Beyond the Books: Understanding Connections Between Teachers and Pupils

From the Perspective of the Student

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Abstract

Using a narrative inquiry approach from the perspective of the researcher's own experiences, this paper explores the connections that developed with several teachers that facilitated and impacted his own academic and cognitive, affective, and behavioural personal development. Viewed through the analytical lens of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, this narrative investigates the potential effectiveness of this model in understanding the lasting and life- altering changes that may be experienced by a student through his or her interactions with memorable teachers. Last, in educational environments today, character and value based curricula are experiencing a resurgence in popularity due to their theoretical applicability for helping students to optimally develop academically, socially, and culturally. With this in mind, a student-based perspective of memorable student–teacher connections may provide a framework for developing more effective means of effectively implementing a character development curriculum.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my wife and children for supporting me during this process. Your love, support, listening ear, patience, and willingness to not always have me present have made the completion of this project possible. I wish to thank my mother, who, though gone for many years, encouraged and nurtured in me a love and desire for learning, teaching and sharing.

I wish to also thank my advisors and sounding boards throughout this project. You have allowed me the flexibility to stay true to this project, kept me on track, pushed me hard when it was needed, and helped me to learn more about myself than I imagined possible.

I wish to honour those memorable teachers who, often without knowing it, made a lasting impression on my life. A word or gesture in a moment or during critical junctures made more of an impact than you may have ever realized. You have helped me realize that the modelling of moral and character development is often instinctive rather than program mandated. These memorable connections are not a work requirement, but rather a work of the heart.

Last, my heart is filled with unspeakable gratitude to the one teacher from whom the genesis of this work originated. You held this concept close until you found one you trusted, one with whom this work also resonated. For your trust and confidence in me, I am humbled and grateful. Your guidance, insights, and support direct me still. You are a master teacher: one who has shaped minds and impacted lives. You provided harmony

when I sang my song and accompanied me with rhythm when I took the lead. You were the teacher who appeared when the student was ready. I hope I have learned enough from you to be that teacher to some other student.

Thank you to all with whom I have connected beyond the books.

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Prologue

Have you ever had a teacher who has impacted you in a meaningful, lasting, and life-altering way? Have you experienced a teacher who impacted you, not just academically, but one who has made a memorable, life-changing connection with you "beyond the books"?

In simply asking others if they have ever experienced such a memorable teacher, the answer has been overwhelmingly affirmative. However, when asked to explain the how and why of these experiences and/or connections, words were often hard to come by. I was no different. I knew that my life had been impacted through these connections, but it seemed to be more of a "feeling" or "knowing" that in fact the encounter was something special and life changing. I did not know how these connections originated, but through this narrative research, I have explored the process of these relationships and have begun to comprehend how it worked for me.

I have had occasion to interact with several memorable teachers over the years; teachers who had touched and impacted my life in lasting ways. They had instructed me in character development before it had become either trendy or a political mandate. I have also spent several years as a teacher and have experienced this dynamic from the teacher's perspective, with students thanking me for the connections made "beyond the books". The gratitude shown to me from students for helping them become better people was more rewarding for me than their accomplishment on the academic portion of the curriculum. I am truly humbled by being both able and allowed to be an integral part of a

student's personal growth and potential transformation.

For me, the lifelong processes of teaching and learning are intertwined. Teaching, as a profession, is a portion of who I am. It has been both a career and a vocation. But the principles of teaching and learning are woven through all of the roles that I have played in my life. If I can learn to be a memorable teacher, then perhaps those same principles of connection are transferrable to my other life roles as a leader, counselor, coach, husband, and father. My hope then is that this exercise will allow me to develop into becoming a better career teacher, but more so, a better person. In essence, this is my character education.

I hope that this project will give to both students and teachers the clarity, words, and if need be, a vehicle for understanding their own memorable life-changing connections.

I believe the worth of this project, while initially for my benefit and growth, is that in some way it might touch the emotions and experiences of others who read this, in particular teachers, students, and policy makers. My story, though individual, may feel common to many and may hint of familiarity to you, the reader. In touching your experiences and emotions, this project contains the power to inspire and transform beyond me. It is a blessing that we are able to participate daily in such a powerful process within the walls of our classrooms (Palmer, 2007) and within the walls of our homes (Covey, 1997; Lee, 1997).

While this journey has been and remains for me deeply personal, I desire to share my story with you, which is the story of a learner and his memorable teachers. I hope that

you will come to understand the depth and power of transformation that is both inherent

and possible when we, both teachers and students, make powerful, meaningful, and

lasting connections "beyond the books."

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

According to the Ontario Ministry of Education's "Finding Common Ground" report (2008), "when students reflect upon their education, they frequently identify a teacher as the single most important factor in their success in life. Teachers play a key role in the character development of students" (p. 13). This Ministry of Education report (2008) points out that the most effective teachers are the ones who work with students to establish relationships based upon trust and respect, and encourage supportive learning. They are focussed upon the development of the student as a whole person rather than on solely academic work. It is the purpose of this narrative inquiry to further understand, from the perspective of the student, the foundational mechanisms underpinning the development of the student– teacher dynamics which foster the development of the student from a whole person perspective.

This study critically investigates memorable student–teacher connections by relating the narrative of my educational and character developmental experiences within the educational environment. The retelling and in-depth analysis of my own cognitive, affective, and behavioural transformation are shared and critically analyzed through the developmental lens and theoretical scaffold of Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Development (Erikson, 1959; R. Evans, 1995).

Research Focus

What is it that makes a teacher memorable from the perspective of the student? As I originally began to explore this germane question, I compiled the names of those teachers that I recalled and identified as having been memorable in my educational career. Remembering these names led to the spontaneous recollection of events and

memories from early and mid-childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood. Each recalled event corresponded with a specific teacher at a specific period of time in my life. These teachers seemed to coincide with experiences and struggles that I needed to overcome at those stages in my development. This general observation of my recalled experiences corresponds with research in the field of lifespan development. According to researchers Ateah, Kail, and Cavanaugh (2009), there are four factors that impact our personal development. The first three of these factors are composed of biological, psychological, and sociocultural forces. As these factors interact, they are powerfully impacted by the fourth factor: the timing or stage of life in which these factors are experienced by the individual.

This realization caused me to reflect upon a statement often heard and which is attributed to several sources (Bodhipaksa, 2013; Collins, 1886). When the student is ready, the teacher will appear. In hindsight, I noticed that these memorable teachers seemed to appear at critical junctions in my own life and development.

Purpose of the Study

This research is intended to investigate several interrelated queries. What is it about a teacher or teachers that impacted me in ways that fostered profound change in my life outside of the classroom dynamic? How do the interactions between student and teacher develop such that the student is able to describe a particular teacher as being a memorable influence in his or her personal development? Last, I investigate the potential for using a developmental theory such as the one proposed by Erikson (1959; R. Evans, 1995; Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981) as a scaffold for more effectively implementing the Ontario Ministry of Education's "Finding Common Ground" report

(2008) goal of developing the "student as a whole person through an ever growing depth of self awareness, reflection and understanding" (pp. 4–5).

Research Question

The questions that underpin my research are:

1. From the perspective of the student, what makes a memorable teacher?

2. How do meaningful, memorable, and life-changing connections develop between students and teachers?

If indeed my personal connections with memorable teachers can be theoretically understood through Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1959; R. Evans, 1995), this may well prove to be a pattern for understanding the connections that others have made with their own memorable teachers. In so doing, we may begin to understand the underlying mechanisms through which we, as teachers, may be more efficacious in the performance of our duties regarding the development of the student as a critical thinking, deep feeling, and compassionate member of our society.

Outline of the Remainder of the Document

In Chapter Two there will be a brief overview of Erikson's (1959) 8-stage model of psychosocial development followed by a more comprehensive breakdown of stages 1–6. These are the stages that correspond to the period of our lives when we are predominantly exposed to the K-12 educational environment. Chapter Two will then initiate attempts to define the term "memorable teacher," followed by looking at relevant literature regarding character education. The need to view this from the perspective of the student will be introduced.

Chapter Three will review the processes considered in selecting a narrative inquiry as the analytic methodology for this project. Details regarding data collection and analysis are discussed, followed by an outline of steps taken to increase the trustworthiness of the findings.

Chapter Four is an introductory chapter outlining the genesis for this research project. Within this and subsequent chapters, definitions, theories and insights will be blended into the fabric provided by experiential narratives. As part of Chapter Four, both Kelly's (1955) personal construct theory and Erikson's (1959) 8-stage developmental theory are presented as the lens through which the several vignettes are examined. Current teacher evaluation methods and scope of practice will conclude this chapter.

Each individual chapter from Chapters Five to Nine will present a personal experience or interaction with one of my memorable teachers. The experience is presented and then viewed and analyzed through the aforementioned theoretical lens. Each chapter will contain vignettes corresponding to the appropriate and sequential stages as defined in Erikson's (1959) theory.

Chapter Ten presents the summary of findings and addresses their implications for teachers regarding their ability to develop memorable relations with their students and the potential benefits and outcomes of such. The ability of such relationships to fulfil the powerful potential inherent in character education is also addressed.

The epilogue is the basis for Chapter Eleven. The epilogue contains a final narrative demonstrating the presence of each of Erikson's (1959) stages of psychosocial development and accompanying virtues as they pertain to the development of memorable life-changing relationships between a teacher and this student.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

An analysis of the research topic in question will involve a two-pronged approach. First, an evidence-based understanding of Erikson's epigenetic theory of psychosocial development, also known as "Identity and the Life Cycle" (Erikson, 1959) or "The Eight Stages of Man" (R. Evans, 1995) will be discussed. Second, the current literature regarding memorable teachers and character development will be reviewed.

Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development: The Eight Stages of Man

In order to understand my school-based experiences with my memorable teachers, I will outline the basic tenets and principles underlying Erikson's theory of character development. Erik Erikson (1959), a moral and character developmental theorist, developed a theory which is referred to as a psychosocial model. Simply stated, his lifespan development theory possesses two components; one of these components is psychological, while the second entails a social or environmental component (Ateah et al., 2009; R. Evans, 1995). Erikson posited that there are eight stages that we pass through in our progression from birth to grave. These stages of development are periods that are characterized by critical developmental tasks. These tasks can be cognitive, physical, emotional, or even spiritual in nature (Erikson, 1959; R. Evans, 1995).

Each phase is identified by dichotomous terminologies that represent the extreme poles of either successful or unsuccessful resolution of the crisis of this phase. The eight stages of development are defined as follows: (a) basic trust versus mistrust; (b) autonomy versus shame and doubt; (c) intitiative versus guilt; (d) industry versus inferiority; (e) identity versus identity diffusion; (f) intimacy versus isolation; (g) generativity versus stagnation; (h) integrity versus despair (Erikson, 1959).

In each of these stages there is a conflict, challenge, or crisis that arises which requires us to be able to develop the skills required to navigate this crisis or dilemma in a healthy, balanced, and well-adjusted manner. For example, in Stage 1 the basic issues surrounding the conflict or crisis inherent in this stage involve the development of trust versus mistrust (Chapman, 2012; Erikson, 1959; R. Evans, 1995). According to Erikson's theory, success or failure in this stage is not based upon whether we learn to trust or mistrust. Rather, the successful resolution of the crisis of the stage is defined by learning to balance between our internal processes and our exposure to and experiences interacting with our social environment (Erikson, 1959; R. Evans, 1995). We strive to learn to balance the interactions between our internal beliefs, skills, abilities and knowledge with the demands of our external social environment (Chapman, 2012; R. Evans, 1995).

Overview of Stages 1–6

According to the theory of psychosocial development, Erikson (1959) notes that the influence of the immediate family on the psychosocial development of a child is most profound from birth until around the ages of 4 to 6 (Alegre, 2012; Bronfenbrenner, nd.; Brooks, 1994; Cook-Grueter, 1985; Covey, 1990; Drexler, 2012; Eyre, 2003). Within the initial stage, from birth until sometime around the age of 2, the child optimally moves through the development of trust and hope through having his or her basic needs being attended to in a nurturing and safe family environment (Ateah et al., 2009; R. Evans, 1995; Maccoby, 1992; Mayes, 2013). If the child's needs are generally met during this developmental period, the child learns to be able to trust that his or her immediate environment will provide for his or her needs emotionally and physically (Chapman, 2012; R. Evans, 1995). Erikson posited that such balanced development will lead to the

development of the virtue of hope (Chapman, 2012). Being able to trust one's

environment fosters the feeling of hope within the individual regarding his or her ability

to continue their development (R. Evans, 1995).

If, however, in this initial stage of development, the child does not develop this

sense of trust and hope, outcomes such as fear, anxiety, and suspicion may begin to

develop. The more maladjusted the experience of the child, the more extreme the

emotional and behavioural manifestations will be from the child (Chapman, 2012;

Mayes, 2013; Nolen-Hoeksma, Girgus & Selligman, 1986). Thus extreme manifestations

might include symptoms of sensory distortion and emotional and physical withdrawal

from their environment (R. Evans, 1995). In such cases of unsuccessful crisis resolution,

a psychosocial foundation has now been set for an ensuing struggle as the next

developmental crisis or challenge presents itself (Chapman, 2012; Cicchetti, 2011; R.

Evans, 1995; Saxena & Aggarwall, 2010).

The second stage of child development, often seen around the ages of 2–3, is

coined by Erikson autonomy versus shame and doubt. During this stage children are

presented with situations dealing with the challenges of manifesting personal control

through learning "right and wrong" (Ateah et al., 2009; R. Evans, 1995). This period is

when children attempt to exert physical control over their environment. Associated with

this is a corresponding development of a sense of independence. This developmental

period correlates to what is affectionately known by many as the "terrible twos." As the

child develops a balance between success and failure, he or she develops a corresponding

sense of independence, autonomy, and self-confidence. Erikson (1959) proposes that the

successful resolution of the conflict or crisis in this stage leads to the virtue development of personal will and determination (Ateah et al., 2009; Chapman, 2012; R. Evans, 1995).

In this second stage, an inability to manage this conflict can lead to a sense of shame and personal doubt in one's abilities, competencies, and self-worth. Abilities relating to self-control may also be impacted, leading to manifestations of impulsivity and compulsive behaviours (Chapman, 2012; R. Evans, 1995). As with all of these epigenetic stages, a failure to resolve the crisis of autonomy versus shame and doubt will set the stage for struggles within the subsequent stages of development (Ateah et al., 2009; Chapman, 2012).

At this juncture, bridging stages 2 and 3 of the theory, the influences in the child's life begin to expand from the parental and immediate family connections that have formed the primary interactions for the child thus far (R. Evans, 1995). The social circle of influence upon the child begins to expand through exposure to a wider circle of friends, family, and educators (Baltaci & Demir, 2012; Valiente, Swanson & Lemery-Chalfant, 2012). Each of these new eternal influences is now part of the learning experience of the young child, increasing the complexity of learning to navigate this crisis stage successfully (Denham, Bassett & Kinsser, 2012; Drexler, 2012; Erikson, 1959; R. Evans, 1995).

In Stage 3, children are faced with dilemmas with outcomes ranging between initiative and guilt (Ateah et al., 2009; Chapman, 2012; Erikson, 1959). In this stage of development, children experiment with the concept of assertion of one's personal power in attempts to manipulate the environment in which they find themselves. Their activities tend to be more goal oriented and outcome focussed (R. Evans, 1995). If the child exerts

too much control over the environment, he or she may experience disapproval for his or her efforts. As such, he or she may then experience guilt from the outcomes of his or her efforts (Erikson, 1959). Conversely, when the child is able to successfully achieve his or her goal directed behaviour through exerting his or her initiative, he or she develops a swelling sense of purpose. The successful outcome of developing balance between a sense of initiative and guilt is the manifestation of both purpose and courage. As a child develops initiative, he or she is able to move forward in goal-directed behaviour with a sense of clarity and purpose through the exertion of his or her will.

Stage 4 of Erikson's (1959) theory surrounds issues of industry versus inferiority. These are generally the early school years, covering the ages from 4–6 years. School creates new learning experiences for the child within the spheres of social development and academic achievement. In classrooms, children are exposed more regularly to their tasks and efforts being graded, which allows the children to begin to understand both their own productivity as well as their standing within the group setting.

Furthermore, children in this age group are also beginning to learn cultural skills and norms. Learning the successful navigation of social skills, strategies, and developing a sense of emotional regulation are key components of this developmental stage. Overall, successful navigation of this stage encourages feelings of competence and self-efficacy, whereas failure leads to feelings of inferiority in comparison to standards and rules within this environment (Erikson, 1959)

Stage 5 generally covers the period of adolescence. Here the crisis requires developing a sense of self and identity along with personal views, values, and attitudes. Successful completion of this stage leads to a sense of being true to one's self based upon

learning to know one's self. A failure to navigate this period of crisis leads to a weak sense of self as well as a hindered development of personal identity and ego (Erikson, 1959). Intervention in this stage of development is generally considered an effective remedial period for the rectifying of previous stages of development not managed successfully (W. Evans, Marsh & Weigel, 2009; Eyre, 2003; McCullough, Ashbridge & Pegg, 1994; Nizielski, Hallum, Lopes & Shetz, 2012). For Erikson (1959), this was the most crucial stage of the eight stages of the development of man. Adolescence serves as a transformative bridge between the past and the future, through both a personal and a societal perspective (R. Evans, 1995).

For the purpose of this work, which is the investigation of memorable connections or relationships between students and teachers, I will conclude this brief overview of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development with the sixth stage, that of young adulthood. This period is generally defined as covering the ages from 18 until 40. The crisis in this stage is learning to develop meaningful and intimate relationships. The earlier stages of development seem to envelop the concept of working through issues internally, then externally. This stage of development pertains to the development of interpersonal relationships. Successful navigation of this stage leads to strong, meaningful relationships. This intimacy is not to be defined in shallow physical terms. Rather these relationships manifest a depth and maturity based upon mutual sacrifice, meaningful communication, and respect (R. Evans, 1995). This is an appropriate place to conclude our theoretical stage review since this is perhaps the type of culminating relationship that may be illuminated through the examination of student–teacher connections made "beyond the books."

The Strengths of an Epigenetic Lifespan Model

Erikson (1959) posited that the conflicts contained in the individual stages of development actually serve a catalytic purpose. As we successfully develop the abilities to balance and resolve our inner dilemmas with our external circumstances, we are able to develop virtues or characteristics that will serve as building blocks used in overcoming later stage challenges. These successes lead to further and more complex social and emotional development and virtue attainment (Erikson, 1959). The mastery of each sequential virtue or skill is then seen as a tool that can be called upon in later situations to help navigate our personal development in an optimal fashion (Ateah et al., 2009; R. Evans; 1995). The ability to successfully navigate the stage leads to the development of a positive psychosocial virtue, or what Erikson referred to as "a healthy personality that actively masters his environment, develops a unity of personality through perceiving the world and himself correctly" (p. 51).

Conversely, a dysfunction within each or any stage, meaning an inability to navigate the psychoemotional crisis towards the development of a healthy personality, may well lead to a maladjustment corresponding to the particular stage or crisis being experienced. The inability to resolve this stage crisis effectively manifests along a continuum of maladaptive behaviours which first manifest in early childhood and, if not resolved, may well persist into behavioural patterns manifest in adulthood (Erikson, 1959).

