
HEALING THROUGH LEADERSHIP :A PROCESS OF CRITICAL LOVE, COMPASSION AND VULNERABILITY

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OBJECTIVES

- Link ways in which contemplative practices deepen our capacities to bear witness to each other's lived experiences and work together to build more compassionate and just communities
- Practice and Reflect on Contemplative Practices
- Share Creative Ways Of Infusing My Own Contemplative Practices in Higher Education Leadership
- Provide some Practical Tips for using Contemplative Practices in Leadership Spaces In Higher Education

WHO AM I ? HOW DID I COME TO THIS WORK?

- Yoga
 - 15 years of Hatha and Dahn,
- Meditation
 - 7 years of training in the Zen Buddhist tradition
- Somatics
 - Aikido :jo Kata and mind/body coaching

THE CULTURE OF OUR DEPARTMENT BEFORE USING CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES

Tenured Faculty in The Percy Ellis Sutton SEEK Department 2003, Coordinator of Counseling Services 2012: Equal Opportunity Program

Mission:

“The Percy Ellis Sutton SEEK Department aspires to promote, maintain, and graduate individuals who strive to further their education and professional success within a social justice framework. We are committed to elevating, cultivating and empowering such individuals by way of academic support, financial aid, counseling and teaching to produce life-long learners and advocates of positive social change” .

- Department chair was removed from her position
- Close colleague passes away/ no closure or healing
- Lack of morale/distrust
- Betrayal
- Disengagement
- Lack of motivation
- Going through the motions/ no innovation
- Sadness
- Anger
- Anxiety/ fear
- Not feeling connected to the Institution
- Working in Silos
- No Vision or Strategic Mission
- Reactive
- Survival mode

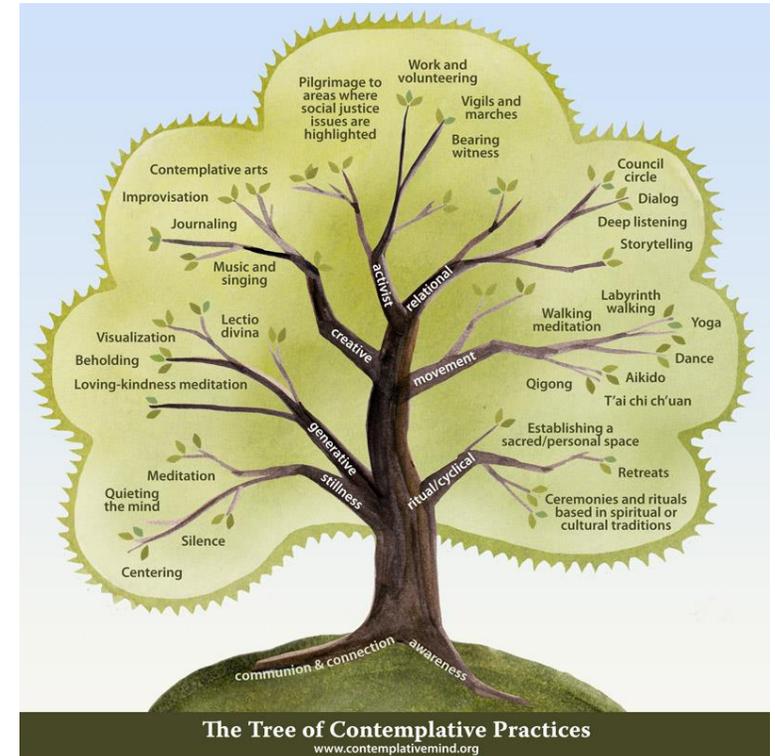
PRACTICE

- Mindful Stretching
- Brief Meditation
- Body map: Where did you feel tension/discomfort/pain? Any thoughts or mind chatter?
- What did it say?



OTHER PRACTICES I USED:

- Rose and Thorn exercise
- Gratitude Gift Bags
- Healing Retreats
- Lean On Me
- Screaming Exercise
- Movement and Dance
- Journaling
- Wellness Room
- Vision Boards
- Weekly staff check-ins
- Undoing Racism Work



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HOW DO CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES DEEPEN OUR CAPACITIES TO BEAR WITNESS TO EACH OTHER'S LIVED EXPERIENCES AND SUFFERING

- It draws attention to what we are feeling and experiencing in the present moment; first in our body then in our mind. Even if these things are discomforting or painful.
- It increases our capacity to stay and reflect on the discomfort of what is happening – how it impacts our bodies and minds.
- It fosters compassion as we identify our own suffering in others , including our colleagues and the students we serve.
- It increases our capacity to cultivate presence , awareness of suffering, we cultivate compassion and a vision of what is needed to change our circumstances.

We don't have to fix people at all. What pulls you to move forward is presence. Presence is what motivates people to love and build community. As you choose to be more present, you are more present. By choosing presence, we learn to let go of our own discomfort, and experience ourselves in a trusting way; a way that allows us to trust others more. We must fully acknowledge ...our own suffering. We cannot have a healed society , we cannot have change , we cannot have justice, if we do not reclaim and repair the human spirit.”

Reverend Angel Kyodo Williams, (2016). Radical Dharma

USEFUL DATA

Observations

- Increased collaboration
- Increased communication
- Joy at work
- Increased ability to serve students who were experiencing burdensome challenges
- Increased Conflict Resolution

Insights

- Daily practice to develop critical awareness and ability to discern what one's experience is as opposed to others
- More supervision and integration of junior staff is key
- Trauma and Vicarious trauma are held both consciously and unconsciously for people of color- race and oppression must be addressed
- We are all suffering

HELPFUL TIPS

- Find and develop your own contemplative practice that you can use daily for your own self-care.
- Integrate your practice in your personal space.
- Integrate contemplative practices as opening points of regular staff meetings.
- Incorporate the use of contemplative practices in staff retreats and other annual trainings/professional development offered at your institution.
- Lookout for and encourage folks in your staff who are interested in developing and learning more about contemplative practices.
- Connect with colleagues in your department or at your campus who can support the use of these practices.
- There will be resistance. Accepting it will help you move past it and not take it personal.

REMEMBER THAT: “REHUMANIZING EDUCATION REQUIRES COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP AND HONEST CONVERSATIONS ABOUT VULNERABILITY AND DISCOMFORT ARE DISRUPTIVE” *BRENE BROWN, PH.D (2015). RISING STRONG*

WE CAN DO IT!!

QUESTIONS???

