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ACPE THEORY PAPER

Supervision and Mutual Vulnerability

Mary Christine Mollie Ward

And God saw that it was good ... God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. – Genesis 1:25b, 31a¹

Although I have been a Christian all my life and an Episcopal priest for more than seven years, it has taken me nearly four decades to claim those words from the opening pages of the Bible as my own. My experiences in clinical pastoral education (CPE) not only have been life-giving to me as I have re-discovered my "true self," but the CPE process has been a model for the life I want to lead. Moreover, understanding of oneself as "good," indeed "very good," is the underpinning for not only my true self but also the theme that ties together my supervisory theory of mutual vulnerability: the idea that authentic relationship is both the means and the end to the nurture of pastoral caregivers.

I believe that God calls each of us to risk mutually vulnerable relationships with self, God, and others. From a theological perspective, I believe that

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God values each of us just as we are, so much so that God is willing to risk God's own true self being known, rejected, and even transformed for the sake of authentic relationship. From a personality-development perspective, I believe that true selves are created, re-created, and sustained in the holding environment of authentic relationships. Without authenticity the true self withers and dies. From an adult-education perspective, I believe that we recognize and remember the wisdom of our true selves when we see authenticity in the faces of educators who are willing to risk letting us kick around in those holding environments as we grow and learn.

The opening chapters of the book of Genesis provide a metaphor of the ongoing struggle on the part of both God and humanity for authentic relationship. Through all of their struggles, they thrive when they stay in authentic relationship with one another, sometimes joyfully, sometimes angrily, but always authentically. It is only when they try to be what they are not, when they try to make their relationship something it is not, that they run into trouble. God tells Moses, "I am who I am" (Ex 3:14). Moses and the rest of us essentially make the same statement whenever we covenant to live in authentic relationship. And that is good enough.

A THEOLOGY OF MUTUAL VULNERABILITY

As a woman, mother, and priest, and as this particular woman, mother, and priest, I experience the world from a place of both power and powerlessness. I embrace both of these, for they are a part of who I am and, I believe, part of the God in whose image I am created. The much-loved, youngest child of their blended families, I grew into adolescence with my parents' marriage intact, carefully sheltered from the reality of family indiscretions and broken relationships. My parents, a war-refugee mother and a soldier father, structured their lives on the ideas that order and hierarchy provided security and that security, however illusory, was what provided life with meaning. To speak the truth openly and directly in my original family—that is, to show one's true self—was likely to get one at best reprimanded and at worst shamed verbally or abandoned emotionally. Better to take pride in using what power one did have manipulatively than to be humiliated by one's ultimate powerlessness.

For that which was supposed to have been trustworthy was, in fact, not trustworthy. Class hierarchy did not protect my blue-blood German Catholic mother from a childhood of abuse and poverty as her own mother was led off

to a concentration camp for resisting the Nazis during World War II. Following orders did not protect my Oklahoma cowboy father from the nightmares that continued to awaken him screaming in the darkness nearly forty years after earning a chest full of medals in Vietnam. Nor did my parents' silence about their own skeletons shield me from the structures that supported, indeed required, their orderly, hierarchical view of the world. Those structures dictated my childhood playmates, who I could love, and my first views of authority, including God.

My early experiences with hierarchy inform my struggle to challenge the very structures that have formed me, and, after many efforts to "slap at authority" during CPE training, the dualistic paradigm from my youth no longer satisfies me: the idea that for one person to "win" someone else must "lose" no longer makes sense to me. Instead, I find that the paradox and ambiguity and mystery that characterize authentic relationships provide meaning to my life even as they diminish false security. As I live and move and have my being in authentic relationship with God, neighbor, and self, my supervisory work is based on a theology of mutual vulnerability: that is, the idea that God risks God's self to be in authentic relationship with us and that each of us is similarly called to risk self in order to be in authentic relationship with God and each other.

The Triune God: A Circle of Authentic Relationship

This theology of mutual vulnerability is most fully expressed in the concept of a Triune God. In using "triune" rather than the more traditional "trinitarian," I consciously claim the mystery of understanding God as a "tri-unity" rather than simply a trinity or simply a unity. This distinction has its roots in my many conversations, and often heated arguments, with teachers of theology. Sometimes I experienced affirmation of my ideas, but, at other times, I was devastated by a sense of being silenced and shamed. The understanding of God that emerged from these struggles is of one who values not only the good of the community but also the inherent goodness of each person and of one who is willing to take risks to be in relationship with humans. As Creator, God continues to endow humanity with freewill and, in doing so, risks rejection, glorying not in blind obedience or empty praise but in authenticity and integrity. As Christ, God experiences our incarnate humanity and risks being known as one who is most powerful in vulnerability. And as Holy Spirit, God establishes relationship between self and others and risks transformation of self as well as other.

St. Augustine of Hippo and the Episcopal priest Carter Heyward both offer images of God as triune that are less like a group of persons than a group of relationships.² Being able to bring together two such diverse theologians represents for me a healing of a split. Some four hundred years after the articulation of what came to be known as the three-legged stool that supports the Anglican understanding of faith, the Episcopal Church in which I was raised and find my spiritual home continues to be wracked by battles over the primacy of scripture, tradition, or reason.³ Both Augustine and Heyward have been painted as heretics by their opposition, and yet both help me to find the words and images to enrich and express my theology—a theology that neither accepts without reason the “orthodoxy” of a literal interpretation of scripture nor breaks ties with a tradition that continues to be life-giving to me.

Russian iconographer Andrei Rublev’s image of the “Old Testament Trinity” portrays Abraham’s three divine visitors at table under the oaks of Mamre (Genesis 18).⁴ In the icon, none of the figures is subordinated to either of the others, and yet each of them is self-differentiated. They draw near to one another, but their faces are fully visible. Their circle and the possibility of relationship are not closed to us. In sitting around Abraham’s table, they accept his hospitality and the risk that this might incur an obligation.⁵

I am reminded of a conversation in the IPR group in the first internship that I co-supervised. For some time, I had felt that the process-group sessions I led rarely moved to the emotional, inter-relational plane but rather stayed on a very heady, disconnected level. This was borne out in the feedback I received from my training supervisor. One day, after struggling yet again with my role, I finally owned up to the group about feeling insecure and uncomfortable with my leadership, and then I took the risk of asking for feedback about how this admission made the group feel about me. Almost immediately the tone of the session changed. The group’s feedback ranged from reassuring (“It just shows that you’re human”) to stinging (“If you don’t know what the hell you’re doing, I’m really in trouble!”), but it certainly could not be described as heady or disconnected.

Rublev’s image and my IPR group experience are not a hierarchy that places God/supervisor at the top and humans/interns at the bottom but a truly mutual relationship that allows each to be nourished and, albeit, potentially hurt by the other.

I have learned painfully that I cannot automatically expect the kind of hospitality that Abraham extended to the angels of the Lord.⁶ In the story of Abraham’s hospitality, his openness to the strangers in his midst is what

brings him into such intimate relationship with God that they latter are described as talking and arguing as if they were the closest of friends. But there is another darker story in the canon. As Abraham’s visitors continue their journey, they travel to Sodom, where they encounter Abraham’s nephew Lot, who also extends hospitality to them (Genesis 19). In this story, the vulnerability of both Lot and the divine visitors becomes apparent as Lot’s neighbors seek to abuse them. This relationship stuff is risky business, apparently. It also is messy business that rarely produces clear victims and perpetrators, as the sordid epilogue of Lot’s daughters illustrates. And, yet, I still believe we are called to live into our creation, to be open to authentic relationship through mutual vulnerability.