Erikson's theory posited that within each stage of development, there are opportunities to hone the skills and values needed in order to succeed at the following stage of development. These varied developmental stages possess opportunities for the

person to develop and manifest the ability to balance psychological, emotional, and social skills in an appropriate manner leading to the successful resolution of the crisis at hand (Ateah et al., 2009; Benjafield, 1997; Bjorkland & Blasi, 2012; Chapman, 2012; R. Evans, 1995) as well as setting foundational footings for subsequent stages (Erikson, 1959).

Successful resolution within each stage creates the building blocks that lead to further developmental growth for the individual. A dysfunction within each or any stage, meaning an inability to navigate the psychoemotional crisis, may well lead to a maladjustment corresponding to the particular stage or crisis being experienced. Thus in order to understand the current stage of development, the previous stage experiences of the individual should be taken into account and consideration (Ateah et al., 2009; Chapman, 2012; Rosenthal et al., 1981).

This stage-based building block model of development seems well suited to the purposes of this narrative for several reasons. First, it correlates with natural law. Nothing is born fully developed, but rather it must grow step by step, principle by principle, and confidence by confidence until it has matured and ultimately unfolds through epigenetic stages of development. The human being is not exempt from the laws of the natural world, but rather exemplifies them (Covey, 1990; Lee, 1997). Thus it makes sense to me that we collectively and individually go through this step-by-step developmental process until such time as our growth has optimally manifested.

Second, I have had experience with others where, in their lives, the successful resolution of those stages of crisis and subsequent virtue development seem to be correlated. Conversely, and in harmony with the findings of Erikson (1959), I have also

experienced many who have demonstrated a maladaptive or immature level of virtue development, seemingly stuck in a particular style of crisis which consistently manifests in their lives. As such, it is difficult for them to progress through the later stages of the development of a healthy personality until the earlier crisis has been resolved.

Third, while I have helped others through some negative memorable experiences in their lives, I have yet to fully apply this developmental theory to certain aspects of my own development. In applying these observations to my own course of development it would be interesting to note if there appear to be corollary connections between when those memorable teachers appeared in my life and what crisis, if any, was simultaneously occurring. Did the areas in which I struggled, be it emotionally, socially, cognitively, or spiritually, coincide with the struggles and crises presented in Erikson's theory? Did these mentors appear and become memorable because my need at that time was manifest in some manner unbeknownst to me? I was eager to discover which came first: the memorable teacher or the student with a need? Can there be a memorable teacher without there being a need from a student or vice versa? Or do the teacher and student stand at the ready waiting for fate and circumstance to bring them together to meet needs that live on in both?

Summary: Memorable Teachers and Character Development in Education

Being recognized as an excellent or exceptional teacher is often different from being recognized as a memorable teacher. For the purposes of this project, an excellent teacher will be defined as one who is recognized for his or her skills and abilities within the classroom. The memorable teachers and their dynamics with his or her students are the ones where there has been a lasting impact in the lives of the students as a result of

the interaction between teacher and student (M. Kompf, 2013, personal communication). As this differentiation is clarified, it becomes easier to comprehend the need for both the evaluation of a) these memorable connections from the perspective of the student and b) understanding the connection between being a memorable teacher and the effective implementation of character education.

There is an abundance of research investigating what makes a good or effective teacher from the perspective of teachers or administration (Kompf, 2005; McCarter, 2001; Palmer, 2007; Shaffer, 2001; Vallance, 2000; Walters, 2001). Frequently, nominations of exceptional teaching come from subjective and vague parameters from the peers or administration overseeing such teachers (Vallance, 2000). Issues such as classroom management, techniques of instruction, lesson planning and preparation, and developing a reputation as one who "goes above and beyond" are often areas in which teacher excellence is measured (Shaffer, 2001; Stephenson, 2001; Walters, 2001). Usually the research focuses upon a dynamic of down-flowing power as perceived through the perspective of the teacher and considers success from the eyes of the academic institution rather than whether the needs of the student have been met (Barton, 2001; Kohn, 2004; Kromrey & Chang, 2011).

Through the Eyes of the Child

There is limited research into the perceptions of students exploring their experiences with the education system. Furthermore, there was a paucity of research specifically investigating the students' perceptions of the interpersonal dynamics with the teachers within the educational environment and its impact on their personal development outside of the classroom (Denicolo & Pope, 1990). The rare case where the students'

perceptions were considered is within the realm of research into juvenile delinquency and studies of at-risk youth (Jenkins, 1995; McCord, Tremblay, Vitaro & Desmarais-Gervais, 1994; Nizielski et al., 2012). In fact, if a teacher has difficulty with a particular student, it is an assumption by the education system that the student is always at fault, somehow defective, unprepared, or just unwilling to care or to learn (Palmer, 2007). Thus the research has tended to focus predominantly upon the negative components of the struggling student. (Cicchetti, 2011; Evans et al., 2009).

While the students' perception of what makes an excellent teacher is rarely examined, their feelings about life-changing, memorable teachers are even rarer to find. Having teachers and principals write about and nominate excellent teachers according to their own biases specifically addresses the teacher's and administration's perspective of the efficacy of the teacher specifically and the educational environment more generally (Vallance, 2000). But in order to understand what makes a teacher *memorable* from the perspective of the student, such analysis cannot come from administrative top down, or from mutually congratulatory peers (Birjandi & Bagherkazemi, 2010; Covey, 1990; Dinkleman, 2000; Quarles & Cole; 2011; Stephenson, 2001; Vallance, 2000). In order to more fully understand this complex and potentially transformative dynamic between teacher and student, the perceptions of the students should be of primary import. In doing so, we can come to better understand the impact that a teacher can have upon the lives of students.

Character Education

According to the Ontario government-based news release (Ministry of Education, 2008), educational reform through character development curricula is designed to help

students to learn, feel, and act with more compassion and wisdom. Character education is designed to enable students to become better citizens individually and collectively. The Ministry of Education (2008) further set about laying out generic principles upon which programs and curriculum could be developed and implemented. According to these documents, the key element is the ability for the students to mirror or model exceptional character and principled behaviour that they see modelled by the teachers and administrators in the school environment. As students see and then begin to model these behaviours, they will proactively begin to exhibit the behaviours that are on display before them at school (Alegre, 2012; Brooks, 1994; Castelloe, 2013; Cavazotte, Moreno & Hickman, 2012; Covey, 1997; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Denicolo & Pope, 1990; Drexler, 2012; Lee, 1997, Maccoby, 1992; Nolen-Hoeksma et al., 1986; Saxena & Aggarwal, 2010).

It is requisite then for the teacher to not only be skilled in the technical or academic component but also to have him/herself developed as a whole, deeply thinking, and feeling, productive member of our society. It is implied, but not clearly stated, that through making a connection with a teacher in whom character or moral development is manifest, a student has the potential to develop past the point of parroting the teacher's behaviour to achieve a more deeply felt and understood conscientious choice of behaviour (Denham et al., 2012; Dinkleman, 2000; Dweck & Elliott, 1988).

The onus for this development does not rest solely upon the teachers. The Ministry of Education document (2008) clearly defines the need for the students to be a proactive part of the process. They must become involved and interactive in more than a "Rah Rah" type of way. Their interaction with the school environment and those who

deliver the educational product must become deep and meaningful to the students themselves. In doing so, these deep connections will reinforce lessons learned and increase the desire to engage in the process of learning, whether their motivation be intrinsic, extrinsic, or a combination of the two (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Godin, 2012).

The idea of a character development or a value-based curriculum is not new. Attempts to understand and develop character extend into the earliest history of civilization (Arthur, 2003; Vessels & Huitt, 2005; Watts, 1979). It may well be said that character education is as old as education itself. Indeed, the academic and philosophical schools of ancient Greece mirror the focus and training of Eastern religious and spiritual schools and sects (Madsen, 1990; Vessels & Huitt, 2005; Watts, 1975). The value and principle directed teachings of Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates were similar in principle to the teachings of Confucious and Lao Tsu (Benjafield, 1997; Vessels & Huitt, 2005; Watts, 1979). While each of these sages differed on individual concepts and tenets, they all sought to uncover truth dealing with the ideal methodology through which a person may optimally develop both internally and in his or her external interactions with his or her environment (Arthur, 2003; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1997; Dreher, 1990; Madsen, 1990; Watts, 1975, 1979).

Character development in education can more recently trace its roots to the development of theories of psychology. Different schools of psychological thought emerged, each proposing its own set of perspectives and paradigms through which human development could be investigated and thereby understood (Benjafield, 1997; Vessels & Huitt, 2005). These schools varied from their early developmental ancestors in that the psychologists tried to segregate moral development from its earlier spiritual and often

times religious-based components (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Ministry of Education, 2008).

As introductory and history of psychology textbooks illuminate, our educational policies and directives owe a great debt of gratitude to many of these early psychologists whose works and insights have propagated a stream of researchers advancing the concepts and theories of these early pioneers (Ateah et al, 2009; Benjafield, 1997). Our understanding of cognitive development within humans has been derived from the early work of Piaget (Huitt & Hummel, 2003). Similarly, for our understanding of social and conditioned learning theories, we are indebted to Bandura and Skinner (Ateah et al, 2009; Benjafield, 1997). But the realm of character and moral development from a developmental lifespan perspective is predominated by the research of Erikson (Ateah et al, 2009; Bjorklund & Blasi, 2012; Chapman, 2012; Cherry, n.d.; R. Evans, 1995). Erikson (1959) stated clearly that the development of a child requires a lengthy period of time so that "parents and schools may have time to accept the child's personality in trust and to help it to be disciplined and human in the best sense known to us" (p. 100). Erikson's view on child and adolescent development resonates in harmony with the explicitly stated principles of character education.

The seeds of such a meaningful development in the lives of students are sown through teaching interactions on the front lines, between teachers and their students (Palmer, 2007). As teachers and students interact within these parameters of holistic student development (Barton, 2001; Wilson, 2001), memorable connections are often made that extend beyond the time and space of the immediacy of the classroom (McCarter, 2001; Palmer, 2007; Shaffer, 2001; Walters, 2001; Werner, 1989). Personal

transformation is potentially generated from sparks that are ignited within dynamic circles of human interaction (Covey, 1990). Changes spring from the heart, which can lead to a reformation of our thoughts and our outward actions (Covey, 1997; Jacobs, Kemp & Mitchell, 2008; Lee, 1997). To students, the teachers with whom life-changing and altering connections are made are deemed as exceptional or memorable (Palmer, 2007). These are the teachers who have made a lasting impact on one's development and growth (Stephenson, 2001; Vallance, 2000).

Few studies, if any, have really delved into the realm of investigating what the students think of their experiences in the education system in general. Even more specifically, how do they perceive their teachers and the roles they play in impacting the lives of their students? If character development education is student centered and depends on their ability to have models and mentors in said environment, it would indeed seem both logical and expedient to determine from the perspective of the consumer whether or not his or her needs are being met.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

It is the stated goal of this research to investigate student-teacher dynamics from the perspective of the student. The focus herein is to understand in depth how these relationships develop and are able to impact the development of the individual student beyond the classroom. This research topic required a methodology that would facilitate a depth of understanding rather than a superficial overview of comprehension (Creswell, 2009; Denzin, 1989). As such, in this chapter I will further outline the reasons for the selection of narrative inquiry as the methodology to best address this research problem (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Dinkleman, 2000; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Last, this chapter will outline and describe the methods used to collect and interpret the data as well as those steps taken to increase the trustworthiness of the findings while protecting the identities of those involved in the interactions described (Cresswell, 2009).

Research Design: A Quantitative or Qualitative Approach?

Currently, significant quantitative research has examined the teacher/ student dynamic (Alegre & Benson, 2010; Denham et al., 2010; Prokop, 2013; Rosenthal et al., 1981; United States Government Department of Education, 2013). One can learn many important general lessons from quantitative analysis, and questionnaires and surveys are quick and economical measures used to gather general information. Through analysis and replication, such research allows for the postulation and identification of trends that can be extrapolated into general theories and statistically placed within a bell curve to determine a consensus of normal (Creswell, 2009; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

While we can learn general theories about teaching techniques, classroom management, emotional regulation of the students, and other related topics through

quantitative means (Barret & Salovey, 2002; Gross & John, 2002; Hosotani & Matsumura, 2012; Ignat & Clipa, 2012), our personal stories within the realm of education are often rich and highly individualized experiences whose complex essence would be difficult to capture through a questionnaire or survey. While quantitative research possesses strengths, it appears that such an approach would lack the substantive analysis requisite for illuminating the depth of impact that teachers can impress upon the individual lives of students.

A form of analysis that enlightens on an individual level would provide more insight into our understanding of these life-changing interactions between students and their memorable teachers. In order to understand the perception of the teaching experience from the perspective of the students, it would seem judicious to involve them as deeply as possible in the research process (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Thus a qualitative form of research would help us to best understand the individual's experience and its personal impact (Creswell, 2009, Polkinghorne, 2007).

As individuals, we are a culmination of our personal experiences. Our lives are a continuous cycle of experiential interactions with others, our environment, and ourselves (Cook-Grueter, 1985; Covey, 1990; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, R. Evans, 1995; Eyre, 2003; Lee, 1997; Watts, 1975; Werner, 1989). All of these experiences are brought together through a complicated process of perception, reflection, and interpretation through which these experiences take on meaning and importance for us (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Denham et al., 2012; Ebrahimi & Moafian 2012; Kelly, 1955; Saxena & Aggarwal, 2010). Our personal interpretations of past circumstances through the process of "reconstructing life's past events towards future anticipations" (Kompf & Simmons, in

press) is a highly individualized and "developed core constructs that remain relatively stable over time" (Kelly, 1955).   There is a great deal of significance in the small degree of differences between each individual person (Covey, 1997; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Lee, 1997; Polkinghorne, 2007; Trahar, 2009).

In order to investigate the personal impact of a teacher on an individual, a narrative approach, specifically looking at the student's "individual story" or "biography" is the best method to convey the impact that teacher had on the student (Trahar, 2009; Vickers, 2002). This student's personal story will perhaps enable the reader to connect and more deeply understand the issue being investigated. Some researchers have focused on using a narrative approach as a method of inquiry, especially when investigating matters in the educational realm (Carter, 1993; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Creswell, 2009; Gudmundsdottir, 1997, 2001; Spry, 2001). Narrative research provides personal stories about individuals dealing with specific issues. These stories are a means of conveying a sequence of events that is significant for both the narrator and his or her audience. They not only introduce us to individualized patterns of thought and feeling, but also help both the teller and the listener of the story to make sense of themselves and others (Adams, 2008; Bochner, 2007; Spry, 2001). These stories are complex and meaningful phenomena that demonstrate morals and ethics. Such research is the study of how people experience the world, and narrative researchers collect these stories and convey these experiences through the written word (Gudmundsdottir, 2001; Spry, 2001; Vickers, 2002).

In my own casual conversations with family and friends, it has been easy to get people to talk about their experiences in the education system in general and about

teachers specifically. Most people are be able to tell you of a memorable teacher that they had, whether that experience was for ill or for good. They are further able to relate how that interaction impacted some portion of their life (Carter, 1993; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Denzin, 1989; McIlveen, 2008). Those stories all possess deep meaning to the individuals who experienced those specific interactions (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Kelly, 1955; McIlveen, 2008; Polkinghorne, 1988).

However, for the purposes of this work, the story best told is the one best known (H. Brown, personal communication, 2013; M. Kompf, personal communication, 2013). That would be my own. My life has revolved around education and learning from both a teacher and a student perspective. I have made connections with several memorable teachers who have shaped my life both inside and outside of the classroom. As well, I experienced character education before it was a government-mandated policy (Bradden, 2013; Can-West News Service, 2006; District School Board of Niagara; 2013; Ministry of Education, 2006, 2008). Through the lens of a personal narrative inquiry, I have investigated my own story to determine the meaning, perception, and mechanisms underpinning the foundational dynamics of the connections that I made with these memorable teachers which promoted significant life lessons and change for me (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Erikson, 1959; Reiff; 2001; Shaffer, 2001; Stephenson, 2001). The impact of these life-changing experiences has reached beyond the walls of a classroom and beyond the books.

Research Participants

In the process of presenting this personal narrative I will, as the primary participant, be retelling my own experiences. In presenting this narrative inquiry, I will be

mentioning my interactions with others as they have been the catalyst behind the interactions and vignettes to be presented. However, for purposes of protection of their identity, names and identifying details will be deemphasized. Such efforts will adjust the focus onto analyzing the experiences presented and recalled by myself as primary research participant.

Data Collection

The primary source of data is journal notes and interview transcripts where the researcher served as both interviewer and interviewee. This narrative research was an organic process that evolved over time and several meetings between me and my academic advisor. Originally this project began as intellectual doodling in the office of my original Master of Education exit project advisor. Away from the constraints of curriculum in the formal setting of a classroom, his office became a setting in which intellectual freedom was not only achieved but encouraged. Here I was challenged to think critically, think deeply, and act wisely (Ministry of Education, 2008). In several conversations over a number of weeks, he would challenge me intellectually and emotionally. He would help me to both recall and to comprehend the meaning behind my recalled memorable teacher experiences that our catalytic conversations had sprung to my recollection. As such, I was the one being interviewed.

Each of these sessions with this teacher would stimulate new directions for me to investigate. Our conversations dealt with a personally recalled encounter with one of my memorable teachers. Then we would discuss this experience through the lens of both Erikson's theory of psychosocial development theory (1959) and Kelly's personal construct theory (1955). He would question me in ways that would both encourage and

allow me to form and express thoughts and memories long hidden. Then he would close

our sessions with a question or assignment relative to the topic of connections between

students and their memorable teachers. By fulfilling these assignments, combined with

personal sessions of "recollection, reflexivity and reconstruction" (Kompf & Simmons, in

press), this led to an accumulation of research field notes (Cresswell, 2009). After the

successful completion of the assigned task we would meet again, discuss what was

learned, and then investigate a newly recalled teacher/ student interaction.

After this process had gone on for a few months, my advisor became gravely ill.

Due to his health restrictions, his office space at the university was no longer accessible.

At this point, our conversations took place in his place of intellectual solitude. I was

invited into his sacred domain, simply known as the barn. Here, away from the

academically imposed role of advisor, he became mentor. Rather than just serving as

instructor and academic advisor, a powerful connection that had been developing for

months was culminated in our final conversation. In the heart of those things most valued

by him I was allowed to share, connect, and learn on an emotional, intellectual, and

spiritual level. These final conversations will serve as the conclusive prologue to our

interactive learning and to our connection beyond the books.

Data Analysis

The vignettes experienced and retold are presented chronologically and then

superimposed and analyzed according to the various epigenetic stages of Erikson's theory

of psychosocial development (1959). Like opening a puzzle and dumping the pieces on

the table, there was a period and process of sorting those collections of memories which

were my puzzle pieces. The pieces needed to be turned face up so that I could see the

images of what I was trying to assemble. Then I needed to collect border pieces to create

a frame into which the picture pieces could later be placed. The framing of my narrative

research puzzle needed to occur in order to establish structure, trustworthiness, direction,

and purpose to this narrative. A framework needed to be established to understand where

this project could lead and what it could mean. Erikson's theory provided that framework

for the puzzle.

Similarities between the retold experience and the corresponding stage of

development become readily apparent. These data are not to be correlated to theory in a

traditional quantitative fashion. Rather the data (in this case the personal narratives

shared) have been analyzed and presented in a manner that will hopefully be both

relevant and salient professionally and personally to the reader.

