

A Teacher's Reflection Book

Exercises, Stories, Invitations

Jean Koh Peters

Mark Weisberg

Foreword by

Gerry Hess

Co-Director, Institute for
Law Teaching and Learning

CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS
Durham, North Carolina

Copyright © 2011
Carolina Academic Press
All Rights Reserved

*For Susan, and in memory of Donald L. Finkel
For Jim, Liz, and Chris
For our students*

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Peters, Jean Koh, 1958-
A teacher's reflection book : exercises, stories, invitations / Jean
Koh Peters and Mark Weisberg.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-59460-942-8 (alk. paper)

1. Teaching--Methodology. 2. Teachers--Training of I. Weis-
berg, Mark II. Title.

LB1025.3.P466 2011

371.1--dc23

2011016487

CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS
700 Kent Street
Durham, North Carolina 27701
Telephone (919) 489-7486
Fax (919) 493-5668
www.cap-press.com

Printed in the United States of America.

Chapter 5

The Teacher and Vocation

[Teaching] is a profession that can seem, on a bad day, after a bad class, quite simply intolerable. "I've just got to get out of this, fast. I'll phone this afternoon to check into that early-retirement scheme." An hour later, a day later, the vocation can feel as fresh and rewarding as it did on that day long ago when I said, "All right, then, I'll be an English teacher, even though it does mean I'll always be poor." On the good days, I always find myself thinking what a coup it was to win all this and to be paid for it too.

—Wayne Booth,
*The Vocation of a Teacher*¹

When we listen primarily to what we ought to be doing with our lives, we may find ourselves hounded by external expectations that can distort our identity and integrity ... In contrast ... Frederick Buechner offers a more generous and humane image of vocation as "the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

In a culture that sometimes equates work with suffering, it is revolutionary to suggest that the best inward sign of vocation is deep gladness—revolutionary but true. If a work is mine to do, it will make me glad over the long haul, despite the difficult days ... If a work does not gladden me in these ways, I need to consider laying it down.

—Parker Palmer,
*The Courage to Teach*²

What if you had nothing to prove? What if you undertook every class, every article, every meeting, every student and collegial in-

teraction, with no need or concern about proving anything to anyone? What would you be doing? Would you be living your teaching life as you now do? Would you write as you now write? Work as you now work? Maintain the same relationship between your professional and personal lives? To answer these questions would be to express what for you would be a life lived in vocation, a life unburdened by trying to fulfill the external expectations imposed, or that we imagine to be imposed, by others.

Yet many of us do find ourselves being governed from the outside, by fear of failing or looking foolish. We try too hard to please others; we measure our success by external standards. Here again is Wayne Booth, one of North America's most celebrated literary critics and an award winning teacher:

Among my many character flaws—perhaps shared with many teachers (it led us into teaching?)—is an absurd insecurity, an obsessive need to be loved and approved by all. This leads to wasted energy, wasted emotion, unwise acceptance of tasks to which I am unsuited. And it often leads to grotesque errors of judgment, some of which can sear my memory for decades.³

For many of us, these barriers to living in vocation persist throughout our lives.

In this Chapter we invite you to explore what it might mean to live and work without these barriers. And to explore these questions in a way that's tailored to meet your individual needs. We'll focus first, on vocation writ large, its substance and processes, and then will explore several specific dimensions of a teacher's vocation. We've divided the Chapter into three sections: *Discovering Vocation*, *Nurturing Vocation*, and *Some Elements of a Teacher's Vocation*. In each section you'll find a mixture of exercises, stories, critical incidents, and attempts to capture the meaning of vocation. We hope they'll help you identify or clarify your vocation and help you sustain it, as well as nurture it in others.

I. Discovering Vocation

A. Understanding Vocation

Poem Postcard

*I would have written you a letter instead of a postcard, but I didn't have time.
I wanted to tell you about what was happening in my life, but I didn't have time.
I would have invited you to dinner, but I didn't have time.
I would have done more reading before writing this paper, but I didn't have time.
We never got to cover the end of the novel because we ran out of time.
I would have read your article more carefully, but I didn't have time.
I didn't have time to read your article,
I wanted to call you, but I was afraid it would take too much time.*

In haste, Jane⁴

Does this poem postcard express how you often feel: rushed, scattered, constantly interrupted, so busy you're unable to do what you most want to do? Perhaps that's why you picked up this book: to find a guide for slowing down, integrating the different dimensions of your life? Or perhaps, confirming what Wayne Booth suggests most of us feel periodically, you've recently experienced one of those discouraging moments or periods when you wonder if you're in the right profession, wonder if your vocation lies elsewhere?