I see the goal of the transformation that I am trying to effect in supervision as authentic relationship: relationship that allows each person to be in covenant both to self and to the other. Thus, my idea of transformation is not becoming what one is not. Rather transformation is becoming aware of and blessing what one is—past, present, and future.⁷ The idea is that we are good by our very nature, not by anything we do but simply by being true to ourselves. I am convinced that “sinfulness” (that is, separation from God) is not our nature at all. Rather, sinfulness is not being true to our nature—our nature as relational and vulnerable beings created in the image of a relational and vulnerable God. A life of sin involves a conscious choice to do or, as the words of the Confession say, to leave undone.⁸ The good life, on the other hand, is a state of being, and we are “good” simply by merit of our existence as relational, vulnerable beings.

Closing the Divine-Human Gap: Mutual Vulnerability

As a Christian and a priest, the priestly image of the second of the Triune circle of relationships resonates most deeply with me.⁹ The integration of Christ as fully human and fully divine prevents me from splitting off parts of myself or another that make me uncomfortable. In the person of Jesus of Nazareth, I experience the Christ as the embodiment of the kind of relationship of mutual vulnerability that invites us to a feast where human and divine can sit at the same table without pretense or shame. God’s interaction with humans is an invitation to a place where the vulnerability of God and the sliver of the divine in the human soul can meet, where “there is no in between,” to use Dame Julian of Norwich’s phrase.

In the supervisory context, my encounters with Jack, an intern who was struggling hard to articulate his spiritual identity, stressed for me the importance of integrating both the human and divine natures of Christ. Not

yet twenty-five years old, Jack had been raised a Roman Catholic but had moved from one Protestant denomination to the next, with brief forays back into Catholicism in between, as he tried to make sense of what he perceived as a mutually exclusive call to ordained ministry and authentic manhood. Jack seemed intent on splitting the human and divine natures of Christ, leaving himself without a way to embrace both the human and the divine in himself or others. My supervision of Jack centered on encouraging him to find ways of relating to God, himself, and others that were not “either/or” but “both/and,” inviting him to image a “third way” of being.

For it is my belief that God interacts with humanity by being human and, in being so, dares us to be divine. As God experiences Godself as Jesus, the human carpenter from Nazareth, and as we experience ourselves as the Body of Christ, the hands and feet of the Risen One, the gap “between” divine and human is closed. In that shared relationship of being, not doing, God and humanity connect. As they connect, a relationship is established between beings who in themselves are inherently relational and who have no existence outside of relationship.¹⁰ Such beings, to exist, must put their relationship first. They must be willing to risk self for the sake of being in relationship because only in doing so can they encounter what is truly precious and life-giving to and in each other.

The Transformative Power of Mutual Vulnerability

In my experience, mutual vulnerability, far from undermining authority, creates a safe environment and models a trustworthy relationship that is constant as well as open to the other. When a relatively “powerful” person (like a chaplain or a supervisor) shows vulnerability to a relatively less-powerful person (like a patient or a student), it gives the less-powerful person permission to also show vulnerability.

I remember an encounter in same-day surgery with a woman who was having a miscarriage. She told me her story rather matter-of-factly and with little emotion. I offered to pray with her and, as I prayed, tears filled my eyes and began to roll down my cheeks. When she saw me weeping, she also began to weep.

In seminary, I confessed to a priest I greatly respected that I sometimes had doubts about God’s existence. Rather than judging me or trying to convince me otherwise, he simply said, “Me, too.” That admission did much for my faith—in God as well as the priest. I realized that, if this notable cleric and author could have doubts and still be a person of faith, so could I.

In the supervisory context, the more I tried to convince an intern named Sean that he should not mistrust the group or me, the more I used my relative power in a hostile way and the more defensive he became. But when I began to approach him on a vulnerable level, letting him know not only that I and the group had been hurt by him but also that I grieved the injury he was doing to himself, he began to lower his defenses, talking and weeping about his sense of betrayal. As I opened my heart to him, he saw my most authentic self—someone who valued him and our relationship enough to risk the possibility that my heart might be broken—and he received permission to be his most authentic.

Allowing myself to be vulnerable to another allows that person the freedom to accept or reject my love, and when I do so, I act in the image of the God who showed vulnerability to me by giving me the capacity to accept or reject God’s first love to me. It’s also my declaration that relationship in and of itself is worth taking a risk for. If a relationship is worth taking a risk for, it follows that I, in and of myself, and You, in and of yourself, also are worth taking a risk for.

Being deemed worthy of another’s vulnerability and openness is profoundly transformative and profoundly healing, which, after all, is the point of pastoral care. Mutual vulnerability takes relationships to a feeling level, where people are empowered to be their most authentic selves and, thus, more able to cope with the painful realities of life.¹¹ When I approach my patients and students on a heady level, our relationships often are characterized by mistrust and intellectual sparring. But when I approach them on a feeling level, I allow them to see my most authentic (i.e., vulnerable, undefended) self and create an atmosphere in which they also can be authentic. It is on this vulnerable, feeling level that I believe that human beings are able to speak the language of God and that God is able to speak the language of human beings. It is on this vulnerable, feeling level that authentic relationship is created and transformation occurs. And that is good enough. Indeed, very good enough.

A PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT THEORY OF MUTUAL VULNERABILITY

As I articulate my understanding of the development of personality, I begin with myself, Mary Christine Mollie Ward. I know myself primarily as “Mollie,” my family’s nickname for me. Being “Mollie” created significant confusion when I began school since my birth and baptismal certificates identify me as “Mary Christine Ward.” “Mary” was my paternal grandmother, and “Christine” is my own mother. When, as a small child I behaved contrary to my family’s expectations. My German godmother tagged me *böse Christine*,

or “mean Christine,” the message being that I (Mollie) disappeared when I misbehaved. As I began my professional career as a journalist, I thought to resolve the Mary-Mollie confusion by using the byline “M.C. Ward,” only to encounter assumptions that I was trying to disguise my gender. When I married and chose to keep my own last name, my parents expressed anxiety that people might think I was “living in sin.” At age 35, the same year I began my CPE residency, I finally asked my bishop to say, and bless, all of my names—Mary Christine Mollie Ward—when he called on God to make me, first, a deacon and, later, a priest in God’s Church.

The Holding Environment: Womb of the True Self

Claiming—that is, saying and blessing—those names has been a lifelong struggle to claim my true self. Alice Miller describes people who throughout their lives have been “praised and admired for their talents and achievements,” people who “should have had a strong and stable sense of self-assurance,” and yet struggle with a lurking “feeling of emptiness and self-alienation.” Miller’s description resonates deeply with me, especially when I consider her definition of the true self as the “integrity” of the small child before it begins to defend itself in order to survive.¹² Throughout my childhood and early adulthood, I felt forced to choose between the needs of my true self and the needs of my parents and siblings. Sometimes, I have clutched desperately at the idea that I am just a poor, helpless victim of thoughtlessness and envy. At other times, I have seen my loved ones as the innocent victims of abuse and neglect.¹³ As a supervisor, becoming aware of my true self and her needs has been crucial for my efforts to create a holding environment in which my students can recognize and bless their true selves.