Trustworthiness

Creswell (2009) posits that there are several strategies that researchers may

implement in order to increase the accuracy of their findings. One of these strategies used

herein is the use of rich, vivid descriptions that may allow the reader to relate to the

narrative through a feeling of sharing the experience. Descriptions of conversations,

emotions felt, body language observed and identified, as well as other relevant details

may assist in situating the reader, within a personal state where they may personally

discover a connection to their own experience.

Creswell (2009) points out that the trustworthiness of qualitative data can be

further strengthened when considering the length of time spent in the field studying such

phenomena. As this work is a narrative recollection of my experiences, they are a

reflection of my life lived. They cover a time period from early childhood to current and

relatively recent experiences. This period, which covers close to 50 years, has involved intermittent periods of self-reflection and personal growth and development involving the impact of these scenarios in my life. The period of time officially recalling, recording, and analyzing these experiences through Erikson's (1959) developmental lens has occurred over a shorter but much more focussed and intensive period of time.

A third triangulating strategy for strengthening qualitative research trustworthiness (Creswell, 2009) involves the recognition and acknowledgement of researcher bias. As these are my stories, there is no doubt that my perception of accounts, experiences, interactions, and conversations from years past are subject to the influences of time, self-serving purposes and personal perceptual interpretations. Recognition of such biases can be seen as a strength of qualitative research, especially when combined with other strategies to increase the trustworthiness of the work. On their own, such biases can also be seen as a limitation. In order to further overcome this potential limitation and as such increase the validity of the findings, I frequently checked my interpretations of the data through conversations held with my original and then current research advisor as well as my second reader for this project.

Limitations

As I share and analyze my narrative and ground it in Erikson's theory of development, there are issues of concern to be addressed and become aware of. George Kelly (1955), the developer of personal construct theory (PCT), proposes that our personal experiences are all remembered because each holds great personal significance to the individual (Burger, 2004). Thus our memories, to a degree, are self-serving and hold the potential for bias to arise in the analysis of the narrative. According to Kelly

(1955), the meanings of our personal experiences are understood in the way that we have constructed and relived those specific experiences (Boerer, 2006; Burger, 2004; Kenny, 1984). Kelly posited that the fundamental principle underlying PCT recognizes that "a person's processes are psychologically channelized by the way in which he anticipated events (p. 46)." Thus PCT proposes that it is my own perception of those events, both as they happened at that original time as well as my current perspective of the impact of these events in the present, that could determine the future impact of these events in shaping my beliefs about myself, my abilities, and my own self-concept (Kelly, 1955).

It is hard to remember exactly what was said in a conversation many years ago. But as a person holds to a story, it is shaped according to the perceptions and needs that are served by the remembering of specific events (Burger, 2004; Kelly, 1955). While I am sure that conversations, experiences, and details happened the way that I tell the story, I must also accept that the story, as retold, serves an intrinsic purpose. Kelly (1955) states that part of this intrinsic purpose, our current perceptions of the past experiences serve to facilitate the framing, anticipation, and comprehension of future experience. Such is the inexact nature of qualitative data. Through the lens of PCT, whether or not the actual conversations recalled are completely accurate matters less than understanding why I have remembered these experiences the way that I have and the potential for where the perceptions of such will ultimately take me (Kompf, 2005; Kompf & Simmons, in press; Kelly, 1955).

The events and the recollection of them have an impact past, present, and future (Boerer, 2006; Burger, 2004; Kenny, 1984), allowing us to understand the development of an individual through a personally evolutionary perspective, rather than in and through

"the flicker of passing moments" (Kelly, 1955, p. 3). How did I perceive the events, both positive and negative at the time they occurred? How have those impressions changed or been reinforced over the passage of chronological and psychological time? Where will those perceptions take me from this point forward (Kompf, 2005)? This personal construct theory seems to be a combination of reflection and anticipation—an ability to analyze and if needed reframe the past in order to serve as a catalyst moving forward (Boerer, 2006; Burger, 2004; Kenny, 1984).

While this narrative methodology does not possess the surgical exactness of specific numbers, correlates, and analysis scores associated with quantitative data, the meaning and impact of these events in my life are no less real. As character education is about the development of the whole person, such development and personal growth are easily seen as a subjective process. If character development is about helping the student to "feel more deeply, think more critically and act more responsibly" (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 4), if the goal for the student is to "increase the depth of self awareness, reflection and self understanding" (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 5), then the rich detail and subtle complexities unearthed through narrative research best match the process of individualized growth and development (Carter, 1993; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Denzin, 1989; Godin, 2012; Gudmundsdottir, 1997, 2001). It is the subjective nature of the experience that will help us to understand how connections are made beyond the books in a way that will facilitate implementing character development curriculum in a meaningful way between engaged student and memorable teacher (Palmer, 2007; Stephenson, 2001).

Ethical Considerations

In the process of presenting this personal narrative I will be sharing my memories of interactions with several teachers and other mentors with whom I interacted at various stages of my life. In order to protect the identities of those who are a part of my story, there will be no names mentioned. They will be referred to in general and vague terms. This will be done for two reasons. First, some of the interactions that I have had with teachers may be deemed to have been negative. I do not wish anyone to be able to identify him/herself and feel as if he/she had been a negative influence in my life. On the contrary, through the self-reflective process of reframing, I have come to understand that each story presented has been a positive experience fostering my learning and personal growth; hence its inclusion in this work.

Second, I believe that most of my memorable teachers would be embarrassed at receiving any type of recognition or public accolades for their work with me. Their connections were an outreach of who and what they were as teachers and humans. They would likely share the opinion of many teachers who, upon receiving recognition as an excellent teacher, simply state that they did nothing extraordinary (Vallance, 2000). They likely believe that they only did what good teachers do.

An effort has been made to make sure that details of schools, locations, and any other potentially identifying features have been eliminated while maintaining enough description of the interactions to allow the reader to be involved in a shared experience. It is an underlying belief of this author that while these are my stories that occurred at my schools with my teachers, they can be understood to have occurred at any school in any community with other teachers. The focus of this research is not to be so much upon the

specific superficial details pertaining to the individual involved in the experience retold.

Rather, the focus of this work is designed to be on the principles woven through the

experiences presented (Erikson, 1955; Evans, 1995).

CHAPTER FOUR: THE GENESIS OF MY STORY

I had been a late enrollee in the fall semester and needed to meet with my professor in order to see what I had missed in the first class, discover the basic course requirements, and learn expectations of both the course and the professor. Personally, I wanted to get a feel for how far in over my head I really was after a 10 year sabbatical away from graduate studies.

My professor and I sat and chatted, making introductions and small talk. We found commonalities in music, which connection deepened as we mutually shared appreciation of some artists in general (thank you Monte) and guitars specifically (Alvarez and Martin, kudos to you as well). He, being a collector of guitars, offered that perhaps someday he would have me come by his "barn" to see his prized collection. Such an offer of trust on his part to share with me something he so prized was to me a meaningful gesture of trust. This initial offering of trust towards me allowed me to feel more comfortable in our burgeoning relationship and, if comfortable in doing so, extend my trust back to him. Quid pro quo: Giving one thing in exchange for another. Reciprocation: A mutual giving and receiving which forms the basis of meaningful cooperative relationships (Abdulkadiroglu & Bagwell, 2010). He was willing to give and to share. Now it was my turn to decide if I would reciprocate by placing my trust in him.

What had begun as a simple meeting about the class syllabus had indeed transformed quickly into something more . . . much more. I understood at that moment what Parker Palmer (2007) meant in his book *The Courage to Teach*, when he recalled a professor who, for him, "opened the life of his mind and gave voice to the gift of thought" (p. 23). I felt that this relationship with this professor was going to be something

special. Indeed, something memorable. But as I have learned in life, nothing of value comes without a cost.

Peering over his glasses and a pile of papers stacked nearly as high as he, where one stack was similarly leaning slightly to one side, he sat with one eyebrow raised. I knew in my gut the question my professor was about to ask. I knew because it was a question that I had asked myself repeatedly. I knew it because I recognized my internal feeling at that moment . . . a feeling born from having wrestled this question repeatedly until I had at least a tentative grip upon the best answer I could formulate myself.

So, why are you here?

The question was asked with arms gesturing to the sides, circling around as if encompassing everything around us. My interpretation of his gestures was that he was referring here to the here and now of the university in general.

And if you can, why are you HERE?

Now the arms pointed to the two of us in his office. His question, at least at that moment in time, was not expected, yet not totally unexpected either.

Returning to University: Why Am I Here and Where Am I Going?

There I sat, a mature (chronologically at least) man in my 50's, having seen and experienced much, yet still feeling as if I was searching for more. Years had passed since I had last walked these halls of academia, and I had often wondered why I had returned at this advanced crossroads in my life.

Some have posited that adults return to university in order to position themselves for economic gain through updating career credentials until some other career opportunity comes along (Palazi & Bower, 2006; Parks, Evans & Getch, 2013). Having

been a victim of corporate downsizing and my livelihood cut short without notice, I found myself without the stabilizing crutch of daily routine. Most men my age were out conquering their corner of the business world or reinventing themselves to become more marketable (Palazi & Bower, 2006). Such did not seem to be a motivational factor for me in my return.

Others perhaps seek to find something, anything to hold at bay inevitable boredom of retirement. They spend their time dreading and thus denying the inevitable quiet moments of reflection that accompanies the changes that come with this period of life (Rivers, 2009). Having spent so many years of their lives with work being the ends rather than the means, living meaningfully without work is a concept both foreign and uncomfortable, even potentially deadly (Woznicki, 2005). But I was not at that place either.

Others have remarked to me that my current life path was a retreat to a place of safety from the onslaught of life experiences that had worn me down. Through the relentless and incessant storms of life, my ship, battered, weary, and taking on water, was limping to the still waters of the harbour: a time of rest, recharge, and reinvention (Palazi & Bower, 2006). A novice may learn to steer the ship in the calm of the harbour, but one becomes deeply connected to the sea through navigating perilous waters of change and uncertainty. While it was true that life's experiences had left me battered and weary, the lessons of those storms brought both wisdom from waves endured and anticipation of tempests yet to conquer.

Perhaps then my return to university life and endeavours was about a quest for lifelong learning. I have always believed that learning is an innate need within each of us.

The focus and depth of such learning vary from person to person. Perhaps then I was

seeking to be satiated through the consumption of knowledge for the sake of knowing to

satisfy that internal need. Of all the explanations posited thus far, this came closest but

still did not seem to resonate with my inner desire to be back at university (Palazi &

Bower, 2006; Parks et al., 2013).

Where then is this journey destined to take me?

A strange set of circumstance and coincidence had brought me back to complete

some unfinished business. While my degree had been started and of necessity put on

pause some years prior, I was not back simply to add a few more letters behind my name.

In truth I realize it was at this point in my life not so much about a diploma, but rather it

was about me.

The halls of higher learning were not just about the dotting of "i's" and crossing

of "t's" of curriculum and technique (Stephenson, 2001). Higher learning is about higher

things. Simplistically, it takes something from where it is and elevates it to a higher level

of being, knowing, and understanding. And nothing is as high or noble as the life and

worth of an individual (Madsen, 1990; VanWormer & Davis, 2013). To take myself and

rise from where I am to a higher place and evolve into the person I have the potential to

become. As I grow and disseminate that growth and knowledge to others, such is indeed

higher learning.

I need to improve myself to grow and become more refined so that I can teach

others through my words and deeds that they also possess a power within to change. For

what good is pure water if it is to be drunk from a polluted cup? For while it may sustain

basic needs for but a moment, it will eventually corrupt, poison, and destroy both the

receiver of the water and its bearer (Dreher, 1990; English & Feng, 1989; Hendricks,

1989; Watts, 1975). This thought, not unique to me, has been presented numerous times

in varied messages over generations of time. The message is that teachers or mentors are

evolving vessels bearing water to be given to others: mentor to disciple, sage to seeker,

and teacher to student. It is the quality of the vessel that at least in part determines the

benefit of the water to others (Baltaci & Demir, 2012; Bharti & Sidana, 2012; Birjandi &

Bagherkazemi, 2010; Ebrahimi & Moafian, 2012; Jacobs et al., 2008; Kohn, 2004;

Vallance, 2000). Thus, the higher learning I sought was not even truly about me but

needed to begin within me (Covey, 1990, 1997).

So why are you HERE?

It is indeed an extension of the first question but one I needed to have articulated

in order to come to my "heart of the matter". I needed a mentor, a guide, and a support. In

moments or opportunities for growth there is benefit for me in having someone with me

to lead the way, show me the ropes, teach me of pitfalls, and get me back on my feet

when life kicks me in the butt or knocks me to the ground.

The reason I was here was because my personal journey of higher learning was

not yet complete. The details were as yet unknown to me. But circumstance and fate had

ensured that my process was about to renew its forward momentum. The path and my

guide were currently unknown, but the vision of guide and journey were becoming

clearer and more focussed

His question penetrated the private thoughts and processes that had brought me to

be at this place and time. I was across the desk from a man I barely knew but with whom

I felt a developing connection. He knew that "the eyes are the window to the soul" and,

as such, looked into those personal quiet places few get permission to enter. This time, softly and quietly, he asked again.

"So why are you HERE?"

But this time the question seemed to probe deeper and was asked in more earnest. I gazed back across at the man partially hidden, perhaps subconsciously, perhaps not, now behind a different stack of papers, clippings, and books, searching for something as if it would be his response to my response to his question that had barely reached my ears. My response came with confidence and conviction that it was, for me, the truth.

 "I have come to love teaching, because it allows me an opportunity to share, and teach and help others in ways and times that they need it the most. Teaching is an act of the heart. When it reaches beyond the topic at hand, it is a connection that goes beyond the books and impacts lives."

I am not sure to this day whether or not he was expecting that response or whether or not he had heard that similar response from hundreds of graduate students over the years. Nonetheless, he let me own that thought and proclamation as if it were my passion and mine alone. This was my Holy Grail, and only later did I realize that I was about to be knighted and thus empowered to successfully complete my arduous but noble quest.

He had returned to his seat, hand in front of his mouth, and muttered, half to himself but mostly for my benefit (for I learned over the course of my experiences with him that there was seldom a wasted word).

"Hmmf . . . connections . . . beyond the books . . .that would make a good title for a book someday". From within his stack of notes and papers, he had indeed retrieved a

resource in response to my response. He said, *"This will be the most important thing you can study."*

He passed a blank pad of lined paper to me. He smiled as I looked at him, somewhat confused. Now that I was armed with an empty pad of paper, he taught me that as I explore and then record my own thoughts, feelings, impressions, and insights, the random chaos of my mind's innermost rambling, insights will begin to take shape and form. My creation of order from intellectual chaos can lead me to where I need to go. This pad of paper will allow for intellectual doodling where questions will be formed and answered. Those answers will then lead to new questions whose answers will spawn even more questions in perpetuity. Through this process, I can then garner meaning and direction from my queries and intellectual wanderings.

And then I realized that he had not taught me this but rather had reminded me of a lesson that a memorable teacher had shared with me years ago. Like many of us, as time passes, we forget these simple lessons of great import and have need to be reminded of them from time to time.

I am indeed competent enough and smart enough. I need to stand strong in the progress I have made in understanding and accepting who I have become over the years.

A lesson learned from a memorable teacher of my past. Reinforced by a memorable teacher in my present.

Identifying My Memorable Teachers

"So," he queried further, *"in your opinion, can you think of a teacher that you feel was memorable?"*

It took neither time nor effort before several names and a few memories of teacher– student interactions came quickly to mind. He told me to write the names down on my pad of paper, which I dutifully did. The names and experiences came chronologically from early impressions to more recent examples and names. As I gazed upon the list of names before me, I became aware of not just the memory of my interactions with them but also of a range of emotions that manifest alongside the memories. This emotional awareness began in very broad and general terms: feelings of gratitude, longing, and nostalgia. The recall of these memories went through an evolutionary change as it were. Although each of these teachers and I had interactions for hours, at first the memories recalled were like snapshots of events (Chugani, 1998; Cziksentmihalyi, 1990, 1997; McPherson, 2011). As I processed them more deeply, they morphed from still images to minimovies revisiting longer periods of interaction with these memorable mentors (McPherson, 2011).

As I began to think more deeply about these experiences individually, these mentally recalled images stretched from moments to mind movies. The emotions attached to such memories also became more complex and rich in their expression and power to move me emotionally and psychologically as it were back to the time and place of the event (Ekman, 1993, 1999; Navarro, 2008; Pert, 1997).

It is not an uncommon phenomenon that the reliving or just the remembering of profound and landmark life events carries with it the re-experiencing of those same emotions that were experienced at the time the brain originally processed the event. The emotional impact of the event itself plays a huge role in the original encoding of the message. The more emotionally charged or impactful the original event was perceived to

be by the one experiencing the event, the more detailed and lasting the memory of the event will tend to be (McPherson, 2011).

Then, as if something had changed, the warmth and peace of my reflections were disrupted by a recollection of a different memorable teacher. But this was one with whom I associated a negative set of emotions and perceptions. I began to experience an awkward sense of something that I could not quite identify with clarity.

Sensing a shift in me from his side of the desk, my professor queried ,

"*What are you thinking of? Better yet, I am not as interested in your thoughts as your feelings... what are you feeling?*"

I told him that I was remembering a negative experience I had experienced with a teacher from many years ago. It became clear to both of us, in that moment: those memorable teachers can be so identified because of their positive or negative impact, experiences and interactions with us. While the details were not as clear and vivid as the previously remembered positive memories, the feelings similarly manifest in basic but powerful descriptive terminology (D'Argembeau, Comblan & Vanderlinden, 2003).

So here I was facing an onslaught of collected memories with their connected emotions running the gamut from positive to negative (McPherson, 2011; Pert, 1997). I was not sure how to deal with them or what to do with them. As with many memories that we spontaneously experience, I anticipated that I would let the nostalgia of the moment run its due course, retreat back into the hidden memory banks of my brain, waiting for some future moment wherein these memories would be randomly triggered and brought to my conscious awareness. Again, I would bask in their moments of goodness and let them retreat once again.

My professor had other plans for me.

"If these memories came so quickly and emotionally charged as a response to a simple question, wouldn't it make sense that these memories, for whatever reason, may have meaning and significance that ought to merit some investigation? Why those memories? Why would they be recalled at this point and time?"

I had no answer other than to realize that there might be something more behind these remembrances other than a "mind body synergistic response" to a random question. I believe that there is no such thing as coincidence. Then there must be a reason why those memories would come to me now. Such a question had personal value in being investigated.

What was it about those experiences that may have greatly impacted me at those times? What was occurring in my life at that time that may have allowed those events to be stored as impactful memories? Understanding why those events were pivotal landmark memories to me might provide me with insights into those things of importance to me both in the past and where they might take me in the future (Kelly, 1955). This is the essence of personal construct theory (Boerer, 2006; Burger, 2004; Kenny, 1984). The events had occurred as they occurred. There was no going back to be able to change the events stamped into the fabric of my past. With PCT here in my hands, I possessed a tool through which the *meanings of* those events could change. It is not the event itself but the interpretation of such by the individual who experiences it that provides meaning to the past, strength in the present, and hope and vision for the future (Boerer, 2006; Burger, 2004; Kenny, 1984, Kompf, 2005).

One of my favorite expressions is "If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always got." My representations of the events of the past, for good or for ill, are intricately tied to my present and future. I was both capable of and responsible for the making of meaning in my own life with accountability for the choices I make (Kelly, 1955). So this PCT lens for investigation intrigued me with its potential to unlock answers from and about within myself. I possess the ability to monitor and revise the personal belief system that serves as a template or window into my interactions with me and my external environment (Kelly, 1955). I was now empowered to be able to analyze the past and make changes that could build on weaknesses and turn them into strengths. I can grow from the experiences of episodic examples to manifesting patterns of consistent behaviour.

