talk? Sometimes that process itself can help you realize whether or not it makes sense to reach out.*

*Over the next few lessons, I'll offer a few theories of adult development to help us make some sense of this central tendency. Perhaps we are not ALL crazy; perhaps it's just a marker of "where we are" in our lives. Perhaps.*

*Though there is a strong focus on self-awareness in DLW, there are more concrete offerings for action as the course progresses. There is a need to build some self-awareness before jumping into that, though it's true that everyone starts from a different point. Each part is harder and easier for different people. I particularly recommend the workbook - it offers a balance between understanding yourself and making choices about how you want to operate in the world.*

*You nail it right here: "What if they say they don't care about me, or don't like me anyways." Indeed. This is not a reason to avoid difficult conversations, this is the classic definition of why we avoid vulnerability: 'truly putting ourselves out there without knowing the result'. Some DCs are a subset of the broader category of how we experience/approach vulnerability. Just a simple reminder from Brene' Brown's research: "We can't get the good stuff without risking the bad." The same holds for the value of engaging in a DC. We cannot control the outcome; we cannot control the other. Oh, and of course, not everyone responds the way your "friend" does/did...*

*There seem to be at least two fundamental possibilities: Of course you could feel VERY self-confident and not come across that way to others. This is one possibility and the other is that you actually do harbor some deep doubts and these are picked up by others. Each possibility implies a slightly different approach, yes? The first suggests practicing some "self-presentation" techniques. One that has gotten a great deal of attention lately was made famous by Amy Cuddy in her now famous TED talk titled Fake it Until you Make it:*

*[https://www.ted.com/talks/amy\\_cuddy\\_your\\_body\\_language\\_shapes\\_who\\_you\\_are?l](https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are?language=en)anguage=en The second explanation requires a bit more work and time. There is no better cure to issues of self-confidence like "wins," getting some success under one's belt is the antidote for self-doubt. There also seems to be a final possibility here. You are indeed confident and authentic in your self-presentation and STILL others*

*perceive you as being "too nice." This is one of those unfortunate/unfair gender double-standards that still exists in many cultures. Unfortunately, the alternative bias also exists for women, where well-deserved self-confidence is often unfairly labeled negatively as well -- a double-bind that leaves very little room for answers except the one at the heart of this course: figure out who you are; be who you are; be comfortable with who you are. You are enough. As we all know, easier said and done, yes? Good stuff here M; solid work.*

*This is the essence of the ground-breaking research behind "Difficult Conversations" (DC). If you want to (have the time to!) read ahead, it's all right there in that little book. In short: surface issue => underlying emotions => identity issues*

*I just wanted to share this link with you: Brené Brown on Empathy - YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw> I'll show this later in the course during our exploration of "Support Teams;" however, it sounds like you could use it right now. Some simple wisdom here N; listen deeply.*

*Read "The Measure of a Man's Life" by Christensen. He is very clear. 100% or nothing.*

*Because we all have different perceptions, you might want to develop some range for yourself so you have more flexibility if someone needs more supervision or support, particularly if they are a new direct report. You might enjoy thinking about this through a genetic lens - there's some research coming out now about how different kids respond to the pressure of something like standardized testing. As it turns out some perform better and others worse (<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/10/magazine/why-can-some-kids-handle-pressure-while-others-fall-apart.html>). Under what circumstances will you use each? Might you shift from basing it on your own experience to basing it on what your team needs? How will you keep reflecting now that these reflections won't be due every week?*

*One thing to consider is to plan what you want to say, at least in the beginning of the conversation. Then in the areas where you see you still have unresolved feelings, you could focus internally on whatever you can learn about yourself from it so those feelings don't take over and turn the conversation south. The book can be quite helpful in reframing your concerns to find common ground in a conversation like this.*

*At the risk of sounding incredibly corny (I understand that by this point in the semester it's probably already too late!), check out this corny (but deep truth) youtube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7\\_kBbWjyf8U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_kBbWjyf8U)*

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