What *does* it mean to lead a life in vocation? Theologian Frederick Buechner understands vocation to be that "place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."⁵ Let's explore briefly each of the three elements in Buechner's conception, after which we'll turn to our own conceptions.

Your Deep Gladness: The Call of the True Self

For each of us, our deep gladness, that which gives us abiding, profound joy, is the call of our true self. In a society where our time schedules are like the ones described in Jane Tompkins's postcard poem, pressing us to look for a quick fix, the call of our deep gladness invites us to look elsewhere, within ourselves. To look within ourselves, to our identity, or core, implies that when we find our deep gladness, it will sustain us in both good times and bad. In that way, it differs from happiness. The joy of deep gladness does not depend on us enjoying good luck, or on good times or smooth sailing. This is the joy that keeps us grounded, content, at peace with ourselves, even in turbulent times.

Joy is self-validating. Joy also can be mystifying. We may not know why we find it so enjoyable to play tennis, put together a jigsaw puzzle, or bake a loaf of bread, or why the sight of a beautiful painting in a museum, or the sound of our favorite music on the radio lightens our heart, even on the most difficult day. But these examples suggest the joy we're describing and inviting you to identify. The joy that is not located in any single moment or particular context, that motivates you today as it did ten years ago, and as you have reason to believe, will continue to do so ten years from now.

The World's Deep Hunger: Which Call? Whose Call?

The call of the world's deep hunger is vast and multi-vocal. For each of us to try to answer its many voices is impossible. So, as we invite you to identify what that call is for you, we're also inviting you to give yourself permission not to answer all the calls that you hear.

How would you encapsulate what for you is the call of the world's deep hunger? For lawyers we might think of it as the call of justice. For doctors, would it be the call of healing? For artists, the call of beauty?

Teachers hear many calls—calls from their subject matter, calls from their educational mission. What speaks to you: the call of understanding, or discovery? the call of learning? the call of your discipline? Take a moment to consider how you would summarize, in a word or phrase, the call(s) that most compel you.

Here's Jean on a moment of hearing her call.

Jean recently had read an exercise challenging her to summarize her mission statement in a bumper sticker, which seemed a preposterous task. While ridiculing the exercise to her children one afternoon in the car, a word came to her: "*Home*." At the time, Jean was a clinical teacher, who, with her students, was representing parents, children, and refugees in a law school legal services organization; she also was the mother of two children, then 9 and 6.

Jean wondered aloud to her children whether she had just received a clue that maybe her motto for what she cared about in life was "*Home*." And, she continued, that motto makes sense: "What do I do? I represent refugees. Who are they? They're people pulled from their homes, trying to find a new home in the United States. I represent children. What children? Children who are removed from their homes. I represent parents. What parents? Parents whose children are taken from their homes. Maybe '*Home*' is my motto."

"But Mommy, if that was your motto, you would be home all the time."

To which her other child replied, "Wait a minute, maybe what she's saying is the only thing that would take her from our home is to help someone else find *their* home."

Have you had an experience like this one? Is there a word, a phrase, a quotation, an image, that encapsulates *your* call? Sit with this question for a while and see what comes up.

In addition to finding your call, we also ask you to identify those calls of the world's deep hunger that you cannot answer, and to forgive yourself for not trying to answer them. In our media saturated times, doing this can be difficult. What are the calls you constantly hear that tear at your heart but cannot be answered now? For many of us who have revered the medical profession but lacked all of the skills required for this call, we must let go of the aspiration of being a great surgeon, or curing AIDS or breast cancer. Or those of us who loved writing stories when we were young may not be able to become the next Alice Munro. Sorting through the calls of the world's deep hunger is a constant challenge, but no challenge is greater than that of daring to hear the sounds of the

world's calls as you search for the ones you can authentically answer.

In fact, your gladness may help you hear the call more clearly. In this information age, we worry less that the call of the world's deepest hunger will reach you, and more that the cacophony of anguish will overwhelm or numb you. Joy's ear may help you tune in to the cries you can hear and answer best.

Where Deep Gladness and the World's Deep Hunger Meet: An Illustration

Do you remember why Luke Skywalker in the first *Star Wars* movie was able to destroy the Death Star through a thermal exhaust port only 2 meters wide? He'd been doing (and enjoying) it for years. "I used to bull's-eye womp rats in my T-16 back home. They're not much bigger than 2 meters!" And when the deed was begun, what did Luke whoop? "It'll be just like Beggar's Canyon back home."