I have always been of the opinion that two witnesses are better than one. If we rely upon one model for research, one perspective upon which to build our foundation of truth, then we are sure to find cracks in our foundation. If the crack is deep and profound enough, the building will eventually become unsafe and uninhabitable. Thus, if any issue were to be examined through two critical lenses, any similar, concurrent, and synergistic findings would then be grounded in and presented with more validity and conviction. As this day of learning continued, it would not take long for a second investigative lens to appear.

A Lifespan Developmental Lens of Inquiry

In lifespan development theories, it is easy to understand that each person is a combination of biological, psychological, and sociocultural forces or influences (Ateah et al., 2009). But equally important in understanding one's development is the timing of

those events in how they impact our development in each of these aforementioned areas. By way of example, a pregnancy, a death of a family member, or any other landmark life event could produce a dramatically different impact upon a person physically, emotionally, psychologically, and socially depending upon the life stage at which said experience occurs.

In looking again at the names of memorable teachers scribbled onto the notepad before me, I noticed that these connections seemed to occur at critical junctions in my own life and development. There were events spontaneously remembered from early and midchildhood, adolescence, young adulthood, and adulthood. These stages of development are times that are filled with critical developmental tasks, whether they are cognitive, physical, emotional, or even spiritual.

Erik Erikson (1959), a moral and character developmental theorist, posited that there are eight stages that we pass through in our progression from birth to grave. His theory is coined as a psychosocial model possessing both a psychological and a social component. These stages are defined by interactions between our internal beliefs, skills, abilities, and knowledge and how these balance and compare to external societal demands. In each of these stages, there is a conflict, challenge, or crisis that arises which requires us to be able to develop the skills required to navigate this crisis or dilemma in an appropriate manner. Erikson posited that it is through the successful and balanced resolution of these conflicts that we are able to develop virtues or characteristics essential for our optimal development. These skills and virtues serve as building block, facilitating our ability to overcome challenges in subsequent stages of development. This epigenetic sequential model posits that as we skilfully move through each stage and its challenges,

we prepare ourselves to achieve future social and emotional development and virtue attainment. The mastery of each virtue or skill is then seen as a tool that can be called upon in later situations to help navigate our personal development in an optimal fashion (Ateah et al., 2009; Erikson, 1959; R. Evans, 1995).

With my professor I shared the feelings of using Erikson's (1959) theory to understand in a generalized perspective the dynamic of the experiences that I had recalled with each of my memorable teachers. But the thought of using PCT as a second prism for a more refined or focused analysis held great appeal to me.

Construct theory combined with Erikson, eh? That might well be a powerful combination. You will find some deep stuff in the foundational theories that a lot of our current research was based upon but in some ways has drifted from the foundational theories. You will also find some deep stuff in YOU, some basic principles that you may have drifted from. Erikson and Kelly. Cool.

Sometimes there are great truths to be understood from stories (Bochner, 2007). My grandfather and I would go fishing when I visited him on vacations as a child. The secret, he said, was not to jerk on the line when you first feel the fish nibble. Be patient and let the fish do the work and set the hook deeply by itself. Then, when you "feel" that the hook is sufficiently set, you slowly reel in your catch.

My professor must have fished with my grandpa.

There, behind a smirk and twinkling eyes already knowing, my professor extended an invitation to work together on this idea of memorable teachers as my culminating project for completion of my Master of Education course of study. Why wouldn't I want to study the very thing that I desired to be? Because in order to study the

thing I wanted to be, I had to explore the complexities of the inner me, all the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual qualities of self and of my heart (Palmer, 2007). For these will either form or deform the way I relate within all of my interactions, whether I be teacher or student, father or child, partner or friend.

Knowing myself as well as I do, keenly aware of what I have kept hidden and concealed for years from the external world, I was terrified. But whatever you desire to call it, God, fate, luck, or an incredible collection of coincidences gathered together at that moment to present my opportunity and to see if I was willing to slay my dragons.

The journey was presented, the challenge had been issued, and the tools requisite for fulfilling my quest, at the ready. All I needed now was the courage to journey inward and reveal the answers that lay within, waiting, just yearning to be discovered . . . needing to be discovered. As ominous as the task at hand was, my response was immediate, powerful, and affirmative.

So What Does It Mean to Be a Memorable Teacher?

The first real chore at hand was to see how others in research had defined memorable teachers. I began searching libraries and journals to determine how others had defined teachers. I discovered that there was information on effective teachers, successful teachers, even excellent teachers, but never memorable.

I arrived early at my professor's office, hoping for time to collect my thoughts and sift through the findings of my initial research. No such luck, as his office door was open and he called me in immediately. I don't know how he, or other professors for that matter, view their office space. Is it simply a place to do research, or to meet with students or to hold and conduct meetings of administrative importance? But to me, I held

this space in high regard. I had been privy in the past to specialized and individualized conversations and teachable moments when in a one-on-one interaction with a professor in his or her own space. Inside the professor's office was a place where ideas could be shared and examined. Seeds of thought could be germinated and nurtured, leading to bountiful harvests. It was within these walls, rather than the walls of the classrooms, where the higher learning I was seeking was occurring. The classroom provided foundational information which served as a platform from which, if so desired, I could spring forth into forays of theoretical, hypothetical, and personal applicability.

But here in this office was a sacred space of supportive thought and inquiry; a place reserved for searching for answers to questions which stretched my thoughts beyond the scope of prepackaged curriculum. Here was the validation and supportive environment that I required to facilitate my learning needs (Willis, 2007).

So what did you find? How does research define memorable teachers?

I am sure that my response was neither revealing nor earth shattering to him. I believe he wanted to test me to see how much effort I had put into this research and how wide the scope of my study had been.

Current Approaches to and Methods of Evaluating Teachers

I was able to identify three main areas of research into evaluating teachers. The first is evaluation of teachers based upon the grades (the academic success) of their students (MacCann, Lipnevich & Roberts, 2012); the second could be generally classified as classroom management (Denham et al., 2012; Saxena & Aggrwal, 2010); the third is subjective rankings of teachers as performed by their peers and immediate supervisory staff (Vallance, 2000).

The evaluation of teachers based upon the academic success of their students is a logical, albeit limited method of defining memorable teachers. Past research revealed to me that the lion's share of the time and training in the education and development of teachers is spent on techniques and theories on how to make teachers academically skilled within their area of expertise (Kormur & Eryilmaz, 2012; Kromrey & Chang, 2011). The "how to teach" and the "what to teach" received lots of attention and rightfully so. If I, as a student earn good grades, then it is assumed that said teacher has done his/her job and is deemed a good teacher. Thus, volumes of research have attempted to quantify the success of a teacher based upon the academic achievement and career outcomes of their students (MacCann et al., 2012; Valiente et al., 2012).

Usually when one thinks of a teacher, it is easy to conjure up images of the "in class" portion of their job performance. The second thrust of teacher evaluation is a bit more complex in both its definition and its measurement. According to Valiente et al. (2012), school success is a crucial predictor in one's academic and career based outcomes. Saxena and Aggarwal (2010) and others (Jenkins, 1995; Kormur & Eryilmaz, 2012; Kromrey & Chang, 2011; Werner, 1989) found that students' academic habits are developed as a result of the experiences that they have in their school environment. According to social and observational learning theories, students learn in part through modelling the rules and regulations of successful classroom behaviour as both taught and seen demonstrated in the classroom environment (Alegre, 2012; Denham et al., 2012; Shabgard, Rahmani & Karimi, 2011). The rules learned for success in the classroom often translate well into specific workplace situations (Godin, 2012).

Teaching Academics and So Much More

Many researchers have identified that a second role of the teacher extends beyond the measuring of the academic accomplishments of his or her students. There has been a shift in research regarding the role that teachers play in the social and emotional development of their students. Teachers are seen as emotional and interpersonal role models to be imitated by the students. As a teacher models and "praises acceptable or good behaviours" in the class, then students learn to follow that example in order to also be seen as good, well behaved students (Denham et al., 2012; Saxena & Aggarwal, 2010). As the student imitates the study habits and classroom rules around them and as such model behaviours are reinforced through meaningful measures, an interactive cycle of positive response between that child and his or her teacher can be initiated (Brooks, 1994; Ministry of Education, 2006, 2008). The habits that lead to academic success, as taught and consistently positively reinforced by the teacher, become the foundation for behavioural change within the student. Over prolonged exposure, this imitative behaviour becomes habitual and longer lasting in its influence on the student (McCord et al., 1994). This is a basic premise behind character education (Ministry of Education, 2006).

Thus successful classroom management requires a two-pronged agenda, one academic and the second socioemotional in nature (Denham et al., 2012; Nizielski et al., 2012). Schools will help society by making students into good workers. Students should obey the rules, be good, do good, and they will benefit society (Ministry of Education, 2008). However, as noted by Godin (2008), this current education process creates students in a state that he terms "sheepwalking." This is when students are taught to test, rewarded for compliant behaviour, and subjected to fear as a principle motivator.

Whereas in decades past that fear was oftentimes corporal in nature, it now often manifests in fear of failure. Godin confirms that many corporations then look for compliant, fearful sheep who "color inside the lines" and are managed through psychological fear of job loss and/or lack of promotion in the workplace. Thus the skills learned in the classroom are indeed transferrable into the workplace.

According to many researchers and educational reformists, this model has become obsolete and in need of reform (Chugani, 1998; Godin, 2008; Kohn, 2004; Krashen, 1982; Willis, 2007). Students are often square pegs trying to be placed into round holes. Sometimes it just doesn't work. Just because these two items on the agenda are being "officially taught," it still does not give us insight into connections that occur "beyond the books."

In trying to determine teaching excellence, peer evaluations comprised a portion of the research literature. This however was of little help to me in aiding in my understanding of memorable teachers. Vallance (2000) identified this problem in his research when he concluded that the hard part is in the actual conditions around which excellence, which was the focus of his research, could be defined. "Does excellence relate to being extraordinarily effective, whatever that means, within the everyday or successful in the extra-ordinary situations?" Vallance concluded that the term "best" remains undefined. So any teacher who was simply nominated as excellent by his or her peers or principal would then qualify as being "excellent" for the purpose of his research.

My professor had listened closely to my findings, elbows on the desk, hands clasped together in front of his mouth, as if subconsciously stifling the impulse to voice

his impressions of my findings (Ekman, 1993, 1999; Navarro, 2008). Slow and measured, the next query came.

So how does this research reflect upon our study of memorable teachers?

It just didn't, at least not really. It danced around the edges. I could find no references for memorable teachers and very little if any research from the perspective of the student. For all of my ability to effectively communicate, my answer to his question came out in a guttural *"aaaaarrrrgggggghhhhh."*

Once his laughter subsided, he stated quite matter of factly, *"Frustrated? Welcome to the world of academe,"* and laughed again.

"Ok then, let's get a starting point, a baseline. In your opinion what is a teacher?"

In a conversation with an educator many years ago, I had a three stage model of teaching described to me. It was explained that there are three types of teachers, defined as an instructor, a lecturer, and a teacher. A lecturer has a one-way transmission, usually speaking down and never lifting up. An instructor may use a transaction approach through basic questions and answers but is still predominantly fact driven. A teacher illustrates and interacts until the knowledge of what, how, and why is conveyed. As stated by Ateah et al. (2009), Vygotsky, an early social theorist in the field of child development, coined the terms scaffolding and zone of proximal development to describe this process. A teacher analyzes the ability level of the child and fills in the gaps until the child has achieved the skill or knowledge. Then, through repetition of the task, the teacher takes a less active role, balanced against the proven ability of the child, until the child is able to complete the task successfully on his/her own (Ateah et al., 2009).

Many who work within education believe that teaching is a calling and a work of the heart (Palmer, 2007; Vallance, 2000). According to some researchers, the very core of the teaching and learning dynamic possesses an emotionally based foundation (Denham et al., 2012; Hosotani & Matsumura, 2012; Perry & Ball, 2007; Quarles & Cole, 2011). Nizielski et al. (2012) explain that teaching is an occupation that presents high levels of emotional labour, meaning it requires frequent interpersonal interactions with others. Teaching should be an interactive endeavour. According to Brown (2013, personal communication), in any interpersonal interaction, you interact with the whole of the other person, meaning the totality of who they are physically, cognitively, spiritually, and emotionally (Covey, 1990; Lee, 1997). Perry and Ball (2007) echoed my frustration that while emotions are intricately woven into the art of teaching, there are sparse amounts of research into the teaching of these essential life skills by teachers.

Ok. So we can agree on what a teacher is, so let's try to define memorable and see how these two can combine.

Ideas, feelings, and words spontaneously sounded back and forth like a tennis rally. A verbal word cloud was forming quickly, a sharing of ideas, impressions, and feelings. I scribbled quickly to capture both the words and the essence of this spontaneous exercise while striving to be in the moment and let my own impressions flow instinctively.

Attitude. Beneficial. Connection. Exceptional. Dedication. Heart. Impressions. Influential. Enduring. Challenging. Outstanding. Excellence. Understanding. Compassionate. Mentor. Transformative. Empowerment. Meaning making. Caring. Formative.

As the volley of words slowed, we began to examine them more closely. Each of these terms described characteristics conceptually, yet they possessed a form of internal meaning that seemed to reach beyond the limited power of words to describe those memorable teachers. Many teachers possess these qualities, yet they are not seen necessarily as memorable by their students. These teachers would be described as very good, highly skilled, or even excellent teachers, meeting the criterion of the two goals found in research: academic training and classroom management. So while I was forming opinions on what "made" skilled teachers, I had not yet come across anything that reflected our quest. What was it that allowed a student to perceive a teacher in a life-changing manner?

The research I was able to find, while not directly relevant to my query, provided valuable insights for me to search. From across the desk, I heard his voice teach me:

"Look at what the research says, and your answers will be where the research is not."

Quickly my mind understood what he meant. There were two gaps in this research that would allow for more insight into understanding what makes a teacher memorable. In my opinion, no one was asking the students about their interactions with teachers "beyond the books," as if that area was somehow out of bounds. To be an idealistic, holistic type of teacher (Ministry of Education, 2006, 2008), it would seem that caring for the person is more important than the subject matter. But that somehow seems taboo. Few have delved into the realm of investigating in depth what the students think of their experiences in the education system, how they perceive their teachers and the roles they play in impacting the lives of their students. And really, what can you learn about

complex thought processes through a questionnaire or survey? You might scratch the surface but never really come close to seeing beyond the tip of the iceberg that might just sink a student's academic voyage.

The second gap in the research is in the methodology used to gather this information. The body of research into the teacher/student dynamic is overwhelmingly quantitative in nature. Questionnaires and surveys are quick and economical measures used to gather information that is packaged into generalized bits of "empirical data" suited to the masses. But if education is about the individual (Ministry of Education, 2008), then a more individualized approach to understanding our experiences in education seems both highly logical and prudent.

In order to understand the perception of the teaching experience from the perspective of the students, it would seem judicious to involve them as deeply as possible in the research process (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Talking to students will help us to see the experiences through the eyes of the student. It is basic good business practice to ask the consumer about the experience of being a consumer, but to do it in a manner that is meaningful to the consumer is both remarkable and powerful (Godin, 2012).

Lips pursed and eyebrow raised, he agreed. *"I think a narrative approach is perfect for this. Stories transfer beliefs and experiences through our culture through generations. This is impactful stuff . . . life changing . . . formative . . . enduring. So how can we collect and analyze these stories? Who will be our population?"*

I thought that although everyone has a story, those stories are not always uplifting, as one of my memories had shown me. There can be a lot of emotions tied up in these memories. I immediately sensed a concern. What if we ask someone about a

memorable teacher but it stirs up things emotionally that they might not be consciously ready to deal with? Are we prepared in the scope of this project to deal with the possible emotional fallout?

His face scrunched up, left hand rubbing his brow and forehead. The prospect of logistically providing counselling if required as well as dealing with the Ethics Board and its clearance left him scratching his head, as if the solution was just below the surface in that always working brain of his.

"So Randy . . . tell me again, why is this important to study this? So what? Once you get this done, what difference will it make? Is this a project worth pursuing?"

Through stories, one can come to understand what makes a teacher memorable, or at least what made that teacher memorable to him or her. As we come to understand the power that teaching has beyond the classroom and the ability to impact individual lives beyond the books, then we, as academics, can more fully comprehend the gift and responsibility that it is to be a teacher. I believe that stories detailing the memorable experiential dynamics of teacher and student will reveal commonalities that will allow us to understand what makes a teacher memorable in the eyes and memories of his or her students. Character development will be intertwined in the essence of our teaching as opposed to being a government-mandated attachment. It will flow without force or effort and or direction, and those who are prepared and willing to receive it will begin to reap the benefits in their own experiences.

"Connections . . . beyond the book connections," he muttered, without realizing it.

As he muffled in quasi-verbal thought, I pondered what it was that allowed and even facilitated a personal connection that extends beyond the books, even sometimes beyond words, that would impact someone deeply, powerfully, and enduringly. If you have felt it, as I have, then perhaps you can also understand the difficulty presented in determining how we could define and quantify this connection in a way that would provide understanding and meaning to these experiences. On a more macrocosmic level, are the connections with memorable teachers so individual that the meaning applies just to the individual? Or could being able to quantify these experiences both bring meaning to your experiences as well as provide a deepening of understanding on the part of the teacher regarding the power that he or she can in fact harness to impress, facilitate, empower, and even heal those students before them?

In fact, the process of interpretation and individualized analysis could be described as a life-giving exercise. As we order and attempt to categorize and structure these experiences, they intermingle and weave together with previous experiences in a subconscious attempt to create meaning. It is through our own personalized interpretation that such experiences take on interpretive import for future interpersonal exchanges (Covey, 1997; Lee, 1997; Czikszentmihalyi, 1990). If teaching truly is a work of the heart (Palmer, 2007), then it is imperative to find a way to connect with the heart of those with whom we interact.

He stopped his head rubbing and I could see in his eyes that a solution to the problem of emotional responses to my query was at hand.

"So tell me Randy, what is your story?"

CHAPTER FIVE: MISTRUST LEADS TO SHAME AND DOUBT

A dysfunction within each or any stage, meaning an inability to navigate the psychoemotional crisis, may well lead to a maladjustment corresponding to the particular stage or crisis being experienced (Erikson, 1959). Thus, in order to understand the current stage of development, the previous stage experiences of the individual should be taken into account and consideration (Ateah et al., 2009; Chapman, 2012, R. Evans, 1995). So, in order to comprehend my personal school based experiences with my first memorable teacher it would be wise to investigate the fields in which the seeds of my educational experiences were sown.

Erikson Stages 1 and 2

According to Erikson's (1959) theory of psychosocial development, the influence of the immediate family on the psychosocial development of a child is most profound during the foundational stages 1 and 2 (Alegre, 2012; Bronfenbrenner, nd.; Brooks, 1994; Cook-Grueter, 1985; Covey, 1997; Drexler, 2012; Eyre, 2003). Within these initial stages, opportunities are presented that will allow a child to develop and manifest the ability to balance psychological, emotional, and social skills in an appropriate manner (Ateah et al., 2009; Benjafield, 1997; Bjorkland & Blasi, 2012; Chapman, 2012; R. Evans, 1995). This development, if successful, both leads to the successful resolution of the crisis at hand and simultaneously creates a foundational stage or building block that leads to continued developmental growth in subsequent stages.