I am a product of the post-modern era and an advocate of intersubjectivity. Although expressions such as “holding environment” and “true self” are the language of object relations theory, I find it to be not only impossible but bad theory to limit my supervisory practice to the tools of only one theoretical framework. As described by Robert Stolorow and others, intersubjectivity favors process over content. It is “both experience-near and relational ... offering broad methodological and epistemological principles for investigating and comprehending the intersubjective contexts in which psychological phenomena arise.”¹⁴ As such, intersubjectivity lends itself to the use of tools from a variety of relational theories, particularly object relations and self psychology, and I draw freely from them in my work.

With that said, I base my theory of personality development on the idea that not only are human beings created in the image of a fundamentally relational God, but that authentic, mutually vulnerable relationships are the holding environment—indeed the womb—in which our true selves are created, re-created, and sustained.¹⁵ Rather than looking at personality as an individualistic mechanism aimed at the fulfillment of drives, relational theory paradigms posit that there is no such thing as an isolated individual and that the relationship between parent (usually mother) and child is foundational to the development of personality.¹⁶ Even after a child is born, the parent ideally continues to create a holding environment as the child transitions from infancy to adulthood. In this holding environment, the parent helps the child to make sense of its world and develop means of experiencing the soothing relationship of the parent when the parent is absent. CPE has been such a holding environment for me.

My own motherhood has coincided with much of my CPE journey, from internship through residency and supervisory training, and my children have provided me with a window on the earliest stages of human development. For example, as I was writing this paper, I attended a CPE regional conference with my husband and children. During some free time one afternoon, I spent a couple of hours with my children at the hotel swimming pool, and I was struck by the contrast in their attitudes toward the water. As I held him loosely, my toddler son Ian floated on his back or his belly in what seemed like absolute relaxation, even after I once lost my grip and he momentarily slipped under the water. By contrast, my pre-school daughter Fiona anxiously clung to me and begged me to support her whenever I even suggested she try to float, though we often were in water shallow enough for her to stand. At just over two years of age, Ian seemed fearless. Without the benefit of knowledge, he plunged blissfully from one experience to another. On the other hand, “brave” seemed the better word to describe five-year-old Fiona. She entered the water with fear and trembling but begged to return again and again. As their mother, it was my job to hold them both, loosely enough that they could breathe and splash, securely enough that they could relax and float. Eventually, I believe, this combination of breathing, relaxing, splashing, and floating will become swimming.

Although the parent-child relationship is for many people the first holding environment that they experience, holding environments are necessary for transformational learning throughout the lifespan. Just as I see my primary job as a mother to create a unique holding environment for each of my children as

they grow into themselves as human beings, I see my job as priest, chaplain, and pastoral educator to create holding environments for my parishioners, patients, and students as they continue their process of becoming.¹⁷ As a priest and chaplain, I help patients negotiate the transitions of life, including birth, illness, and death, particularly through the sacrament of the pastoral relationship. As a pastoral educator, I help students transition into their pastoral identity, individually and as members of a group, particularly through the sacrament of the supervisory relationship. So, for example, in the first unit that I solo supervised, when my students began to negotiate authority by challenging what they had identified as the “power” of the system (i.e., me the supervisor), some clung to me, some thrashed about and some seemed to bob along unaware of what was happening. As their supervisor, it was my job to hold all of them, loosely enough so that they could breathe and splash, securely enough so that they could relax and float. In the process, true selves began to emerge.

Holding environments encourage the development of the true self in two main ways. One is by allowing people to make meaning of their experiences and relationships. Meaning-making is how we integrate our experiences into our lives, the “reflection” portion of the clinical model of learning. I believe that transference is a natural and significant part of the meaning-making process. Although classical theory views transference as a pathology that must be overcome, intersubjective theorists see transference simply as the way people “organize” or make meaning of their experiences: “From this perspective, transference is neither a regression to nor a displacement from the past, but rather an expression of the *continuing influence* of organizing principles and imagery that crystallized out of the patient’s early formative experiences.”¹⁸

Because the holding environment is not the end in itself, the other way that the holding environment functions is to provide a place for people to craft means of soothing themselves when they inevitably encounter crisis.¹⁹ Ideally, young children learn through ordinary experience not only that their parents don’t cease to exist when they are absent but that, even when they are absent, the children can draw on these internalized “selfobjects”²⁰ to sustain them when they are uncertain or fearful.²¹ Even in adulthood, as people experience fragmentation of the self, either because of derailments in early childhood or situational stress as adults, they need a re-charging, as it were, of their selfobject batteries. The holding environment that I created with a group of students when they challenged my authority shortly after mid-unit served those two purposes. By allowing them to voice their feelings without judgment or criticism, I fostered the holding environment. By educating them

about the process of group development, I helped them to make meaning of their experiences and to develop means of soothing themselves the next time they encountered conflict.

Empathy, Mutuality and Curiosity: A Foundation for Supervision

In my view, empathy, mutuality, and curiosity are the three primary and interconnected ways in which a holding environment is created. Lee and Martin describe empathy as “a mode of gathering subjective data about another self through vicarious introspection. It is the process of exploring what another thinks and feels by placing oneself in another’s shoes.” In other words, empathy is the capacity to feel with, rather than to feel for.²² Although I believe that human beings are hardwired to have the capacity to be empathically connected with one another, I think it is a rare person who emerges from childhood without scars from faulty attunement, and those scars in turn influence our capacity to be empathically attuned with others. Indeed, I believe that patriarchal society and religious traditions, including my own, have created whole structures that inhibit the capacity for empathic attunement.²³

In contrast to the idea that empathy is synonymous with support and affirmation, I believe that empathy is always confrontational (literally, “with face”) and many times is challenging and even uncomfortable. I establish empathy with my students when they experience me as someone who will tell it like I see it. This was particularly so with Gene, a congregational intern who had experienced the childhood trauma of discovering the dead body of his mother.

Gene’s family and friends’ response to his grief was to advise him essentially to “grin and bear it.” He carried that advice with him into adulthood, consistently sporting an upbeat attitude and often reflecting on how the smiles of his patients made the stresses of his job worthwhile. Shortly after mid-unit, I confronted Gene about how his “happy face” attitude left his patients reluctant to disappoint him with unhappy feelings. This led to a very important awareness on his part regarding what he came to see as a life organizing principle of marching past, rather than through, grief.

In confronting him, I refused to play along with his false self by putting a happy face on the visit itself. Instead, I was empathically attuned to him by looking his true self in the eye and seeing the little boy who needed a holding environment, not a happy face, to feel and explore his grief.²⁴

The second key ingredient to establishing a holding environment is mutuality, which starts with the understanding that there is no such thing as ob-

jectivity. Inevitably, just as two heavily laden travelers meeting on a narrow rope bridge have to negotiate their conflicting needs, I bump into someone else, and we have to negotiate what happens next.²⁵ In the context of an “inter-subjective” milieu characterized by authenticity, I am required to acknowledge that I bring my own baggage, as well as insight, into any interaction, whether it is with my children, my patients, or my students. For example, when I experienced myself not only tuning Gene out when he went off on one of his lengthy tangents but fearing to hurt his feelings by telling him so, I realized that I was responding to him in much the same way that I do to an elderly relative. Understanding that my subjective reality had an impact on his subjective reality as well as on the space between us allowed us to create a holding environment in which to make more sense of our own relationship. Mutuality also involves willingness to model risk-taking: I cannot ask of others what I am not willing to do myself.