If in the first stage the child does not develop the virtues of trust and hope, outcomes such as fear, anxiety, and suspicion may begin to develop. In cases of unsuccessful crisis resolution, a psychosocial foundation has now been set for struggles

as subsequent developmental stages are manifest (Chapman, 2012; Cicchetti, 2011; R. Evans, 1995; Saxena & Aggarwall, 2010).

The second stage of child development, often seen around the ages of 2–3, is coined by Erikson as autonomy versus shame and doubt. In this second stage, an inability to manage this conflict can lead to a sense of shame and personal doubt in one's abilities, competencies, and self-worth. Abilities relating to self-control may also be impacted, leading to manifestations of impulsivity and compulsive behaviours (Chapman, 2012; R. Evans, 1995). As with all of these epigenetic stages, a failure to resolve the crisis of autonomy versus shame and doubt will set the stage for struggles within the subsequent stages of development (Ateah et al., 2009; Chapman, 2012). Although my home environment was not as bad as some, there were still enough negative events and challenges in my immediate family environment and dynamics that my experiences would correlate strongly with known predictive risk factors for at-risk adolescent behaviour (McCord et al., 1994; McCullough et al., 1994; Werner, 1989).

Welcome to my world.

CHAPTER SIX: INITIATIVE, GUILT, AND THE SINISTER CHILD

I knew then, even as a five year old child, that I hated her.

I can recall the message delivered and the hurtful words used. "We must teach you to become right-handed. Left-handed is evil, it is sinister. Sinister is Latin for sin and evil. You are sinister." The smack of the ruler stung against the back of my hand. I wanted to cry, but I dared not. I wanted to yell at her, but again I dared not. But deep inside, where emotions can be hidden from overt expression, I hated her.

Some researchers have indicated that a sign of intelligence within the human species is the ability to categorize things based on similarities, differences, and their degree of utility (Niedenthal & Dalle, 2001). As our level of intelligence and scope of experience increase, we demonstrate a greater ability to utilize more discrete and minute distinctions (Ateah et al., 2009; Bjorkland & Blasi, 2012). For example, when my children were very young, all four-legged animals either barked or meowed. As they were later introduced to cows and horses, they learned that there are differences within their two-category classification of four-legged animals. As their intelligence and experience expanded further, they learned that there are differences among types of cows, and myriad breeds of dogs and horses. There is more than one colour or shade of red, a mind-boggling variety of plants, and on and on it goes (Niedenthal & Dalle, 2001).

Erikson Stage 3: Understanding Emotions

Emotions, as with other things, can also be classified and categorized. Some researchers have organized basic emotions into categories such as anger, fear, sadness, surprise, disgust, trust, joy, and anticipation (Plutchik, 1980). As with intelligence, our ever-expanding interactions with our external world lead us to understand that there are

variances in the degrees of intensity of these emotions. The ability to perceive and express fine and subtle differences between these emotions increases with experience and development of our biological systems (Chugani, 1998). So, over time, we learn that the basic emotion of anger, for example, can be felt and expressed on a continuum ranging from annoyance to rage. Along the continuum between these polar expressions, lie other variations of anger such as hurt, hostility, selfishness, criticism, sarcasm, jealousy, and other emotional shades of anger (Plutchik, 1980).

Researchers debate over which emotions children feel and at what stage of physical and cognitive development they are experienced (Ateah et al., 2009). While children may be able to experience a wide range of emotions, they have a harder time describing those emotions in other than basic terminology. When we are infants, our range of emotions similarly is categorized into quite simple and basic descriptors. (Ateah et al, 2009). So when a child doesn't get his or her way or is sent to bed, he or she verbalizes his or her feelings as "I hate you." As an adult, we can understand that it is not really hate they are feeling, but they express their emotions based upon their stage of emotional, psychological, cognitive, and experiential development (Barret & Salovey, 2002).

Thus it was for me. When I was young, it seemed everything fell into a simple emotional classification of responses to situations. Good or bad. Love or hate. Happy or sad. When I felt those emotions, I felt them powerfully and intensely.

As surely as I knew anything, I knew that I hated her.

At that time, I had no idea what Latin was, but it sure sounded both official and terrifying. I was raised in a home where the concepts of sin and evil were explained in

terms that might make sense to my 5 year-old brain. Being sinful and evil meant I was

going to hell. That sure sounded official too. Good boys and girls go to heaven. So if I

was hell bound, something was wrong with me. I must be flawed, somehow broken. Every

time she caught me using my left hand, the smack and physical pain of corporal

punishment preceded the verbal reminder that I was evil and sinister. The verbal and

physically painful message was reinforced . . . and so too was my anger and hate. To this

day, I have never forgotten.

Initiative Versus Guilt

Between the ages of 3 and 6, children generally pass through the phase that

Erikson (1959) defined as initiative versus guilt. In this stage the child begins to expand

from issues of self-control to being able to exert control over and within his or her social

and physical environment. Rather than being predominantly concerned over personal

development, the focus shifts to a more social and environmental set of developmental

tasks. How do the lessons learned at home translate into real-life situations?

During this period of development, a young child experiences a shift from the

isolated and often relatively insulated world of family influence to a more expansive

experiential social level of interaction and learning. The institution of family is not

replaced by but rather reinforced and supported by other societal institutions, such as

schools and churches. Parents, teachers and other societal institutional leaders share the

goal of teaching the best habits to their children in an effort to help them develop in to

significant contributors in our society (Maccoby, 1992; Saxena & Aggarwal, 2010). Just

as parents strive to teach and assist their children in their development, teachers also seek

to provide and promote a positive socio-emotional environment that will enhance the development of that same skill set (Denham et al., 2012).

As children grow and develop, institutions such as schools and churches serve as links between the child, community, and their society. It is within these institutions that the child expands upon the lessons of social and interpersonal interactions learned at home (Alegre, 2012; Alegre & Benson, 2010; Denham et al., 2012; Perry & Ball, 2008; Saxena & Aggarwal, 2010). These new influences in the lives of children become the interface between the student and the society in which they need to learn to interact and integrate. So the developmental task of the child now becomes an attempt to understand how the lessons learned at home, church, and school translate into real-life situations.

When the crisis or conflict of this stage is successfully handled, the child is able to develop a healthy sense of purpose and belonging. He or she develops an accompanying sense of courage and confidence. He or she develops the ability to appropriately play and interact with others. When the child fails to demonstrate the ability to integrate smoothly into the social and environmental demands, he or she is often corrected through physical means. Though the correction initially is physical, the underlying emotional impact is quite profound. The child, unable to balance between self and environment, may then tend to develop a pervading sense of guilt, confusion or even anger and ruthlessness when reproved for his or her behaviour (Levy, 1976).

That is where I seem to have found myself with this teacher. The persistent messages of being wrong, bad, evil, and sinful would, through this theory, explain feelings of doubt in me and my inherent goodness. The consistent disapproval of who I

was and what I was doing may well have contributed to my anger at and hatred towards her.

However, there was a confusing, yet very interesting dynamic that began to play out within me. My lessons at home taught me that you do not argue with authority. When an authority figure speaks, he or she is to be obeyed. What the authority figure says, goes. I learned that lesson in official ways at home as well. So by virtue of the authority of the teacher as the head of our first grade class, in spite of the fact I hated her, I was to obey her. I can still recall the feeling of conflict and the guilt I felt because I HAD TO like her, but I really didn't want to.

This conflict between what I was feeling internally and what I felt I needed to do externally was creating what I would later come to know as cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1962; Higgins, 1960). In order to diminish the feelings of dissonance between my expected duty to obey and my feelings of hatred, I slowly began to believe her. The inner dissonance dissipated the more I gave in to the external conditioning. I began to feel as if I was truly broken. Somehow, in ways and for reasons that I could not understand as a child, I began believing the message that she was giving me (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959; Higgins, 1960). I was flawed and broken, my nature evil and sinister (Levy, 1976).

But then as I manipulated my own behaviour in order to reduce feeling such dissonance and hatred (another sin for which I was surely going to hell, thus reinforcing the new belief that I was evil and sinister), I began to feel more confused. The messages from home didn't match the messages from school that conflicted with the messages from my church environment. Herein lies the manifestation of the conflict or socioemotional crisis to which Erikson (1959) referred. I needed to learn to reconcile

between the conflicting external messages with my inner but still childlike sense of right, wrong, good, and bad (R. Evans, 1995, Higgins, 1960).

Every Sunday at church I was told that God was good and that He loved us. It didn't make sense to me that God would send me to hell for being left-handed. He created me left-handed. He loved me left-handed. I was His child.

But during the week, the continued and repeated conditioning attempts at correcting my sinister handedness sent me the message that I was indeed evil and going to hell. Why else would I continue to use my left hand and willingly experience the pain and public ridicule of being called evil and sinister (Levy, 1976)?

The messages from home were mixed and varied. I was good, and I was bad. I was valued but was to be seen and not heard. I needed to learn to do things on my own but was only allowed to do what they allowed or directed at risk of incurring the displeasure of a parent who also said that he or she loved me unconditionally.

At the age of 5 or 6, with these mixed messages from varied sources of authority, the seeds to the "I am a screwed-up adult" plant were deeply sown and nurtured in the soil of who I was.

Time has passed, and experience gained has allowed me to review my past through a different lens of perception. I know now as an adult that my hand was being hit to produce behavioural change. Research in the psychological field of behaviourism and operant conditioning has validated the common belief that a punishment is a powerful tool in the suppression of or decreased frequency of an unwanted or undesirable behaviour (Ateah et al., 2009). If the outcomes of an action are harsh, undesirable, or

painful enough, the frequency with which such behaviours are participated in will theoretically decrease.

Corporal punishment was the cultural norm of the day where spanking was commonplace among parents and the strap was a policy-approved disciplinary tool within the walls of our education system (Axelrod, 2010). Beyond teaching the 3 Rs (which never made sense to me because only one of the three actually begins with an r, but I am not going to say anything because I might be seen as sinister and evil, a concern that still sometimes comes to my mind when I question authority), the official policy in Ontario, as stated in the Department of Education Act of 1891, mandated that teachers use physical disciplinary tools to motivate the mind, to restore and maintain order, and to correct and prevent unacceptable behaviour (Axelrod, 2010).

Reflective Perceptions

Looking back on that experience through an adult perspective and understanding, I can tell myself that there was no ill will or malicious intent on the part of the teacher (Kelly, 1955). She was doing what had been done for the previous century in schools. Educational policy of the time dictated character development through corporal punishment, strict behavioural codes of conduct, and creating an air of unquestioned authority. In fact if I try to be very open-minded about it, I might even present the perspective that such disciplinary tactics were in fact administered because of a deep, overwhelming desire on the part of the teacher to help me become the best that I could be. Due to her concern for my wellbeing, she used the tools and techniques of her training in an attempt to facilitate my development and betterment. Logically, these things can be

seen to make sense. It was a different time and a different cultural mindset (Kompf, 2005).

But as a child I was angry, hurt, and confused. Without a doubt, I hated her. The thoughts of questioning her intent were foreign to me as a young child. I don't recall thinking, "I wonder if she is trying to hurt me? Doesn't she realize this might scar me emotionally?" She was causing me pain. I hated her then. But through the backward glancing perspective of Kelly's PCT (1955), and some purposeful reframing of those experiences perhaps I do not hate her so much now.

My professor had been listening intently as I shared with him this episodic narrative. Orally sharing this long-hidden experience left me feeling both relieved at the subjectively cathartic experience while maintaining my ability to objectively analyze the experience through both a personal construct and an Eriksonian theoretical lens. Having listened well, there my advisor sat behind his desk, pondering the tale I had just shared with him. His pause was more drawn out than usual. I was expecting some in-depth analysis, words of wisdom, or profound insight into what I had shared with him. I expected him to comment, at least academically, upon the manner in which I was able to integrate my experience with our chosen educational and psychological theory. But he just sat quietly. I tried to read his expressions to gain a glimpse into his thoughts so that I could prepare my response.

He sat back in his chair, as if inhaling from an imaginary cigarette that I am sure he wished he could have been smoking at that moment. With the exhale of the imagined smoke, his response came slowly and clearly.

"So what?"

I had just poured out a part of me, a painful secret memory that I had kept secret for years. I had exposed vulnerabilities, and I got a "so what?" Seriously?

"A memorable teacher, according to your definition, is one who makes a profound and lasting impact on your life. Personal construct theory teaches that you hold onto these memories because they have meaning for you. They have shaped who you are in this moment. Your past provides you with opportunities to grow based upon how you perceive and decide to respond to the experiences you have. If you have learned nothing, what a waste. Nice story, but what have you learned about yourself from looking back at this experience? So what?"

I paused for a moment and tried to get past the anger of the 5 year-old boy. What was the deeper meaning that I could glean from this experience? I held to this memory for years, which indicated that in some way it was important to me. But if I did not learn the lessons, then it would be wasted baggage that I would carry the rest of my life.

Looking beyond the details of the situation, I tried to decipher the underlying principles that have woven like a thread in the tapestry of my life. If my life was a quilt, then what colours, shapes, and images would this experience weave into the fabric of who I am now?

Quickly and distinctly, I was able to articulate three memorable lessons from this teacher. These thoughts were not identifiable at that young age, but rather were manifest through my childhood actions and recurring patterns of behaviour in later developmental stages (R. Evans, 1995). It is only through a more experienced and mature lens that I have been able to articulate and attempt to understand consciously what I learned and responded to subconsciously.

First, I learned to conform by performing acceptable behaviours under fear of being caught and ultimately experiencing the accompanying pain of that event. I never really held to the idea of conforming my behaviours just because that was the social norm or expectation. Rather, I learned to behave in specific ways at specific times in specific situations in order to avoid specific punishments. One might say the lesson corresponds to Erikson's (1959) first stage. Rather than trust, hope, and faith, I saw the world through a fearful perspective, where punishment and pain presided. Maladaptive response . . . check.

Second, I learned to be sneaky. I would use my left hand whenever I thought I could get away with it. When the teacher's back was turned, I would write or cut or paste with my left hand. I learned that there was a satisfaction that came from being able to get away with something. In later life, it was no longer an issue of sneaking into left-handed behaviour. Rather, it became a subtle pattern of self-indulgent and antiauthority rule breaking. Not on a grand scale, as I learned that too much rule breaking would lead to pain. But when I could get away with little things, I would relish those opportunities. Maladaptive outcomes in dealing with the crisis of Erikson's (1959) second stage demonstrated potential manifestations of impulsivity and compulsive behaviours. Maladaptive response . . . check two.

Third, even in the face of physical pain and/or emotional ridicule, I would sometimes persist in my own choices: my personal maladjusted, sinister behaviour. I believe that there are things that society places a value on that have little or no meaning or importance to me. Behaving and choosing to go against the grain, contrary to societal expectations, often carries a cost. But for me at times, if the punishment was worth the

price to be paid, then I would do the act regardless. A pattern developed where I learned to be willing to hold to what I believed to be for "my perceived greater good" rather than conform.

Throughout my life, such an attitude has on occasion been detrimental. But more often than not it was instrumental. To me the reason behind the request motivates me more deeply than doing something just because it is the expectation. For those accustomed to jumping through hoops and surrendering themselves and their identity in order to blend in, they will never understand. To them, the nonconformist in me means I might just be evil and sinister at worst, broken at best. From Erikson's (1959) theory, I was learning to balance between purpose, personal courage, and ambition. Purposeful proactive choices counterbalance blind conformity. But to the authorities, there might always be something wrong with me.

> *"Randy, the first lesson you have shared means you are not broken, but are*
> *normal. We all go through role playing in certain situations and life scenarios.*
> *You play the game at times, to facilitate later victories. Your second point, I must*
> *admit, for you as well as for me, there is satisfaction, at times, in breaking the*
> *rules. Policies are important, people are priorities. So, may I ask, do you break*
> *the rules now because you are selfish, or is it usually for the benefit of someone*
> *else? Your third point sounds like you do it for the benefit of others: The greater*
> *good. That is what Kohlberg referred to as post conventional moral reasoning.*
> *The rule makers and societal hoop jumpers are usually stuck at conventional*
> *reasoning. So of course they think you are broken. But here is the thing. You had*
> *a choice, somewhere along the way. You could let that experience haunt you so*

that you remained bitter and angry and you would never have grown past it. But

you chose, somewhere, to turn that potentially negative experience into a tool to

shape your destiny . . . to shape who you are now."

As he paused here, I knew it was a signal for me to reflect and process the new

information he had presented. I initially processed the information cognitively. What he

said made sense. Then I processed it emotionally and spiritually, and it rang even more

true. What had started as anger and hatred melted away as my eyes became moist.

I realized the debt of gratitude that I owed this teacher for helping to shape me,

albeit unknowingly, into the man I am. The characteristics that have motivated some of

the decisions and behaviours which have been difficult but life shaping were planted in

my early moments of left-handedness (Levy, 1976).

CHAPTER SEVEN: LIVING WITHIN THE BOOKS.

I believe that you can tell a lot about a person by his or her surroundings. I believe this holds especially true in the environments in which a person spends the bulk of his or her personal and often alone time. I have been in offices decorated with mementos of travels abroad or displays of personal economic status. I have been in other private spaces where diplomas and other tokens of institutional recognition were prominently displayed. Each of those environments has given me glimpses into the priorities of the person who claimed this space as his or her own.

As I sat in the office of my memorable teacher, I noted that the predominant feature of his office in terms of volume most assuredly was books. Everywhere books. There was no apparent rhyme or reason to his organizational methodology, yet he instinctively knew which towering pile held the nugget that he wanted to personally access or share. The eclectic range of books to one who shared a love of books was impressive to me. Titles of books from the pile closest to where I sat indicated an interest in topics ranging from education to psychology, spirituality and religion, children's stories, personal development, and quantum physics. That was just pile number one.

I once asked him about why he had so many books and why he sought such an eclectic range of topics and subject matter. After telling me that he had spent many hours walking the aisles of used book stores, he said

> *"There was no realm of learning from which truth could not be gained. Good books, well written, hold keys to power. Books are both private and intimate. I have learned that books can speak directly to you when you need it. Like a good relationship, books will give back to you more than you put into them."*

Erikson Stage 4: Industry and Inferiority

The role of books in my life had been prevalent but initially served a different purpose. It had been my refuge. It was my solitary world where I could escape. Children can sometimes be mean and have a way of tormenting others (Davis, 2013; Volk, Camilleri, Dane & Marini, 2012). Regardless of their intent, whether in innocent jest, dysfunctional upbringing, or acting upon some evolutionary form of instrumentality (Volk et al., 2012), children can be cruel and heartless towards those either deemed different or somehow targeted (Davis, 2013). Their behaviour can range from teasing to taunts, from ostracization to physical and emotional threats and violence (School Boards' Association, 2013).

When I was a child, the lights of scientific research had scarcely begun to illuminate the wide range of schoolyard dynamics (Volk et al., 2012). Sadly, I was subjected to taunts, teasing, and being ostracized. Beyond sad to tragic was the fact that the weapon words used to taunt, harass, and mock were provided to my classmates by the aforementioned teacher. While my red hair and freckles made me an easy target as someone who looked different, my classmates responded to my teacher calling me evil and sinister. I now became known as "devil boy," the "red headed devil" and "Evil Randy."

While my experiences never reached the stage of physical bullying or abuse, the verbal harassment led me to seek refuge inside the classroom during recess and lunch breaks. Books became my best friends. They were not judgemental; my red hair and freckles were of no consequence to them. Perhaps best of all, they didn't care whether I turned their pages with my right hand or my left (Levy, 1976).

As a 6 year old, according to Eriksonian (1959) theory, I had previously experienced the stages of conflict of autonomy versus shame followed by initiative versus guilt (Ateah et al., 2009; R. Evans, 1995). If the goal of these psychosocial conflicts is to learn the skills requisite to successfully accomplish a state of balance between the two poles of this continuum, I had indeed failed.

Upon reflection, it is presently obvious to me that the consistent berating from my teacher, coupled with conflicting messages of self-worth and competence from my home environment, led me to feel disempowered and doubting my own abilities. The message delivered to me from both of those sources taught me deep and powerful lessons. I understood all too well the feelings of shame and guilt. I was horrified to try new things for fear that anyone seeing my attempts to do anything novel would mock me into submission before I had really exerted the requisite effort to see if I could, in fact, accomplish learning a new task. In the Commission on Reading National Report (2013), such learned helplessness is often a conditioned response by children to external demands of parents and teachers. This response creates emotional, cognitive, and motivational deficits within the children, ultimately impacting their ability to effectively learn. The report continues that children learn to reinforce this maladjusted response to learning until it becomes habitual, with a propensity for such behaviour to lead to the development of childhood depression. The website Thisiswar.com (2013) expresses that such depression develops in children because of a pervading sense or feeling that there is nothing that you can do to alter the situation, so why even bother putting forth an effort to create change? Tragically this feeling of depression and helplessness becomes a toxic sense of generalized failure which slowly seeps into other areas of the children's lives.

The epigenetic nature and design of Erikson's (1959) theory proposes that the successful resolution of one stage lays the foundation for development of the virtues and skills required to create a state of homeostasis when the next psychosocial crisis arises. Those who had not yet learned to navigate such crisis were then at a decided disadvantage in their attempts to resolve the next stage of development. This is what happened to me.

This stage of development, industry versus inferiority, which generally occurs around the ages of 6 until adolescence, presents the basic challenges of learning new skills and developing an increasing ability to interact and work with others (Ateah et al., 2009, R. Evans, 1995). In fact, Erikson (1959) himself taught that learning, while a fundamental lifelong pursuit, seems to have a special dynamic or curiosity when engaged in during exposures and experiences at this time of life (R. Evans, 1995). As we interact and learn new skills, while we are busy doing and learning we develop the psychological and social skills to navigate this period of our lives.

Instead of learning through outward interactions, however, I was being drawn inward. Rather than learning through doing, I was learning through reading. Rather than developing interpersonal connections, I was content in withdrawing into myself. In hindsight, one might say that during this period, rather than learning for the sake of successful application and development or being busy learning for the sake of learning, I was learning to learn to escape. Now while reading and learning are not in and of themselves bad, it is the lack of balance between the two that holds the potential for detrimental outcomes for the individual. There is a time and place for solitude but not all the time and in every place, especially when you are 6 years old.

It is an amazing phenomenon that allows the storing of images, words, and actions in a format that we are later able to recall in vivid detail, often years later. This autobiographical memory and recall process has been the source of much research (Ateah et al., 2010; Chugani, 2009; Ekman, 1999; Huitt & Hummel, 2003; McPherson, 2011; Pert, 1997). Some researchers have tried to learn how to differentiate between exaggerated telling of tales and the accuracy of episodic and autobiographical memory recall (Ekman, 1999). But while there are those who may question the validity of the details of such recalled memories, the vivid detail of these events correlates with theories of the cognitive processes surrounding the storage and processing of memories. The more profound the experience is for the individual, the more heightened are the physiological responses involved during the storing of this information (Pert, 1997). According to Pert (1997), the information is stored chemically and on cellular levels through the mechanisms of neuropeptides. Once the memory is activated through either external cues or internal emotion or thought processes, the information stored in these chemical messengers is released into the body, triggering an inevitable response similar to the state we were in when the information was stored.

> *I can recall it clearly. As I was sitting in the classroom, I could hear the laughter of my peers just outside the window. I knew I didn't fit in. I was different. My previous teacher had told me so, and the mocking of my schoolmates reinforced it. Part of me longed to be with them, but I wasn't sure that fitting in was worth the cost. Fitting in with the group at play meant that the laughter would be turned towards me. Rather than laughing with, they would be laughing at. The more I felt the longing to be with them, it seemed the deeper I went into my books.*

One day, my teacher asked me if it was ok with me if he stayed in the room during the recess break. I told him that it was ok, with it being his classroom and all. I then returned to my books.

Perhaps I was not as deeply involved in my reading as I thought I was, and he may have seen me gazing wistfully through the window to the playground outside. Or perhaps he somehow saw, or just sensed the conflicted feelings manifesting in my body language. Then again, maybe I was not the first student he had encountered who had chosen to spend his or her free recess time in the class in the company of books rather than the company of children. I don't know what he saw that day, or how long he had seen or sensed something was amiss, but that day, he saw something and acted upon it.

Without my realizing it he had crossed the room and was sitting in a desk close to where I was reading. He cleared his throat and asked, "If you don`t mind me asking, why aren`t you outside playing with the others?" I cannot remember if I confessed the real reason why I stayed inside during the break. I had been rejected and felt shame in who I was and doubt regarding how to interact with my peers safely. I am sure that somehow he knew.

He spoke about noticing my love for books and inquired as to what types of books I was reading. At 6 and 7 years old, I remember that I would take the textbooks that my older siblings had left behind when they went to high school each day. When they left their textbooks lying around, I would take them to school and read them.

As a parent, I know that my children have sometimes held books up and modelled the behaviour of reading. They said they were reading the books as their eyes scanned the pages blankly, followed by the appropriate turning of the pages. At times they were convincing, but not so much when they were very young and the book was being held upside down. Social modelling theory at work (Ateah et al., 2009).

My teacher was surprised to find me reading textbooks so far beyond my grade level. Just like my experiences with my own children, I am sure now that he was fully expecting that the texts were more decorative than informational. So he quizzed me on what I had been reading. I do not remember what was asked, but I do recall that he was quite impressed that I had such a degree of comprehension. It was then that he asked if I had ever been interested in competing in a spelling bee. If I could read and comprehend words years beyond my current grade,then a second grade spelling list would be a piece of cake.

I was concerned that winning a spelling bee was a guaranteed way to seal my fate as class geek and principle target for the verbal barbs and bullying of my classmates. He assured me that he would help me to win in a way that I wouldn't get beat up. Recesses and lunch hours were spent together as he coached me on how to balance between high performance and schoolyard survival. He taught me how to win in such a manner that I would miss a word when I had to in order to not appear to be too smart. He taught me that no one likes someone who wins all the time because that makes other people feel stupid, and that will make them be

even meaner to me to make themselves feel better about themselves (Volk et al., 2012).

Under his tutelage, I began to feel a sense of accomplishment. I was able to experience success in a way that was meaningful to me. After a few victories just within the boundaries of our own class, I began to feel a sense of pride in my accomplishments. I began to see that I was capable of achieving when and where others had proclaimed me to be broken and faulty. It was not yet a confidence that pervaded my whole sense of being. But there, in the spelling bee lineup, I knew how to play the game. I knew that I was good, and competent and smart. He helped me to see that. But more so he helped me to feel and experience that.

Character development curriculum policies presented currently posit that as a child has continued exposure to an environment of encouragement and inclusiveness, he or she will begin to model such behaviours until they become more natural and instinctive (Ministry of Education, 2008; Saxena & Aggarwal, 2010; Shabgard et al., 2011;Vessels & Huitt, 2005). Character development in school curriculum wasn't a topic for consideration in my early years of learning. But somehow he knew. He knew what I needed and what I was feeling. But more than that, he saw in me a potential untapped. He helped me to begin to see that I could be more than the words and labels of past opinion. He had awakened within me the stirrings of the virtue of competence (Czikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1997; Madsen, 1990). He helped me begin to feel less broken. Somehow he knew the essence of character education (Arthur, 2003; Bradden, 2013; Ministry of Education, 2006). But his efforts were not policy driven, but rather personally inspired and people focussed. People are more important than policies. Where had I heard that before?

He was an oddity really. I always thought it was strange that he was the only male teacher in the school. In the late 60's, public school teachers were predominantly female. If it is true that the mentor or teacher appears when the student is ready, then this was more than a coincidental happenstance. Whatever led him to be a teacher at that school, at that time, I will never know. But I sure am glad he was.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE MANY DIMENSIONS OF ME

"So when you think of memorable teachers, who else is on the list?"

The list of names had been hastily scribbled down in front of me. Flashes of memories accompanied each of the names on the paper he had handed me. The names of these memorable teachers had, perhaps subconsciously, appeared in a chronological order. However, this was where I was not sure my professor and I would see eye to eye. The names before me were all influential figures in my adolescent period of development. I quickly realized that none of the major influences in my life at that time were traditional teachers from academia.

I conveyed to him my dilemma. Here I was, investigating memorable teachers from an academic perspective as part of my studies in the Faculty of Education. We were surrounded by professors teaching graduate students who want to be teachers how to be good classroom teachers. Yet the closest I could come to naming a traditional school teacher during my period of adolescence was my high school basketball coach.

He looked at me with a glance and a smirk that made me feel like I had uncovered the most obvious of obvious conclusions.

"Well, duh. Who said that teachers had to be within the walls of schools and classrooms?"

Evidently, I had indeed uncovered the most obvious of obvious conclusions. But he continued:

"If they changed or impacted your life in a meaningful manner then of course we
need to find a way to incorporate them into this work. The principles upon which
those memorable connections are made may well be clearly illuminated by

actions outside of the classroom. Even though some in education may feel that we

have exclusive domain over all things teaching, realize that all human

interactions should be about teaching and impacting lives. When a student needs

a teacher, one will be present. When you need to learn, the lessons will be there

wherever you may be and in a way that is most relevant to you. If you are ready

and open, all of your interactions should leave you with lessons learned and a life

changed."

Erikson Stage 5: Identity Development

In Eriksonian theory, the period of adolescence with its inherent identity crisis is seen as perhaps the most critical of the psychosocial developmental stages (R. Evans, 1995). This is a period of development where the adolescent learns to define who he or she is and where he or she fits on a personal and intimate scale as well as within the larger cultural and societal context. This personal identity manifests and evolves more smoothly as the ability to negotiate the crisis in the earlier stages of life has been developed (Chapman, 2012; Erikson, 1959). The corresponding virtue that manifests through the process of developing this identity is that of loyalty. This loyalty is measured through both a loyalty to oneself as well as to one's developing goals and values.

This is truly a period of conflicting drives within the individual. There resides in us an almost evolutionary drive to attach ourselves to some ideal that we believe will serve our personal development. Yet at times, this internal drive seems contrary to the expectations of those within our larger circles of interaction and influence. Adolescents are faced with opposing conflicting pressures in their attempt to identify and then adhere to some personally serving ideology (R. Evans, 1995). This conflict is well described in

Higgins's self discrepancy theory (1960). He corroborates Erikson's (1959) perspective by postulating that there are three senses of self that we all possess and must bring into balance. The first is the sense of beliefs or attributes that you feel you possess. The second self is comprised of the attributes that you believe that you should ideally possess. The final components, as per Higgins, are the attributes that you believe that you want to possess. This triumvirate of conflicting positions and cognitions: who I am, who I want to be, and who I ought to become, remain a source of emotional and psychological turmoil until such time as balance between the three juxtapositions is resolved (Festinger, 1962).

This sense of identity struggles between both positive and negative elements. Each of the positive and negative poles of this continuum has both an intrinsic and externally based pull. On the negative intrinsic side there are things that we don't want to do or be. This couples with externally imposed ideologies that there are also things that we are not supposed to do. From a positive perspective, we intrinsically have things that we want to do or be. This often couples in part with things that we are supposed to do or be (R. Evans, 1995).

The adolescent is at a developmental crossroads. Having had years of developmental learning from family, schools, and other societal institutions, it is natural for one at this developmental stage to desire to stretch the boundaries and learning of the past into his or her own created vision of the future (Erikson, 1959; R. Evans, 1995). The foundational psychosocial developmental skills learned in earlier stages are now flexed in a newfound sense of individuality, like a newly discovered muscle. As a product of their environment intertwined with personal, often untapped, powers of proactive potential, adolescents may easily feel that they are stranded between the vulnerability of childhood

and the strengths of adulthood. Without objective guidance and strategic support, they then latch onto any ideology in search of stability and strength (R. Evans, 1995).

It is important to note here that Erikson (1959) clearly states that adolescence is ideally a dynamic period of evolution. If this crisis is not resolved adequately, then it may well become a period of de-evolution. While childhood is indeed a time in which we learn to navigate in our environment through interacting with external stimuli, it is important to realize that we always have the ability to use those experiences, both positive and negative as a catalyst for our growth and progression (Chapman, 2012; Erikson, 1959; R. Evans, 1995).

Spiritual, Psychological, Emotional, and Social Development

Welcome to my teen years. Just as others before me, my teen years were defined by seeking to learn who I was. Unlike earlier childhood, when I was just me being a child, I realized that now I began to seek for my identity in four different areas. I strove to seek acceptance and belonging within each of these individual groups. Not that it was a conscious decision to do so. Rather it was a natural outreach based upon needs and circumstance. My family, being religious and frequent church goers, led me to develop a religious or spiritual identity. Due to economic necessity, I worked full-time while going to high school. As such, I developed a reputation and identity within my workplace. But more than being a job, this was my exposure to psychology for the purposes of teaching, training, and leading others. My third identity was developed in high school through participation in sports. So the third portion of my identity was the athlete. This stage is where I began to learn to balance and harness both positive and negative emotions to

serve beneficial purposes. Last, and in retrospect the least developed of the four, was my social or interpersonal identity.

Through this multifaceted development of my roles and identity, it became clear to me that memorable teachers exist outside of educational facilities. When we think of memorable teachers, it seems almost natural for our thoughts to immediately search the memories involving schools or formalized education. But at this time period, teachers began to take many shapes and forms. I learned that each of these developing identities required a memorable teacher of its own. While some of these teachers were more or less formal than others, they were just as effective nonetheless.

Spiritual Integrity and Balance Promote Trust and Healing

My teen religious experience for me was a microcosm of adolescence as a whole, a conflict between what I wanted to do and what was expected of me. I genuinely felt a sense of peace and goodness when I was participating. I was developing an identity of leadership among the youth. But I was not always comfortable conforming to the expected behaviour and standards taught by a relatively strict religious environment. This was reminiscent of my earlier life experiences where my struggle with authority led to physical pain and emotional coercion as a means of compliance. As an adolescent in this environment, I was often reminded that a violation or deviation from the standards and norms of the religion would surely lead to some form of eternal punishment, complete with fire and brimstone. Conform or be damned.

But there was a second means of enforcing compliance, one that was internally driven and defined. As I was developing a reputation and status through leadership among the youth of our church, I was keenly aware of the second blade of the two-edged

sword that was unsheathed in this emotional environment. This social interaction and peer-based respect led to accompanying feelings of self-worth, importance, and competence. I was somehow keenly aware that deviation from the norm would mean a loss of reputation and influence among my peers, which was of greater fear to me, more than the diminishing of status would be the return of the feelings of brokenness from earlier years.

As I was struggling to learn to balance these new feelings with my old beliefs that bubbled too close to the surface far too frequently, I had occasion to interact with a man who began to have a powerful influence upon me.

There she was, the new girl at church. Cute and friendly, with a dazzling smile and delightful eyes. However, I was painfully shy and was terrified to even speak to her. Someone like her would never be interested in a broken, evil, sinister child. But she had a brother who played the bass, and I played the guitar. Maybe he and I could get together and jam at their place sometime? Arrangements were made, and I was soon at their house.

After several hours of playing together, supper was served, and I was invited to dine with the entire family. They were a family of some great means, the dad being an executive within an international company. I was but a poor child from very humble circumstance. I felt there was no way these two worlds could ever coexist. What was I really doing here?

After dinner, the father asked if he could speak to me for a few minutes. We retired to a sitting room where he looked at me and knew I felt I didn't belong in this environment. He asked if I could tell him what I thought made him and me so different.

He knew my family and our circumstances, so how could he not know the answer to the question he had posed? I gestured towards the house and the possessions and said, "All of this. I have nothing, and you have everything that people could ever want."

He nodded slightly and said, both quietly and humbly, "Yes I have been blessed with many things. But none of it would be worthwhile without living a principled life. Without principles, life is about things, and they can come and go in a moment's notice. A life based in foundational principles is enduring. Does that make sense?" Easy to say when you are sitting in the lap of luxury, I thought to myself. But then he asked a question I had never really heard in my youth. "What principles are you striving to develop now so that you can enjoy their fruits later in life?"

As we spoke I was mesmerized. He asked me questions that began the process of uncovering the principles that were most important to me. He allowed me to ask questions to help resolve issues that I held deep inside and had never felt comfortable sharing with anyone. We spoke of hypocrisy and integrity. We spoke of teaching being a work of the heart. He taught me about the need for and inherent power in living a balanced life. During the time we spent together, I forgot that my ulterior motive was to be closer to his daughter.

As our conversation that night drew to a close, he told me that there would be a place for me at their dinner table any time I wanted to drop by. I came by unannounced on several occasions to put that promise to the test. Every time I arrived, there was a place set waiting for me. It became my home away from home.

I don't know how I knew, or perhaps it was more felt than known, but his life reflected the principles that he shared with me. There was neither hypocrisy nor self-

serving motivation in him as I had come to experience in other authority figures (Festinger, 1962). There was no hidden agenda or benefit to be gained. Through a series of interactions with him and his family, our lives began to become intertwined.

There was a resonance and harmony between his words and deeds. There was power for me in that combination. I was able to develop a trust in him, for his life was evidence of the beliefs he held and the words he spoke. The more we interacted, the more confidence I held that it was safe to share. The teaching moments became a cycle of positive reinforcement (Van Wormer & Davis, 2013) but also a period of personal healing. So when he told me that he saw in me great potential for good, for benefiting the lives of others, his personal credibility made this statement more believable to me.

Beyond teaching me of the power of integrity he taught me the principles of balance (Covey, 1997). I learned to balance between being self-critical for the purpose of self-improvement yet being objective enough to recognize and honour my growth and change from who I was to who it was possible to become. He helped me to see strengths within me that could lead me through difficult times (Van Wormer & Davis, 2013). But he also helped me to see that I possessed weaknesses that were opportunities to be developed into strengths (Hendricks, 1989; Madsen, 1990). Last, he taught me to balance between my internal and external worlds and beliefs. The external world was one of role playing and was a source of learning. But the secret and often times confusing perspectives of my internal world could only be understood and navigated by me (Kelly, 1955). Those who were external could never see nor completely understand the inner perceptions and workings of my mind.

For years I had wanted to be normal. Rather than feeling like I was being broken, I just wanted to fit in. He taught me to seek for similarities and commonalities but to simultaneously honour my differences. He taught me that the things that others saw as different were actually ways that I was exceptional and gifted. But with such an honest appraisal came an equally honest warning. For those who were average, the exceptional qualities, gifts, and insights that I possessed would always be difficult to understand.

Often I learned from him that there were parts of me, my emotions, my thoughts, my feelings, which needed to be treasured and guarded. Those were things that were reserved for the open-minded and open-hearted and not for the average. As I learned to discern both what to share and with whom it was safe to share, my spiritual journey became more balanced. I could help others but still remain true to myself.