In my view, the final significant ingredient to the creation of a holding environment is curiosity, which I see as essential to the healing of the good-bad object splitting that characterizes early childhood and that follows many people into adulthood. Initially, of course, we are literally connected to our mothers, and, object relations theory suggests, the newborn cannot even conceive of the mothering one as “other” to itself, much less as part of a relationship. Soon, however, the infant begins to differentiate, and the first attempts at this are to identify its experiences as “good” and “bad” (e.g., warmth versus cold, satiation versus hunger). As this splitting occurs, the infant also is confronted with the reality that the mothering one—upon whom the infant is dependent for life itself—sometimes is experienced as “good” and sometimes as “bad.” Although unsettling, the realization that “good” and “bad” not only exist within the mothering one but also within the child’s own self is a move toward maturity. Ideally, splits begin to heal with the awareness that what Winnicott describes as the “good enough” mother (and by extension the good enough child) contains elements of both “good” and “bad.”²⁶

Being curious rather than condemning, inquisitive rather than assuming, has been essential to creating a holding environment for my students. As suggested earlier, when integration does not take place early on, people develop defenses in order to survive.²⁷ The supervisor’s role is to encourage exploration and understanding of these defenses with the aim of making the student a better pastoral caregiver.

John grew up with the idea that not having the “right” answer was to be condemned. John’s father taught him that the way to the right answer

was an orderly, linear progression and expressed frustration with John’s imaginative thought processes, which John learned to condemn as illogical and rambling. Even though John achieved success and respect in his engineering career, he became frantic whenever he assumed he had given the wrong answer, no matter whether the information being sought was new to him or not. When I suggested that the goals for his CPE internship that he had listed as professional and skill-development sounded more like personal goals, he became visibly flustered—shuffling papers, darting eyes, stammering. He was amazed when I invited him to be curious about what was happening, particularly about his anxiety. For the rest of the quarter, curiosity was a theme for John and served him well as he reflected on his experiences, both affirming and challenging, with patients and peers.

In the language of family therapy, the aim of the holding environment is to “contain the emerging family anxiety so that the family has a place to hold it while they look at it and learn about it.”²⁸ In my view, the creation of a holding environment not only allows a person’s true self to emerge (or re-emerge, as the case may be), but it also sets up the necessary condition for healing and learning to take place. I believe that holding environments that allow for the emergence of true selves are created by those who, themselves, have been held. As the writer of the First Letter of John puts it, “We love because [God] first loved us” (5:19). The authentic relationships that I have experienced have helped me to create such a holding environment. Throughout my childhood, even while flooding me with praise and attention for intellectual and artistic achievements, my family emphasized my basic helplessness and ineptitude concerning practical things. “Little Mollie couldn’t possibly take care of herself” was the refrain. While I was pregnant with my first child, I told my mother and my closest sibling that I did not want them to visit for at least a week after the baby’s birth. In creating for myself a holding environment, I allowed myself the chance to internalize a mothering one who was confident and competent enough to also be open and accepting of help. By contrast, just a day or two after my second child was born, I remember awakening from an afternoon nap, my son nestled in the crook of my arm, to the sound of my mother vacuuming downstairs. Rather than feeling anxiety about my mother’s opinions about my standards of housekeeping, I found myself filled with an overwhelming sense of warmth and well-being. My true self could welcome my mother’s visit in ways that Little Mollie never could. From these experiences has developed a deep determination not only to recognize and bless *my* relational, vulnerable self but also to invite students and patients to begin their

own processes of healing and learning by recognizing and blessing them for what they are: precious children of God.

AN EDUCATION THEORY OF MUTUAL VULNERABILITY

I began to give up childish ways of learning the day my seminary professor directed me not to disagree with him in class anymore.²⁹ My disagreement, he said, made him feel like a failure as a teacher because if he were a better teacher he would be able to convince me of his position. Although I finished seminary first in my class,³⁰ I graduated convinced that I just did not have the intellect to “do” theology. About a year later, in the midst of my CPE residency, I found myself dreading the day when I would have to present my pastoral theology paper to my supervisor and peers, preferring to silence myself before my supervisor could do so (as I was convinced would happen). To my utter surprise, my Ivy-League-educated supervisor not only tolerated my theology, he actually encouraged it. The reaction of my professor (with whom I actually aligned theologically more closely than almost any other professor) hurt me, but it didn’t really surprise me. As I eventually realized, it fit in quite neatly with the dualistic worldview I had learned from my parents as they dealt with conflict either with shouting or with silence. I was as used to that way of being as an old pair of shoes. What did surprise me was the support of supervisors and mentors who refused to accept my claims of ineptitude and, in retrospect, the support of other educators and seminary classmates who refused to be silent about the obvious tension between my professor and me. *That* way of being challenged and perplexed me.

As I wrestled in supervision and therapy with feelings of anger and curiosity, I not only began to want to heal but also to learn. In my view, the primary goal of therapy is self-awareness for the purpose of healing and living life, while the primary goal of CPE supervision is the practical application of self-awareness for the purpose of establishing pastoral relationships. The two are intimately related because, without awareness, learning cannot take place.³¹

Joshua, an intern in a hospital-based CPE unit, began the summer with the belief that he should see every patient on his large surgical floor every day, logging upwards of twenty brief visits a day but doing little pastoral care. As Joshua began to explore family-of-origin issues around scrupulosity, he began to see a pattern among current dynamics, such as driving himself to visit every patient, arriving a half-hour early for every appointment, and anxiously inquiring about reading assignments months before

the start of the unit. Similarly, as he began to explore his family of origin’s ways of dealing with conflict, he began to make connections with his tendency to swing between superficial, friendly visits and heady, theological debates. The result was not only a much deeper ability to bless his own feelings but also to validate the feelings of his patients and thereby attain to deeper pastoral relationships. With the support of supervisor and peers, he not only began to heal himself but to learn.

The support that I refer to is the idea of mutual vulnerability—that is, the willingness to risk authentic relationship. Socrates referred to the educator as one who reminds rather than teaches.³² Through the twentieth century, education theorists refined the role of the educator as a facilitator rather than an expert. For example, Lindeman writes of “teachers who are also searchers after wisdom and not oracles” and Palmer writes that, “by Christian understanding, truth is neither ‘out there’ nor ‘in here,’ but both. Truth is between us, in relationship.”³³ An adult education theory of mutual vulnerability requires a supervisor who is willing to show an authentic self and begins in the subjective reality of a student’s experience and learning style.

Authenticity as Boundary

Just as the boundary between teacher and learner is semi-permeable, the boundaries between truth and untruth, safety and risk, are more a membrane than a solid wall. As a supervisor, the primary boundary that I set is a pledge to authenticity—to risk saying the things that need to be said, taking ownership of my feelings, and covenanting to stay in relationship. Healthy boundaries are established by authenticity. The educator’s most basic job is simply to be an authentic self because authenticity is essential to the establishment of the holding environment necessary for learning. Clinical psychologists such as Rogers emphasize the importance of safety in the learning process, arguing that “significant” learning can only take place when the self is maintained or enhanced and that the self must be relaxed and free from threat for experience to be assimilated.³⁴ In my own experience, authority figures often used silence as a weapon to keep me wondering if I had made a mistake, and they almost never acknowledged their own mistakes. This created a person who was hyper-vigilant and far more concerned about right answers than right relationships. During my residency, it was only after I began to trust my supervisor’s authenticity (his willingness to claim his part in a break in empathy, for example) that I could relax enough to hear his legitimate critique of my halting attempts to articulate my pastoral theology. As I have entered supervisory work myself, I have found that a central task

is to let my students see me for who I am, as a means both of creating safety and of modeling authenticity.

The supervisor's role in creating safety and modeling authenticity also affects the evaluative nature of the CPE process. I regard the evaluation of students as an ongoing, mutual process rather than a one-time, top-down event. There should be no surprises when I present a student with my final supervisory evaluation. Thus, if I have not voiced an issue with a student previously, I do not use the final evaluation as a forum to present new concerns. Along the way, I treat silence with great respect and even caution in the supervisory process.

From a subjective standpoint, throughout the quarter, I take care in crafting my comments and recommendations with an eye to speaking the truth in love, both in terms of content and of process. Grammatically, I make a point of offering affirmation before critique, and I temper critical remarks with phrases like "it seems" and "in my experience," rather than making universal pronouncements. In my formal, final evaluation, I address the student's own learning goals. And I make a point of finishing writing my evaluations before the students present their final self evaluations to give them freedom to express themselves without fear that their statements will influence the "stuff" that I inevitably bring into the supervisory relationship.

The objective portion of the evaluations is characterized by a numerical score for each of the objectives outlined in the *ACPE Standards* and a yes/no achievement of the outcomes. Obviously, there are many subjective elements to even this portion of the evaluation. The numerical scores, for example, are based on my observation rather than a multiple choice test after all. However, just as using a lectionary cycle of scripture readings keeps me "honest" in my preaching, systematically addressing the objectives and outcomes of the *Standards* helps me to check my expectations against those of the larger community.

Group Authenticity: Making a Safe, Womb-like Space in which to Learn

I see the holding environment as the womb in which not only the true self but also the group's self is created, which, in my view, is the overarching project of a process group.³⁵ The group's first task is to create a holding environment in which the group can wonder about its purpose, its norms, and its willingness to take risks. So, for instance, when I am working with a new group, we begin telling our life stories only after we have had a formal conversation about group norms—a conversation in which students and super-

visor alike take active roles. However, creating safety involves more than a list of rules: it requires someone to model risk-taking. I begin that process by sharing my own life story and continue as we move into didactics, when, for example, I use my own family system to discuss genograms. As I provide a model for the students of an authentic self, I show them that it is acceptable and possible both to be vulnerable and to set boundaries.

As others begin to take risks, the group moves into the second stage of its development, in which the group begins to interact authentically, that is, confronting by supporting and challenging. In this stage, the group wrestles with issues of who is in and who is out, negotiation of authority, and maintenance of the holding environment. For example, in the first unit of CPE I supervised by myself, the group began in earnest to negotiate my authority, and its own, when one of the intern's view of authority ran headlong into my view of shared authority.

The last, leave-taking stage of group development is the most reflective, although action and reflection flow through all of the stages. The group begins to form transitional objects and, in a sense, becomes one. The group begins to make meaning of its experiences by wondering about its legacy and how to take leave of one another. For example, just as many families begin to tell humorous stories about a loved one who has just died, in the final weeks of the unit, students often begin to tell stories about their experiences in the context of "remember the time when ____?" I formalize this process by asking members to reflect on how they will say goodbye to one another and in the graduation service, when I not only give a "charge to students" but invite them to speak as well. In these ways, the members of the group leave the holding environment with "something to carry away" and inform their future actions.

The student's job, at its most basic, is to experiment with what it feels like to interact authentically in the holding environment—to kick around in the womb, as it were. Thus, the experience of the student is primary in adult education. To educators like John Dewey, all genuine education comes about through experience. Moreover, each student brings into the CPE learning process a lifetime of experiences upon which to build. "Every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after."³⁶ In my own story, for example, it was my experiences with risk-taking that led me to my theology of mutual vulnerability. As I experienced vulnerability, I sought to make sense of my experiences and, in doing so, clarified my theology.

Experiential Learning, Receptivity, and Resistance

When learning is rooted in experience, it gives voice to those who are not heard.³⁷ Feminists point out that what the dominant culture has taken for granted about how people learn has tended to focus strictly on European-American men's experience to the exclusion of just about everyone else.³⁸ In discussing the concept of "caring" as a feminist approach to moral education, Noddings emphasizes that the response of the caring-one to the one-who-is-cared-for is based in receptivity to the experience of another. Noddings contrasts a "peculiarly rational, western, masculine way" of looking at empathy with a "feminine" model, noting that "the sort of empathy we are discussing does not first penetrate the other but receives the other."³⁹ This model of receptivity seems particularly suited to the richness of a multicultural learning environment, which, in my view, depends on mutuality and safety.

Suzanne, a hospital-based intern, asked me during her admission interview whether BroMenn, located in the corn and soybean fields of central Illinois, would be accepting of her as an African-American seminarian from the Southside of Chicago. As I assured her that the center and I would indeed welcome her, I showed her pictures of previous (integrated) groups, but I believe it was my respect for and openness to her life experience that cemented our relationship. Thus, for example, as she hesitated to voice her concerns about the treatment some of her patients were getting, I helped her to draw connections between ways in which she herself had not been heard.

My response affirmed the wisdom of her perceptions, even when voicing those insights conflicted with the power structure of the hospital. This seemed to mark a profound shift in Suzanne's view of authority and, in turn, seemed to bolster her understanding of her own authority and led her to advocate more vigorously for her patients.⁴⁰

Experiential learning also helps to ensure that students take ownership of their learning.⁴¹ In my view, the best learning is motivated by what Malcolm Knowles and others describe as "the individual learner's own perception of what he or she wants to become, what he or she wants to be able to achieve, and at what level he or she wants to perform."⁴² If experience helps students to make meaning, learning styles offer clues as to how they might craft future actions. In my view, learning styles move the conversation beyond "right" and "wrong" ways of learning and toward meeting students at their points of need. Howard Gardner and others theorize that people use "multiple intelli-

gences" to learn.⁴³ Each student's experiences and styles combine with those of the supervisor to create a unique relationship and learning opportunity.