These are not teachings that are easily comprehended by the usually distractible mind and attention of an average adolescent. But he knew what I needed and also understood what I was capable of comprehending though still in my early youth. Much like Vygotsky's theory of scaffolding and the zone of proximal development (Ateah et al., 2009) he could see my potential end result much more clearly than I could. He walked beside me, sharing my journey and provided assistance where requisite.

Over the past several decades, my spiritual identity continues to be shaped by the teachings of this master. The seeds of personal integrity were sown deeply and have been nurtured and cultivated over the ensuing years. The principles that we discussed have become the key cornerstone foundations of my Personal Mission Statement (Appendix). These foundational and supportive teachings planted in the fertile soil of adolescence have yielded a rich and bountiful harvest in my adult life.

A Serving of Psychology With a Side Order of Training and Leadership

As I was developing my spiritual identity, I was simultaneously entering the world of employment. My family was as broke as I was young. So I was instructed by my father that if there was anything that I wanted, I would have to earn the money for it myself. So off I went to the world of fast burgers and fries. But the lessons learned here reached far beyond the job training of customer service, providing quality service, and orderliness. These qualities were foundational transferable life skills that have served well in many life areas.

Without the draw of social obligations and interests, I was willing and able to spend a great number of hours at my place of employment. My quick mind and willingness to work long and hard hours led to the development of an identity at work. I had taken the spiritual lessons of balance and began applying them at the workplace. I balanced between developing relationships at work that served a career-based function while managing to keep myself distant from the activities of adolescence which often conflicted with my inner ideals and personal comfort levels.

Never having been truly comfortable in the company of adolescents, it always seemed easier for me to be drawn towards carefully selected adult company. It was through modelling their behaviours and learning from their experiences that I could learn to provide for myself and my needs. The leadership skills honed within the scope of my religious identity were able to be applied in my career. My first boss, the owner of the first company I worked for, was indeed a memorable teacher. He saw within me a sense of responsibility and maturity which allowed me to quickly be promoted within the organization.

At times I received some heckling from other teenagers employed there, being called the favorite and a suck-up. In hindsight it was much better than the evil and devilish taunts of my earlier years. I was learning to apply balance in my life experiences. I was willing to experience those verbal taunts because I was receiving needed emotional and esteem-based reinforcement. In this period of identity development I was learning what was of most importance to me and the steps I needed to take achieve it.

The owner took me under his wing and stoked my fire for learning about my own skills and abilities in a more practical application. I had learned leadership and people management skills theoretically in my spiritual domain and growth. But herein was an opportunity to see that my abilities could be transferred from role to role. I did not have to reinvent myself from setting to setting. Rather, if the abilities and skills I developed were principle based, they would require only slight modification in order to not only survive but to thrive in new environments.

When the owner promoted me to heightened responsibilities in the workplace, I was motivated to do more in order to receive more. He taught me of practical applications of business theory and management. He taught me the power inherent in understanding psychology so that I could connect with people in order to understand and motivate them more completely (Covey, 1990; Godin, 2012). He also cultivated in me my love for teaching and training. He saw that I had an ability to teach and mentor others to help them to expand the range of their competencies at work. He also observed and later pointed out to me that my peers of similar age were drawn to seek advice from me since I had not become weighed down with some of the struggles that they were going through. Thus my lifelong affinity for counselling, teaching, training, mentoring, and my love of

psychology with its inherent study of human nature began to take root and blossom. My life was being shaped and molded in memorable ways. I have always thought highly of that owner, specifically for directing me towards this particular path. But in retrospect, I see that it was me who gravitated towards the path and that I was doing the majority of the shaping. But I understand that in no way does that undermine the value or significance of this teacher in my life. Without his guidance, support, and vision, I would not be the man I am today.

Our paths still cross from time to time some 30 years later. There remains warmth and a genuineness that is humbling. Sometimes circumstance and life timing of events do not allow you the opportunity to express your thanks to those who impact your life. Often it is only after the passage of time that hindsight allows you the opportunity to see how impactful certain interactions were (Kelly, 1955). Sadly, by then, the opportunity to thank someone is missed. I see it as a blessing that I have had the opportunity to express my gratitude to him.

Strangely, he struggles to see that he did anything out of the ordinary. Perhaps that is a component of those memorable connections. Maybe it is an innate part of being a memorable teacher. When the teacher is in the act of teaching, the genuineness of the intent of the act spontaneously flows, thus making the connection organic and natural rather than a task to be accomplished (Palmer, 2007).

Learning to Harness My Emotions

In public school, any recognition I received came from inside the classroom walls. Spelling bee success had led to academic success. I was a book-loving nerd. I was a geek. I hated school sports.

The entire class was outside on the soccer field. I was allergic to freshly cut grass. I was sneezing immediately. The gym teacher selected two team captains who would then be the forces for division within our class. Both of them were star soccer players representing their ethnic communities' respective youth soccer leagues. Each captain was quickly selecting his or her peers and the other highly skilled soccer kids. It was slightly reminiscent of dinnertime around our family table. The strong survive and divide the spoils while the weak settle for leftovers and crumbs that fall to the floor. Any public school bookworm knows the feeling I was experiencing.

The choosing was getting more and more awkward because there was an odd number in the class. The team selection process was slowly grinding to a halt. Three of us remained, and I dreaded being picked last. One captain pointed towards me and my hopes of being selected rose, albeit briefly. As he pointed he said to the other team captain, "You take the redhead geek and the other loser and we will take the girl. We have a better chance playing shorthanded than having those two on our team." Devastation. As laughter erupted, I turned to the teacher to emotionally save me. Sadly he thought it was hilarious and was laughing along with them. Did I mention I hate sports?

Nobody is devastated when you are not picked as part of the debate team. Sadly, school popularity and recognition often come from excelling in sports. Maybe it is an evolutionary throwback, wrestling with the triceratops and winning type of thing that makes us honour the physically gifted among us. In my situation, learning to play sports was also evolutionary. How would I survive the transition from grade 8 to being a freshman geek in high school? If public school was a socially horrible experience, high

school would be full of dread, angst, and beatings. So I knew that to survive, I needed to learn to play a sport.

It is hard to play most sports by yourself, so I was drawn to basketball. First it was cheap. Second I could take hours and be by myself. Third, I could create a world where I was as highly successful as I wanted to be. I could pretend that I didn't miss a shot when I did. I created scenarios where I was scoring the basket that won both the game and subsequently gained the popularity that accompanied the school athletes.

Over the summer between grade 8 and high school, a most wonderful event occurred. I grew 6 inches and put on about 30 well placed pounds.

With a new physical frame and skills acquired in solitude, I tried out for the high school basketball team. It was the first time I had ever ventured to do so. After three or four practices the coach pulled me aside and asked "Why are you trying out for the team?" I remember as clearly as if it was yesterday. Fear and doubt filled my mind. That toxic feeling of helplessness that I had experienced early on in life had indeed radiated to a sense of generalized failure (Commission on Reading, 2013). I was not an athlete, and this was not my world. I immediately felt the desire to retreat to the safety of books where none could harm me. I assumed the posture of the defeated and insecure, head down and not wanting to look him in the eye (Ekman, 1993, 1995). I replied "I'm not sure why I am trying out." He said "How about because you are good. You have some skills. You just need to learn how to be part of a team."

Over the next 3 years I developed a relationship of trust, accountability, and interdependence with this coach. I was able to experience a taste of crisis resolution that had been residual from my earlier failed attempts in Erikson's (1959) stages 1, 2, and 3.

As coach and player, his trust in me led to a feeling of reciprocated trust in him and my hope in moving forward. Stage 1 crisis . . . check. He helped me to develop a sense of physical control over my environment, which led to the development of a sense of autonomy and success. These are key outcomes of stage 2. His success as a coach increased proportionally to my development as a player and leader on the team. Together we learned lessons about winning, about success, about life. Stage 3 . . . Check.

In our second year together as player and coach, I saw him in the library reading a book on coaching basketball. I was rather taken aback that my coach was reading a book on how to be a coach. Upon asking him why he was reading that book, he taught me several lessons. First, no one is ever so smart that he or she cannot learn something new from within his or her environment. Second, when you stop learning, you stop growing, and anything that stops growing is beginning to die. "Learning is living," he said quite matter of factly. He was always good with catch phrases—a trait I have long since mimicked. Third, there are powerful truths to be found in the basics. He believed that all too often, the pride and ego of people tend to take beautiful simple truths and contaminate them with complex ideas and convoluted policies. This is where I first came to understand the expression that you can't see the forest for the trees. People, he said, get so caught up in complicated theoretical game-playing and the one-upmanship of competition that they never take the time to focus on the basics. He would teach back to basics, KISS (keep it simple stupid), and the steak is more important than the sizzle.

Accolades came in from opposing coaches, players, and the occasional newspaper article. I was recognized in the halls of the high school. This recognition felt empowering but also confusing and dangerous. The more that people knew of me, the

greater my exposure and the higher the risk of being ridiculed and hurt emotionally. In

our conversations away from the court, I shared with him my concerns and fears. He

helped me to see that basketball was only a small part of who I really was. That time and

place and experience were but a moment in the big picture of my life and development.

The accolades of fickle fans pass, and I had to be prepared to be comfortable with who I

was internally. When all of the external plaudits are gone, when the cheering stops, when

my knees will no longer allow me to do those physical things that I could do then on the

court, who would be left standing? He encouraged the growth and development of my

spiritual and career identities. He then taught me a lesson I would hear repeated years

later. Learn to put first things first, and the first thing to be dealt with is you! (Covey,

1990; Lee, 1997).

You Are Who You Associate With

Last, and possibly least, was the development of my social identity. My

aforementioned memorable teachers during this period of adolescence assisted me in

balancing between the various life roles in which they had influence. I sought

development within each of those roles for two reasons. One is that such progress in

those role identities allowed me to flourish in a sense of esteem within a superficial group

setting. But the second reason was that, perhaps subconsciously, I was submerging

myself so heavily into the other roles of my life that I could use a lack of time as a

valuable reason to not engage in developing a social identity. Basketball practice was in

early morning before school began. Classes would run all day, with my lunch periods

being used for studying. Immediately after school I worked full-time Monday to Friday.

Saturday was a day for me to be alone, and then Sunday was church. I had no time for dating or other such social activities.

In high school, in spite of the accolades and popularity that I was gaining through success on the basketball court, I still preferred solitude. I was too busy with work or practice or church to worry about dating. Girls were terrifying. Cute but terrifying. I went out on one date in high school. It was my senior year, and I need a date to accompany me to the end-of-the-year sports award banquet. It was an unmitigated disaster wrapped up in nerves, awkwardness, and frequent waves of nausea.

I was learning to be a chameleon, adapting to the environmental demands placed upon me. But those areas in which my weakness could be exposed were forbidden zones to be avoided at all costs. I am not sure in hindsight if the development of my identity in these other areas insulated me from potential hurt or isolated me from those experiences that would have helped me to blossom socially.

Erikson (1959) proposes that the period of adolescence is about developing in all of these areas. Our progress as teens needs to be a holistic, well-rounded development, similar to that as proposed in character education curriculums (District School Board of Niagara, 2013; Erikson, 1959; Ministry of Education, 2008). Successful negotiation in this epigenetic stage leads one to be able to develop meaningful and more mature and complex relationships in the period of young adulthood. As I moved through Erikson's fifth stage of adolescent identity development with the help of three memorable teachers, I was beginning to correct some of the maladjusted behaviours and beliefs that I had carried on through my earlier stages of development. But as I had lacked a mentor in my social identity development, there were some very painful consequences to come.

CHAPTER NINE: ERIKSON STAGE 6: INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

While Erikson (1959) posited that the adolescent stage was the most critical of his eight stages theory of the development of man, it is here in the sixth stage that one reaches a pinnacle of sorts in his or her development. It is in this stage where, if a person has been truly successful in the earlier stages of development, one might be able to move past him or herself and extend him/herself outward towards others (Chapman, 2012; Covey, 1990, R. Evans, 1995). It could be stated that in learning how to help one's self grow and progress through the stage of identity development, a person in this stage is now able to help others to do likewise (Barton, 2001; Cook- Grueter, 1985; Denham et al., 2012; Dweck & Elliott, 1998; R. Evans, 1995).

Intimacy: The Sharing of Self-Identity

The naming of this stage as intimacy versus isolation carries with it an undercurrent referring to physical intimacy within a relationship. There is often confusion in today's society and general culture wherein intimacy holds a sexual connotation. However, according to Erikson (1959), true intimacy is much more than this shallow interpretation of the word. An intimate relationship includes the sharing of self, ideals, commitments, and identity. It is a confidence in one's own abilities and self-knowing that allows for the individual to integrate his or her own identity with another without fearing the loss of identity that they have struggled to obtain. Rather than a relationship based in the framework of cost and risk analysis, true balanced intimacy leads to a mutually enhancing interpersonal relationship (Erikson, 1959; R. Evans, 1995).

Intimacy and the Virtue of Love

As with all of Erikson's (1959) stages of psychosocial development, there is a virtue attached to the successful navigation of each of the stages. The virtue associated with this capstone developmental era is love. Again, Erikson would caution against the use of this term in its base physical definition. Such a narrow definition leads to a distortion of the transformative power of such a virtue manifest in a mature intimate relationship (Covey, 1990, 1997; Czikszentmihalyi, 1997; R. Evans, 1995). In fact it is the lifelong development of character, virtue, and maturity within an individual that allows for love not only to be felt internally and instinctively but also to be shared with meaning, power, balance, and wisdom with the person with whom one interacts (Covey, 1990; Eyre, 2003).

The development and manifestation of love in these meaningful intimate relationships appear to be a culmination of the values developed through resolving the dilemmas that were presented during each of the developmental stages in life span development. An inability to successfully resolve any of the first five stages of development will negatively impact the ability for an individual to successfully negotiate the crisis inherent in this stage of intimacy (R. Evans, 1995). It is in this sixth stage of development that all of the experiences, skills, and balanced crisis come together like pieces of a puzzle.

My mother taught me that there are two types of puzzle pieces. There are the border pieces which frame the internal image. Then there are the inner pieces that fill in the framework provided by the border pieces. The virtues gained through the successful resolution of each stage from each stage constitute the frame of this puzzle. These pieces

are the virtues of hope, will or determination, courage and purpose, competence, and

loyalty to ideologies. The labels on the filler pieces of the basic conflict puzzle, trust,

autonomy, balanced control and initiative, industry, and identity, all come together to fill

in the puzzle of intimate relationships. The stage of intimate relationship development is

based upon a willingness to share these lessons learned with others in a powerful and

meaningful way (Chapman, 2012; Erikson, 1959).

CHAPTER TEN: CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY: SO WHAT?

I sat in his office and knew what question was coming. This time I was prepared. His eyes were squinting as if they were forcing their way into the thoughts of my mind. He always liked to get in there and figure out what I was thinking. That way he could ask a question in such a way that I would sort out the chaos of my often disconnected thoughts and create a clearly organized vision of the matter at hand. But such was not for selfish reasons. Upon being able to intellectually lead me to where he knew I needed to go, he would then craft the conversation in such a way that I would think that this moment of clarity was of my own creation (Carnegie, 1993). Truth be told, these question and answer sessions of intellectual doodling were our shared Aha moments. As much as I learned from him, he always felt that he had learned something new from our exchanges as well.

Knowing now that I knew what was coming; he sat back in his chair and quietly asked "*So what?*"

Recalling the look on his face brought to me a culminating sense of satisfaction.

"*You have done hard work, good work. Well done. So now . . . what?*"

Implications for Teachers: Developing Meaningful Relationships

The purpose of this work was to understand the dynamics underlying the development of memorable relationships between teachers and their students. After emotionally and psychologically journeying through my recollections of memorable teachers and analyzing those relationships, it has become retrospectively clear that there was a sequential development in each of those relationships. This allowed for the dynamics of interpersonal relationships to deepen from a sense of survival to stability

which breeds success and then ultimately a sense of significance (Covey, 1997). As

individuals and in our relationships, we move step by step from dependence to

independence and then ultimately reach a state of interdependence. Each step along the

way has the potential to produce interactions of influence. As we progress from a state of

independence to a position of interdependence (Covey, 1997) or an intimate mature

relationship as Erikson would describe it (Erikson, 1959; R. Evans, 1995), we are able to

more fully enjoy the fruit of these memorable and life-changing interactions.

Covey (1997) agrees with Erikson (1959) that the roots of such meaningful and

life-changing relationships are foundationally based in the development of trust. Such

trust allows for the development of a sense of trust and hope. This is significant, as the

manifestation of trust in a relationship allows for a sense of security and safety in the here

and now, while a sense of hope allows for that trust and safety to move forward with the

individual into the future. As such, having persons in your immediate environment who

consistently model examples of trustworthiness facilitates the development of your own

personal sense of trust.

This principle is true whether we are considering our earliest relationships in our

family (Covey, 1997; Drexler, 2012) or within any relationship regardless of when it

occurs in our life cycle (Ateah et al., 2009; Erikson, 1959). The modelling of such

characteristics is part of the character education mandate for teachers to effectively

impact the lives of their students (Ministry of Education, 2008). However, a failure to

establish a sense of trust between student and teacher can lead to a range of behaviours

from general inattentiveness, disruptive classroom behaviours, poor academic

achievement, to demonstrative defiance (Denham et al., 2012; Evans et al., 2009; Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959; McCord et al., 1994).

The next sequence in the development of meaningful relationships corresponds to the second stage of Erikson's (1959) theory. The conflict in this stage is based upon the personal development of an internal sense of control and independence. In this stage of relationship development, one must learn the power of personal choice. If choices and options are limited through external controls, the individual's personal growth and willingness to participate in the furthering of the relationship will be limited. Through the development of self-control and emotional regulation, the child will gain a sense of balance or meaningful cooperation within the dynamics of the relationship (Gross & John, 2002; Hosotani & Matsumura, 2012; Jacobs et al., 2008; MacCann et al., 2012). As relationships develop, one moves from a sense of dependence to more of a feeling of independence. For example, a child is initially dependent upon his or her parent or student upon his or her teacher but eventually learns to do things all by him/herself and developing a sense of autonomy and purpose (Covey, 1997; Erikson, 1959).

The next step of relationship development moves one from a sense of purpose to developing a feeling of competence (Erikson, 1959). As I moved from feeling ostracized and sinister to a burgeoning sense of accomplishment, my earlier sense of trust in my teacher deepened. He facilitated the development of my sense of self-control, culminating in a sense of accomplishment and achievement. This newfound competence was supported through the scaffolding structure of a teacher who had first gained my trust and created an environment of safety and stability.

Erikson's fifth stage of development (1959) revolves around the development of a sense of self within external roles. In this period of psychosocial crisis, one establishes and identifies personal values, attitudes and accompanying relationships to which they develop loyalty and fidelity (R. Evans, 1995). This stage presents the initial deepening of earlier, more superficial relationships. In the foundational stages of development, learning occurs in generalities. As we develop our sense of identity and values in adolescence, the learning that we experience becomes more focussed and role specific (Erikson, 1959). Having grown initially from dependence to embryonic independence, Covey (1997) defines this stage as the initial baby steps moving from independence towards interdependence.

As I examined and analyzed the development of relationships with teachers and mentors throughout my life, I learned that as a teacher emerged to meet my needs at that time, this new relationship would need to go through each of the stages of development. Hence, just because I trusted my spelling bee teacher and that trust led to feelings of success and competence, my next mentor or meaningful relationship would have to pass through the steps already achieved in the last relationship before we could progress to resolving the current conflict I was facing. I discovered that such was addressed by Erikson (1959). General introductions to his theory as found in psychology and life span development textbooks generally posit that his theory possesses eight separate and distinct epigenetic stages of development (Ateah et al., 2009; Benjafield, 1997). For example, the first three stages deal with issues of trust, then autonomy and then finally initiative.