Not every opportunity for learning is captured, of course. Sometimes the student seems to actively resist learning. In thinking of resistance, I find it helpful first to distinguish between a "problem about learning" and a "learning problem."⁴⁴ Ekstein and Wallerstein describe learning problems as skill-development issues, while problems about learning are a matter of deeper self-awareness. In my view, resistance indicates there is a problem about learning and is addressed most appropriately by helping the student to become aware of the unconscious. I believe much of "resistance" is an adaptive stance aimed at avoiding pain.⁴⁵

John, the congregational intern described in my personality paper, scrupulously made sure he did not deviate from authority figures' expectations as a way of coping with his father's constant attacks on him for drifting off in pursuit of his own interests. That John's scrupulosity did not work in the pastoral care setting was not so much a sign that scrupulosity was "bad" (it made sense in the context of his childhood) but that John was wandering bewildered in territory that he no longer recognized (where curiosity about one's feelings was not only tolerated but encouraged). Eventually he had to resolve the conflict between his father's expectations and mine. It was difficult for him to be curious about his feelings, even though this was a natural way of being for him as a very young child.

If learning requires as a backdrop the safety created by an authentic supervisor and begins with the subjective world of students' experience and learning style, what does the learning process look like on a practical level? Moon suggests an eight-stage model that combines both experience and reflection and fits with the "action-reflection-action" of the clinical method of learning: "the 'having of' the experience; recognition of a need to resolve something; clarification of the issue; reviewing and recollecting; reviewing feelings/the emotional state; processing of knowledge and ideas; eventual resolution, possible transformation and action; possible action."⁴⁶

John, for example, grew up in a home where his father saw John's tendency to wander "off track" in pursuit of butterflies not as the spontaneous curiosity of a bright, inquisitive little boy but as an early sign of deviation that had to be curbed. When John arrived at BroMenn, he assumed I would behave just as his father did and was perplexed to find that I encouraged his curiosity rather than condemning it. Based on these experiences, John began to "recognize a need to resolve something"—that is, the conflict between his

father's expectations and mine. As he began to clarify the issue, he also began to see how difficult it was for him to be curious in general but particularly about his feelings, even though he recalled this as a natural way of being for him as a very young child. In supervision, John began to review and recollect other instances when he had been discouraged or encouraged for showing curiosity and the feelings surrounding these experiences. He began to combine those subjective experiences and feelings with objective facts (e.g., watching patients respond positively to inquiries about their feelings, getting feedback from the group about their perceptions of him). Eventually, John began to see a disconnect between two very different images of himself, compelling him to decide which to accept.

In my view, "re-cognition"—that is, bringing back to mind—of the bits and pieces of authenticity that form the true self is both the goal and the method of the andragogue. This is what I believe Socrates had in mind when he talked about there being no such thing as teaching, just reminding. "The soul has learned all things; there is no difficulty in her eliciting, or as men say learning, out of a single recollection all the rest, if a man is strenuous and does not faint; for all enquiry and all learning is but recollection."⁴⁷ In likening the educator to a midwife, Socrates stands on its head the idea of an "expert" understanding of education that crafts the teacher in the image of an omniscient god. Over and over again, I have seen students defer to the "experts" at the expense of voicing their own wisdom and common sense. In much the same way that I tell my screaming toddler to "try to use your words" when he is upset about something, I think voicing our needs in prayer allows us to practice using our words and, in the very act of making ourselves understood, healing occurs. I believe that learning takes place in a similar way. Just as the point of walking a labyrinth is not so much about reaching a geographic goal as it is about the experience of the walk itself, when I muddle around in the wilderness trying to articulate myself, I hear and see myself and experience others hearing and seeing me, and learning occurs.⁴⁸ That process allows me to recognize the elements that ultimately become my relational, vulnerable, true self and my best tool as a pastoral caregiver: me.

NOTES

1. NRSV.
2. Augustine describes God as the lover, the beloved, and the love between them. Augustine, *On the Trinity*, trans. Gareth B. Matthews and Stephen McKenna (Cambridge,

UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Heyward writes of: "She who, from the beginning, has been the source of all loving, dying, and letting go throughout and beyond the cosmos; He who—at the same time, in every moment—is embodied through us in our fur and paws, our hands and hearts; The same Holy Spirit connecting our lives, celebrations, and griefs to those of persons and creatures in all times and places, strengthening us through the real presence of those who've gone before and those who will come after us." Carter Heyward, *Saving Jesus From Those Who Are Right* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), 75.

3. The Anglican divine Richard Hooker argues that faith must be based on scripture, tradition, and reason. As articulated by further generations of Anglicans, an unequal emphasis on any of the three would produce a shaky faith in the same way that a three-legged stool begins to wobble and tilt when the legs are uneven. Richard Hooker, *The Works of That Learned and Judicious Divine Mr. Richard Hooker*, arranged by Jon Keble, 7th ed., rev. by R. W. Church and F. Paget (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1888), 3 vols.
4. The Roman Catholic monk Henri Nouwen describes the icon this way: "As we place ourselves in front of the icon in prayer, we come to experience a gentle invitation to participate in the intimate conversation that is taking place among the three divine angels and to join them around the table." Henri Nouwen, *Behold the Beauty of the Lord* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1996), 20.
5. The obligation at risk here is not a contractual or material one but a covenantal and relational one: in accepting the openness of another, one is obliged to be similarly authentic.
6. Growing up as a member of a military family that moved every few years left me often feeling rather lonely and out of place in my childhood. One of my first conscious attractions to the Episcopal Church was comfort in the familiarity of the liturgy no matter where I went; an ongoing grief for me is the well-earned reputation of the denomination as an exclusive club. As a woman, I have encountered the sexism of male-dominated vocations. My life experiences and faith traditions have given me a keen appreciation for hospitality and compassion for outsiders—what I have understood as "radical hospitality" and the Episcopal theologian Timothy Sedgwick describes as openness to strangers. Timothy Sedgwick, *The Christian Moral Life: Practices of Piety* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1999).
7. St. Paul touches on this idea in his letter to the Ephesians (2:10): "For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life." British psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott does so too in his idea of the "good enough" mother. D. W. Winnicott, "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena: A Study of the First Not-Me Possession," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* vol. XXXIV (1953, part 2): 94.
8. *The Book of Common Prayer 1979* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 41.
9. The Christ as the High Priest, the one who closes the gap between human and divine. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed., s.v. "Priest."
10. The Mother-Child relationship, with all its flaws and imperfections, is another important image of the integration as well as risk-taking inherent in a theology of mutual vulnerability. I am both "Mother Mollie—the priest" and "Mollie—Fiona and Ian's Mama," and neither of those parts of myself needs to be set aside in favor of the other. This understanding has helped me to broaden my view of my priestly vocation and

my role as a CPE supervisor, and, insofar as I embody these relationships for my students, they make my supervisory work as sacramental as celebrating baptism and communion. Moreover, the Mother-Child relationship reminds me of the inter-connectedness of the supervisory relationship. From at least the moment of our physical creation, each of us is in relationship, whether we are aware of it or not, and the mutuality of relationship is evident from before we are fully knit together in the womb (Psalm 139). What pregnant woman has not been admonished to take care of herself because in doing so she is taking care of the child she carries?

11. Chaplain Dick Millspaugh writes of the importance of “a clear sense of an inner self” for one’s ability to make sense of and cope with pain. Distinguishing between suffering (i.e., spiritual pain) and physical or even emotional pain, he describes a woman experiencing the intense (physical) pain of childbirth but notes that “the degree that she suffers may be the degree to which she finds a purpose for which to endure or even embrace the pain,” depending on the circumstances of her pregnancy and labor. Millspaugh links a “loss of self” to the breakdown in meaning-making that turns pain into suffering: “Anything that threatens one’s existence or brings significant changes in one’s relationships may result in the loss of one’s ‘is-ness’ or sense of purpose and may readily be experienced as spiritual suffering.” Dick Millspaugh, “Assessment and Response to Spiritual Pain: Part I,” *Journal of Palliative Medicine* 8 (2005): 919–923.
12. Alice Miller, *The Drama of the Gifted Child: The Search for the True Self*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997), 2–7. Scharff and Scharff write: “Unempathic mothering can cause the baby to try to mold itself to its mother’s needs, when its mother cannot respond flexibly to her baby. This leads to the infant’s suppression of its ‘true self’ in favor of the development of a ‘false self’ that is apparently compliant, while the true self dwindles or is nourished secretly inside the self.” David E. Scharff and Jill Savege Scharff, *Object Relations Family Therapy* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1987), 45.
13. Being a life-long Episcopalian, I’m not used to speaking in the language of conversion experiences, but, on 12 February 12 2003, I was born again. That day, during a CPE residency didactic seminar on personality theory, I asked my supervisor if it was possible to receive too much mirroring as a child. After all, I told Bill, I could understand how my siblings could claim to suffer from a lack of mirroring, but that hadn’t been my experience at all. If anything, I often cringed with shame at how little I seemed to have to do to garner my parents’ adoration. “That would be ‘false mirroring,’” Bill replied, and, for the first time in my life, I caught more than a fleeting glimpse of my true self. Fast forward almost exactly three years. I’m again sitting in a seminar with Bill, this time presenting a video tape of an individual supervision session from my first solo unit as a CPE supervisory candidate. As we discuss why it is so important for me that the intern in the video succeed, I begin to realize with profound anger and grief that my parents were every bit as oblivious of me, my true self, as they were of my siblings.
14. Robert D. Stolorow and others, *The Intersubjective Perspective* (Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press, 1994), x.
15. Kegan states this idea elegantly: “Evolutionarily there is a sense in which the infant (and the person throughout life) climbs out of a psychological amniotic environment. Some part of that world in which the infant is embedded nourishes his gestation and assists in delivering him to a new evolutionary balance. I call that part the embeddedness culture, the most intimate of contexts out of which we repeatedly are recreated.

I suggest that it serves at least three functions. It must hold on. It must let go. And it must stick around so that it can be reintegrated.” Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 121.

16. Sheldon Cashdan, *Object Relations Therapy* (New York: Norton, 1988), 20.
17. In my view, the character of holding environments differs primarily based on the unique development levels and issues of the various groups, but the broad principles are the same.
18. Robert D. Stolorow, Bernard Brandchaft, and George E. Atwood, *Psychoanalytic Treatment: An Intersubjective Approach* (Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press, 1987), 36.
19. Self psychology would include among these the “crises” moments of optimal frustration, which involve the inevitable empathic breaks that naturally occur in relationships. “The vulnerable infant frequently requires the help of caregivers to meet his physical and psychological needs. Through the caregiver’s intercession, the infant eventually learns to perform for himself the functions that previously he could not carry out—this process Kohut called transmuting internalization.” Michael Franz Basch, “Are Selfobjects the Only Objects? Implications for Psychoanalytic Technique,” in *The Evolution of Self Psychology: Progress in Self Psychology*, vol. 7, ed. Arnold Goldberg (Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press, 1991), 3–4.
20. Kohut refers to a selfobject as “that dimension of our experience of another person that relates to this person’s shoring up of our self.” This contrasts with the object relations understanding of self-object relationships—i.e., relationships between self and other. Kohut suggests that the development of personality is related to the meeting of three primary selfobject needs: mirroring, idealization, and twinship. If one or more of a person’s selfobject needs is not met, the self-formation process (i.e., the maturation of narcissism from archaic to useful forms) is derailed, and the person spends all of life trying to fill that need. In the view of self psychology, the therapeutic response to narcissistic wounding is to assist the person in meeting those needs. Heinz Kohut, *How Does Analysis Cure?* ed. Arnold Goldberg (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 49.
21. Often, of course, people need concrete objects to help them soothe themselves. A favorite blanket or teddy bear serves as such a transitional object for many children. Transitional objects need not be inanimate, however. For example, when I was providing pastoral care to the mental health unit at my hospital, a patient acknowledged in a group setting that she was feeling anxious about a meeting she was to have with her estranged husband and a social worker. Although the patient had taken strides in coping with her illness, she felt certain that her anxiety would take over and she would come across as unfit to care for their children. The meeting was to take place in the same room that we held our Faith Journey group sessions. I suggested to her that she need not be in that meeting “alone” but that when she felt her anxiety rising, she might imagine me and her fellow patients sitting around her in our usual places, and I invited the group to voice to her our support and the prayers that we would be offering for her during her meeting. In this sense, the holding environment itself (i.e., our Faith Journey sessions) served as a transitional object for her.
22. Ronald R. Lee and J. Colby Martin, *Psychotherapy after Kohut: A Textbook of Self Psychology* (Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press, 1991), 123. So, for instance, I was ordained to the priesthood around the same time I began to question, both in terms of theodicy and in terms of human beings as imago Dei, the idea of an omnipotent God. Yet there I was,

Sunday after Sunday, leading my congregation in prayer to the “Almighty and everliving God” or the “God of all power, Ruler of the Universe” (*The Book of Common Prayer* 1979, 363–370). It was only when I came to see the need of many of my congregants to idealize God that I let go of my (unempathic) desire to disabuse them of that notion. Similarly, I am reminded of several conversations I had during my residency in which a peer and I contrasted our views of God. My fellow resident, an African-American, spoke of a fatherly God who is mightier than the dominant power structures of the world she lives in, while I, a European-American, tended to yearn for a more companionable relationship with a God whom I could relate to as a friend. Not surprisingly, my fellow resident has experienced first-hand the abuse of the dominant power structures of our society as well as the nurture of a loving father, while I have experienced the benefits of my position within the dominant power structure as well as the volatility of my father’s unresolved anger. In deciding that neither of us needed to destroy the other’s experience of God, we created a holding environment in which we could explore not only our respective understandings of the Holy but also our true selves.