Erikson (1959) actually proposes, however, that each stage of development actually contains multiple components. In stage 1, Erikson illustrates that while the main conflict to be resolved is the issue of trust, this period also contains early-planted seeds for the development of early forms of the later manifesting conflicts of autonomy (stage 2) and initiative (stage 3). In stage 2 (the crisis of autonomy), this stage requires a deepening or more mature form of basic trust (stage 1) and a continuation of an early form of initiative (stage 3). What we would generally refer to as the third or initiative stage of crisis resolution possesses later or more matured forms of trust and autonomy (stages 1 and 2) while embryonically preparing oneself for the development or onset of stages 4 and 5 (industry and identity). Thus each stage of his theory is not rigid, simplistic nor mutually exclusive. Rather each stage is a complex interaction between lessons learned in the past, experiences of the present, and conditions and situations in the future (Erikson, 1959, R. Evans, 1995).

As my relationships, as explored herein, followed this sequential pattern of growth and development, the next step was a maturation or development of an intimate love within the relationship. In order to reach such a level of connection, each of the previous stages of the psychosocial stages had to be achieved through effective conflict, balancing, and resolution. The stirring swellings of this type of intimate relationship or connection could be experienced in part within the earlier periods of development. In order for each student–teacher connection I recalled to be meaningful in its own way, each of these relationships needed to be forged through the developmental processes of dynamic interpersonal interactions. It must pass through the stages of development of trust, stability, structure, and self-success. Then, ultimately, this connection or

meaningful relationship would bear the fruit of personal transformational significance (Covey, 1997).

Implications for Teachers: Fruits of Memorable Teacher –Student Relationships

In my practical experiences as a teacher within a private career college primarily focussed upon adults returning to academia in preparation for a career, my experience has been twofold. From the perspective of the college, my success as a teacher was based upon test scores, graduation percentages, and job placement rates. Students would comment upon the effective teaching styles used which would make difficult and abstract topics easier to understand. Further, the students noted that I would attempt to teach them how the theories were applicable and meaningful in their practice. As a teacher, feedback and assessments containing such accolades and acknowledgements are indeed satisfying to receive.

But there were connections made beyond the books. As each class graduated, I was humbled when their expression of thanks was more often geared towards the changes that they had experienced in their personal lives rather than the technical or academic knowledge learned. One student stated that it was her belief that she had learned more about life from me than from any textbook and that she had been transformed by the experiences and interactions between student and teacher. Yet another stated that my compassion, warmth, and genuine concern had touched the lives of many in the class and that she considered her life to have been enriched and blessed through the teacher–student experience.

From the perspective of the students, in many ways their academic experiences had mirrored mine. When I was stuck at a crossroads of development in my life, a wise teacher was there to see, understand, and assist me through the resolution of that developmental crisis. As I grew, I was able to then be in a position to help other to become unstuck from their dilemmas. Teachers have the opportunity to touch and empower lives to change and grow. My conviction of this truth both bears out in my experience and is corroborated in the experiences of others.

Implications for Character Development in Education: So What?

Character development and character education possess the potential for universal good within the lives of individuals, their schools, and their communities. It is an ideology whose value is always present and whose time is always right (Kompf, 2005). In 2006, the Ontario government pledged to implement character development curricula into Ontario schools (CanWest News Service, 2006). This announcement through the press was supported with the release of the Ministry of Education's Guide to Character Development (2006). According to this document, character education is defined as the teaching of children in a manner that will help them develop optimally as moral, civic, well-mannered, behaved, non-bullying, healthy, critical, successful, traditional, compliant, or socially responsible beings. Several years later, in 2008, the Ontario government and the Ministry of Education reaffirmed this stance and curricula change of focus through the publication of a public document entitled "Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12" (2008). This government document outlined a principle-based emphasis to be placed upon the implementation of a character development curriculum within school boards across Ontario.

The goal of this government sponsored curricula push was to switch traditional paradigms regarding education priorities. Rather than character, values, and principles being a background by-product of the education system, such a character development focus would now bring these personal and more human elements to the forefront of educational efforts (Can-West News, 2006; District School Board of Niagara, 2013). In the Ontario Government and Ministry of Education's "Finding Common Ground" document (2008), character development curriculum is designed to focus upon the total or more holistic nature of the student. Thus, rather than focussing predominantly upon the academic component of the educational process, it has been deemed expedient for individual school boards within the educational system to also prioritize the development of students emotionally and interpersonally (District School Board of Niagara, 2013; York Region District School Board, 2013) .

Character Development in Education: Shortfalls

In practice, however, such theory often comes up short (Arthur, 2003; Bradden, 2013; United States Government Department of Education, 2013; Vessels & Huitt, 2005). There are several potential reasons to consider when analyzing the success or failure of these educational reformation efforts. First, there is great disagreement over what principles should be emphasized. Character is a multifaceted concept that is easy to converse about yet poses great difficulty in establishing a consensus definition. Variations of character are promoted through the values, morals, and ideologies and religious, cultural, political, and family agendas. In further compounding the issue, the government has handed over the determination of how to define as well as how to implement such character development programs to the individual school boards

(Ministry of Education, 2008). As such, school boards have responded by identifying generic qualities such as courage, respect, kindness, empathy, thoughtfulness, inclusivity, fairness, and punctuality (District School Board of Niagara, 2013; York Region District School Board, 2013). Yet Kelly (1955) argues that character by its very definition, needs to be defined dichotomously so that each end of the spectrum encompasses what the character both is and is not. This is similar to Erikson's (1959) approach to defining each conflict through development of opposites (i.e., trust versus mistrust) (Chapman, 2012; R. Evans, 1995). Therefore, coming to agreement on how to identify what characteristics should be included and how to define those terms is a difficult task indeed (Kompf, 2005).

Further obstacles to the effective implementation of these programs in the education system revolve around the ability to quantify the efficacy of such programs in the school boards (Arthur, 2003; Bradden, 2013; United States Government Department of Education, 2013; Vessels & Huitt, 2005). While the government presented general philosophies to direct school boards towards a set of vague end results (Ministry of Education, 2008), the structure and method to achieve such desirable and humanistic outcomes are left up to the individual school boards to determine (Arthur, 2003; District School Board of Niagara, 2013; York Region District School Board, 2013). Thus the ability to achieve province-wide, standardized measurable outcomes would seem to be significantly impaired. How can one measure a target that is neither clearly defined nor inherently quantifiable? As of this narrative, there have been few if any published findings directly establishing a causal link verifying the efficacy of this educational reform.

It has been proposed by some educational boards that the success of this curriculum shift can be quantified through several outcomes. It is proposed that such a curriculum shift would reverse trends of increased absenteeism and dropout rates (Bradden, 2013; CanWest News Service, 2006; District School Board of Niagara, 2013; York Region District School Board, 2013). Furthermore, as schools strive to create more inclusive and student supportive environments, students are then more invested in their own educational experience. This personal student investment should manifest a corresponding increase in academic performance (Covey, 1990; Ebrahimi & Moafian, 2012; W. Evans et al, 2009; MacCann et al., 2012).

As the corollary connection between graduation rates and graduates' impact on society is further understood, one could surmise that the increased contribution of these graduates to society is measured in economic impact rather than their overall worth on an interpersonal level. Vivan Prokop, CEO of Pathways to Education, a Canadian program designed to help at-risk and otherwise vulnerable youth graduate from high school, openly promotes that through their program, there is a 1:24 return on investment as measured in the economic impact of these students (2013). As previously stated, character education is defined as the teaching of children in a manner that will help them develop optimally as moral, successful, traditional, or socially responsible beings (District School Board of Niagara, 2013; York Region District School Board, 2013). From such a definition, one can easily discern that character development truly has little to do with ones earning potential or impact on societal economics. If the focal shift in the education system is to move from predominantly academic achievement to holistic

character development, success in such an endeavour would be more accurately measured in terms of interpersonal dynamics rather than socioeconomic profit and loss.

Character Development in Education: Potential Solutions

In order to meet these criteria, I have detailed Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1959) as a lens through which character development curriculum could be analyzed and more effectively delivered. Rather than focussing upon a quality or character trait of the month type of program as is currently instituted in several school boards (District School Board of Niagara, 2013; York Region District School Board, 2013), a more focussed program of character development coinciding with the developmental abilities of the child would provide a potentially effective match. Erikson's theory focusses upon understanding and supporting the individual child as he or she strives to develop psychologically and socially within the current demands and crisis of his or her individual environment (Ateah e al., 2009; Chapman, 2012). This stage-based theory focusses upon the development of key virtues or character traits in a manner suited to the age related ability of the individual child (R. Evans, 1995). This theory has been defined as being epigenetic, meaning that each stage of development serves as a building block upon which subsequent virtues and characteristics can be added (Czikszentmihalyi, 1997; R. Evans, 1995). The theory has demonstrated individual applicability and covers the developmental periods overlapping the ages at which a child would be interacting within the educational system and other environmental influences (Ateah et al., 2009; Chapman, 2012).

The second finding of this study is that qualitative data are a well-suited tool in determining and measuring the potential for such a theoretical framework to be able to

achieve the lofty ideals inherent in character development curriculum. Character

development curriculum is designed to benefit each individual child. It has been stated as

official mandate that the schools should provide for each child an interactive, safe, and

supportive environment that would be conducive to the optimal development of each

individual child (Ministry of Education, 2008). As character development curriculum is

about the individual and his or her development through the meeting of his or her

individual needs and individual situations, then it appears that using quantitative

measures would be an ineffective form of measuring the impact of such a curriculum on

the individual. While quantitative research may well provide generalized measures about

the institution in question (Creswell, 2009; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), the most significant

impact of such curriculum change is designed to be demonstrated in its impact upon each

individual. The depth and pervasive nature of such a change can truly be effectively

measured only through some form of individual qualitative research methodology

(Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Creswell, 2009; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Gudmundsdottir,

1997, 2001).

So what does this all mean? If education is to be approached from a business

perspective, then providing the best service for the customer is of paramount importance.

It would be deemed requisite that the needs of the client be understood in order to be able

to optimally service them (Godin, 2012). Godin (2012) continues to say that businesses

that are out of touch with their clients and that try to make the client fit the service rather

than the service fitting the client will find that they have become obsolete and bankrupt.

In order to avoid such an outcome, the institution of education would be wise to take an

approach that analyzes the services provided at least in part from the perspective of the student.

If education is about assisting in the holistic character development of youth (Ministry of Education, 2008), then they would also be wise to seek out the needs of the students as identified by the students. Then educational reform could implement flexibility within the curriculum in order to optimize the individual development of the students.

If education is about preparing the students for their future lives, then it would be wise to see what has worked in the past and determine how we can best implement that in the future. If education is just about academics, the memorization of facts and figures, then we short-change generations of students by providing only a portion of that which can be learned.

Lee (1997) summarized it best by stating that the greatest influence occurs from those who balance competence with character: the power to teach; the stewardship to lead; the ability to bless. I have been able to identify teachers who are memorable because their impact on my life has been profound and lasting. I have come to understand that through a comprehensive life span developmental theory, the impact of these teachers had less to do with academics and had more to do with their impact upon my life and development as a whole. They taught, they lead, and they blessed my life. May we, as teachers, come to understand the grand calling that we hold in shaping futures through making connections "beyond the books."

CHAPTER ELEVEN: EPILOGUE: THE ART OF THE LUTHIER

My initial advisor for this project was a culminating example of a teacher who has had a powerful and life-changing impact on me. Many years ago, I had to take time away from my Masters degree studies. When I recently returned to university to complete that degree, I was terrified. As a mature student, I wondered how I would fit in. Had time passed me by? Would I be able to keep up with those who had been full-time students? Could I balance my personal and family responsibilities with the workload of school? Coming off of a number of setbacks in life personally, was I capable, competent, and deserving? Would a learning disorder that I struggled with for years be controlled, or would it impede my ability to complete my degree with good marks?

The Six Stages Culminate in a Memorable Relationship Beyond the Books

This teacher, without knowing my fears and apprehensions, made himself available to me. Our conversations ranged from school assignments to topics such as grand as truth, knowledge and life, to music and guitars. This rapport developed trust: Erikson's Stage 1.

He helped me with issues of self-esteem and self-efficacy through his consistent and genuine encouraging words and behaviours towards me. He knew I could complete this project that we had begun together. He helped me to develop a determination to see this project through: Erikson's Stage 2.

He empowered me to believe that the things I had to say were worthwhile. He helped me to believe that my thoughts and questions were valuable and insightful. No pretence, no games. He dealt with me genuinely and honestly, with humour and compassion. I began to feel like I belonged in an academic environment. My successes

under his guiding wisdom had allowed me to develop a deeper sense of purpose and the courage to continue forward in my journey. As he stood there before me, physically weak but spiritually strong, his actions and example gave credence and power to his words of courage and purpose: Erikson's Stage 3.

I have modelled some of his characteristics. I now take solace in my messy desk. I am strengthened in fighting against bureaucracy. He challenged me to seek knowledge from all sources. I seek for things that I am passionate about and pursue them. I have learned about the impact of word clouds, such as this one created based upon key concepts of what makes a memorable teacher.

So what made him memorable? Most of all, I truly believe that he cared for and about me. I was not just a number, a student, or a paycheque. I was an individual who in his eyes was capable, bright, and worthy. His confidence in me can still be felt and appreciated today. Through my interactions with him, I truly began to see, feel, and believe in my competence as a student and as a person: Erikson's Stage 4.

Prior to his passing, he called me and invited me to his "barn." This was his special place. He reminded me that in our first meeting, he had told me that perhaps, when the time was right, he would invite me out to his barn. He wanted to remain a man

of his word. Knowing who he was in his varied roles, he desired to the end to be loyal to

his goals and faithful to his word: Erikson's Stage 5.

Both of us knowing that he would soon pass, we scheduled to meet that day.

My trip to his barn that day would be a microcosmic review of our experiences

and growth together. Our original conversations were as much about music and guitars as

well as about issues of academics and learning. Gradually things shifted proportionately

to more academics and less music, and then became as much again about both. Entering

the barn, the main floor had been converted into a music studio, housing both his guitar

collection and a luthier (guitar repair) facility. He took time to share with me some of his

musical treasures. Each guitar had a story that he lovingly shared with me: a Martin, a

Gibson, an Epiphone; these few were selected as there was a lesson in each one for me. I

had shared with him some months earlier that when I first started to play guitar, I had

always dreamed of owning a Martin acoustic, and a Gibson would be my electric guitar

of choice. But he also remembered that I had shared with him in our very first

conversation that I had to sell my Epiphone hollow body guitar in order to fund my return

to university. It was clearly obvious that he had listened months earlier and had

remembered. That he would remember such a story was empowering to me. Here this

busy educator of no small repute had taken the time to truly listen to me. I felt validated

and significant. Such a small act was a powerful manifestation of his willingness to

connect with me "beyond the books." Emotional intimacy: Erikson's Stage 6.

We moved from the music room to the upstairs loft of the barn. This was his

personal office space; his home away from home. If I thought there were a lot of books in

his university office, it was nothing compared to the vast collection he had surrounded

himself with in his office retreat. He presented to me a box of books that he felt spoke to

him about me. Many were used as research within the context of this paper. Emotional

intimacy: Erikson's Stage 6.

He was more rushed than usual, knowing that time was our common enemy. He

felt that he had much information to unload in order to facilitate the completion of this

project.

He extended his now weakened arm across his desk and handed me a blank pad of

paper. *"This will be your most important tool right now."*

He was almost too weak to smile, but what smile he lacked on his face was more

than compensated in his eyes. His mind ever sharp and eager, we went to work for

several hours. It was clearly evident the physical pain that he was in. I tried to beg off a

few times to shorten our meeting so that he could rest. He told me,

"For an old man with bad habits, I will get plenty of rest soon enough."

Time stood still as thoughts, ideas, respect, love, and laughter were shared.

As our intellectual doodling session was drawing to a close, I asked him why me?

Why had he trusted me with finishing a project that he had held in intellectual reserve for

many years? He responded quickly and quietly:

"Many students over many years, and very few understand. You understand the

power, the potential and the responsibility that comes when people trust you with

their minds."

We went back downstairs in preparation for me to leave. We were standing in his

workshop beside two guitars that were in midrepair. There was both a 12-string and a 6-

string Alvarez acoustic guitar. I remember clearly because this was a guitar brand that

few people knew of but had been one of our initial bonding topics of conversation. Our very first conversation, our initial connection, had been in part over Alvarez guitars. Upon viewing these two guitars, in their state of midrepair, I asked him how he got into the hobby of repairing guitars.

"Being a luthier is a lot like being a teacher. You have to look sometimes beyond the marks and dents in the surface, past the chipped lacquer and the scratches on the pick guard. Too many people are only interested in the finished product, but I love the labour of love that goes into transforming the guitar from what it currently is to what it has the potential to become. I will check the body and see if it is structurally sound and check the neck to see if it is straight and true. If these things check out, then it is a project worth undertaking, a transformation that, under the hands of a master, can transform something of hidden potential into a work of art. I can visualize what the rich tone of the music that will be the end outcome of our work together . . . the guitar and I are partners in the transformation from what it is to its end potential outcome."

Both of us, with tears filling our eyes and obscuring our vision, could still see the moral of that story and the power it held. We had been partners together in my transformation. My body strong and neck true, he could hear in his mind the tunes that I could eventually play. I had been lovingly shaped from what I was to what I could become. My dents and chips have been restored under the hands of a master. Emotional intimacy: Erikson's Stage 6.

Although he was a man selective in his willingness to overtly show affection, we embraced, with promises spoken to meet again soon if his health would so allow. We both hoped for such, but it was not to be. But that was okay because we had indeed

connected beyond the books. Again, the pinnacle of Erikson's (1959) developmental theory as it applies to the development of relationships, the purpose of this narrative. Our relationship and interactions possessed all of the epigenetic steps outlined in the development of man (Erikson, 1959), but also as this narrative bears out, the development of meaningful, memorable, life-altering relationships.

So if he were here right now, what would I say to him? At a time of fear, you gave me peace. In a time of doubt, you gave me support. In a time of personal darkness, you gave me light. Within the chaos, you gave me hope. You have done more for me than you could have imagined, and I feel a debt that I cannot repay. Our face-to-face interaction was not long enough, but our connection transcends the ticking of a clock.

May I touch lives as you have touched mine, helping them to be better people as you have helped me. Interestingly this desire to return the gifts given, to benefit the lives of others, is described in Erikson's Stage 7.

When the student was ready, the master appeared.

Thank you for connecting with me "beyond the books."

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APPENDIX

Personal Mission Statement

I AM a Man of Integrity

Intelligence and Integrity guide my choices and learning

Nobility is my birthright for **I am** the son of a king.

Teach from the heart to touch other hearts.

Example, enthusiasm and excitement are essential for living a powerful life.

Growth from who **I am** to who I ought to be is the purpose of my life.

Riches are measured by relationships not by things.

Intuition and insight into my own soul promotes my personal perfection.

Truth is truth, whether it hurts or heals.

Yin Yang: Remember the circle, strive for balance of **Mind, Spirit and Body.**

personal mission statement of Dr. Randy McCreary 2001

Personal Mission Statement of the Author, 2001