23. I believe differentiation, rather than relationship, is what is learned. Stern describes babies’ built-in capacity for attunement with their mothers. Daniel N. Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant: A View from Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology* (New York: BasicBooks, 1985.) Beebe and Lachmann “call this capacity for mutual influencing...a precursor to empathy” (quoted in Lee and Martin, *Psychotherapy after Kohut*, 123). The work of Chodorow and Gilligan challenges the notion that a “feminine personality [that] comes to define itself in relation and connection to other people” is necessarily a problem, or that boys’ separation of “their mothers from themselves, thus curtailing ‘their primary love and sense of empathic tie’” is either a universal norm, much less necessarily desirable Chodorow, as quoted by Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003). Similarly, Lee and Martin note, “The educational processes of Western culture are designed to replace this ‘inferior’ narcissistic capacity with unempathic forms of cognition that foster an objective, materialistic, and mechanical view of life. In Kohut’s mature person, the primitive capacity for attunement has not been expunged but is transformed into vicarious introspection for appropriate utilization in adult personal relationships” (Lee and Martin, *Psychotherapy after Kohut*, 123–124).
24. In the language of self psychology, Gene was narcissistically wounded. “According to Freud, there is a totally narcissistic libido in the newborn, and as the infant becomes a child and then an adult, there is a shift toward all libido being invested in objects and none in the self. Using Freud’s theory, the therapist tries to replace the patient’s narcissism with object love, an aim Kohut thought not only difficult—if not impossible—but very undesirable. Kohut challenged the assumption that narcissism had to be eradicated” (Lee and Martin, *Psychotherapy after Kohut*, 122).
25. In my experience as a child and younger adult, bumping into the other usually meant confronting two unappealing possibilities. I would either have to back across the bridge or have to jump into the stream or, worse yet, the other would have to retreat or take a dive. The solution I typically found to this dilemma, particularly when the other looked like an elephant, was to transform myself into a mouse who nimbly dodged the feet of the on-coming traffic while sidestepping the abyss altogether. Whether dealing directly with my family members or with others whom I perceived to be victims of oppression and abuse, I avoided causing them even more pain by shielding them from the “pain” of my confrontation. While this seemed to secure my

place on the bridge, it also ensured that I would have to leave my treasure behind and that eventually I forgot that I was not a mouse.

26. In my own story, good-bad splits are reawakened for me around issues of attention and competence. Being the center of attention was to be “loved” by my parents and “hated” by my siblings. Being competent meant being “loved” because of my achievements and being “hated” for attracting attention. Becoming a parent myself has forced me to face that the difference between the “good guy” and “bad guy” (inside of me as well as my parents, siblings, and children) is rarely an either/or proposition. One morning, hearing screams from my children, I ran into the living room just in time to watch my son lunge with teeth bared at his bigger sister. “What’s going on?” I asked as I separated them, and Fiona tearfully acknowledged that she had just snatched a toy from Ian. It was startling to realize that, even in the midst of my horror at Ian’s aggression, I wanted to cheer him on for asserting himself and that, even in the midst of my anger at Fiona’s bullying, I wanted to protect her from injury. As I reflected on that mixture of emotions, I realized that I had begun to heal an important split.
27. I have come to understand one of the defenses that I have constructed as ingratiation. I have not only been the “steady” daughter who can be counted on to make her parents proud but also the steady student, writer, chaplain, and supervisory candidate who always can be counted on to get the job done. Specifically, I have created an image of such responsibility and reliability that people often make excuses on my behalf. Thus when I consciously rebelled against the hospital dress code early in my supervisory training, an administrator asked another chaplain to “remind” me of the standards because surely Mollie wouldn’t knowingly break the rules. (He obviously had never met mean Christine.) See Stolorow and others, *The Intersubjective Perspective*, 51.
28. Scharff and Scharff, *Object Relations Family Therapy*, 156.
29. 1 Corinthians 13:11–12: “When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.”
30. This, despite the facts that I gave birth to my first child during my middler year and commuted 150 miles to school.
31. Frawley-O’Dea and Sarnat, who write from the perspective of psychoanalytic supervision, argue that “the ‘teach/treat’ dichotomy is no longer a meaningful distinction” for this very reason: “We need a model of supervision as a fully analytic process that, because it encompasses exploration of relational patterns alive in both the supervised treatment and in supervision, includes some blurring of teaching and ‘treating.’” Mary Gail Frawley-O’Dea and Joan E. Sarnat, *The Supervisory Relationship: A Contemporary Psychodynamic Approach* (New York: Guilford Press, 2001), 138.
32. In his commentary on the classical Greek philosopher, Boeree notes that “philosophy, the love of wisdom, was for Socrates itself a sacred path, a holy quest—not a game to be taken lightly. He believed—or at least said he did in the dialog Meno—in the reincarnation of an eternal soul which contained all knowledge. We unfortunately lose touch with that knowledge at every birth, and so we need to be reminded of what we already know (rather than learning something new). He said that he did not teach, but rather served, like his mother, as a midwife to truth that is already in us! Making use of questions and answers to remind his students of knowledge is called maieutics (midwifery), or the Socratic method.” C. George Boeree, “The Ancient Greeks, Part

- Two: Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle," C. George Boeree Web site, <http://webpace.ship.edu/cgboer/athenians.html> (accessed 21 March 2010).
33. Lindeman is quoted in Malcolm S. Knowles, Elwood F. Holton III, and Richard A. Swanson, *The Adult Learner*, 6th ed. (Burlington, MA: Elsevier, 2005), 37–38. Parker J. Palmer. *To Know As We Are Known*. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993) 55–56.
 34. Quoted in Knowles, Holton, and Swanson, *The Adult Learner*, 49–50.
 35. Sigmund Karterud and Walter N. Stone, "The Group Self: A Neglected Aspect of Group Psychotherapy," *Group Analysis* 36 (2003): 10–12. Marianne Schneider Corey and Gerald Corey, *Groups: Process and Practice*, 7th ed. (Belmont, CA: Thompson Brooks/Cole, 2006), 102–287.
 36. John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 35.
 37. "No one is silent though many are not heard." Quote from "How to Build Community," a poster distributed by the Syracuse Cultural Workers.
 38. In my view, the idea of "turning away" has its roots in the masculine experience of leaving mommy in order to establish one's independence and discounts the feminine experience of community and intradependence. I believe the portrayal of the masculine experience as the norm weakens both men and women spiritually, intellectually, and emotionally.
 39. Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics & Moral Education* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), 30–31.
 40. At mid unit, Suzanne gave me some of the clearest, most direct, and important feedback I had ever received about the message that I send when I do not model self-care—quite a step for a woman who had swallowed the idea that she was too pushy.
 41. During my years as a Peace Corps volunteer, ownership was a basic principle of development work, for we knew that no matter how great the need, no matter how worthy the project, it was doomed to failure unless the local people embraced it as their own.
 42. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson, *The Adult Learner*, 124.
 43. Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 73–276. Even though the dominant culture tends to focus primarily on verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical intelligence, Gardner adds musical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, and personal styles and argues that they all are equally important. Thus, for example, Jane, another hospital-based intern, was a gifted artist whose theological reflection was most powerful when she used her non-dominant hand to draw and paint—combining both spatial and bodily intelligences in ways that allowed her to express herself even when confronted with the unfamiliar.
 44. Rudolf Ekstein and Robert S. Wallerstein, *The Teaching and Learning of Psychotherapy*. 2nd ed. (New York: International Universities Press, 1973), 139.
 45. Corey and Corey argue against even using the term "resistance," noting that using more "descriptive and nonjudgmental terminology" creates a self-fulfilling prophecy: "As you change the lenses by which you perceive members' behaviors, it will be easier to adopt an understanding attitude and to encourage members to explore ways they are reluctant and self-protective." Corey and Corey, *Groups*, 179.

46. Jennifer A. Moon, *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge-Falmer, 2004), 115.
47. As quoted by Plato, *Meno*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Project Gutenberg EBook, 2008), <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1643> (accessed 21 March 2010).
48. Vanessa Compton, "The Labyrinth: Site and Symbol of Transformation," *Expanding the Boundaries of Transformative Learning*, eds. Edmund V. O'Sullivan, Amish Morrell, Mary Ann O'Connor (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 103–119.

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