What is your Beggar's Canyon? The path of vocation requires you to recover and experience your deepest joy, daily, and to offer it in service of the calls that move you most—justice, healing, understanding, beauty, learning—whatever you designate. And the aim of delighting in the service of the most compelling may evolve for you, as it has for some of us, from a quest for identity—Who am I?—to a quest in faith—Whose am I? Our musings on vocation quickly implicate our deepest beliefs, our spirituality, and, for some, our relationship to the Divine.

B. Finding Your Vocation: Four Exercises

What follows are four exercises that might help you identify, understand, and possibly, more thoroughly embrace, your vocation. Try one or two and see where they take you.

1. Write Your Obituary

One way to discover your path might be to begin at the end and explore what you'd want said about you at the end of your life. Take some time with your journal and compose either your obituary or a eulogy for your funeral. If they help, use the following guidelines:

- a.) don't fret about any detail (which newspaper, what length, the identity of the author, the date of the article or speech) unless it sparks your creativity. If a choice of detail blocks you, choose the least anxiety-provoking alternative and keep writing;
- b.) beyond grounding the basic facts in reality, feel free at any point to reach into imagination or fantasy;
- c.) if you get stuck, observe what stimulates your writing and also what impeded it, and go back to a;
- d.) hang in there. When you're finished, explore whether you've found some meaning in your life independent of the need to have proven yourself to the world.*

* Here is an example of each, composed by Sophie Sparrow, one of the participants at the 2003 *Reflecting on Our Teaching* retreat, held in Leavenworth, Washington.

Obituary

[Name] died last week at the age of eighty-two. The mother of two children, [name] 50, of Vancouver, and [name], 48 of San Francisco and Hawaii, she was the wife of [name], who predeceased her by three years. The deceased taught law students and wrote about the art of teaching. She was a professor and dean, but is most widely recognized for her work on writing and teaching about teaching.

But perhaps her most important source of recognition is as the mother of her 2 children. Her daughter, [name], noted author, writer, teacher, artist and performer and her son, [name], the performer/designer, have both made a name for themselves individually and as collaborators. Her son has designed a new jet, plays rhythm guitar, and designs play spaces for adults. Her daughter teaches students from the Kindergarten to graduate level, leads retreats, designs clothing and furniture, writes novels, and consults on leadership issues. In addition to their individual contributions, together they design space, lead retreats where adults return to their play selves, and also conduct workshops on raising friendly siblings and addressing sibling rivalry/partnership. Together the deceased's children have co-authored several books and are currently going on a world tour/leadership consulting trip that will take them to Singapore, Malaysia, India, China, Mongolia, Nigeria, Kenya, Australia, New Zealand, and Europe.

2. Find and Explore a Governing Metaphor

As a way into “the mystery of our selfhood,” Parker Palmer invites us to fill in the blank in the following sentence: “When I am teaching at my best, I am like a _____.”⁶ He suggests you “accept the image that arises, resisting the temptation to censor or edit it.”⁷ To illustrate the “risk and payoff” of this mode of self-understanding, Palmer offers his own metaphor.

... [W]hen I am teaching at my best, I am like a sheepdog—not the large, shaggy, loveable kind, but the all-business Border Collies one sees working the flocks in sheep country.

...

In my imagination—unfettered by expert knowledge of the real thing—the sheepdog has four vital functions.

Eulogy

From my daughter:

Mom was mom. She was a real mom. When we were younger, we used to criticize her for not being a real mom. She wasn't real when she was busy, distracted, focused on work, tired, cranky and dressed in work clothes. A real mom wore faded jeans, cotton hooded sweatshirts, and faded worn shirts. That was mom.

She didn't often make cookies and stay home so we could see her after school, but she was real. Mom made us think, *why?* “Why did what I just did make you mad?” She'd ask. “How can I be a better mom?” “[Name], how can I keep from procrastinating?” She honored us by treating us like her collaborators. We weren't her chummy buddies in the sense that we ever forgot who was the parent, but we collaborated in family dynamic improvements. When we'd complain or be upset, or have a bad vacation, she always got us to reflect. “So, how can you make it better? How could it be different? What is it that made that special?”

She gave us the gift of knowing ourselves. Of listening. Of developing a voice. Of thinking/doubting/believing. She gave us the joy of growth. She knew she wouldn't physically be with us, but she gave us the tools to always keep her in our souls. She encouraged us to grow, to fly, to soar. We have. Thanks Mom.

It maintains a space where the sheep can graze and feed themselves; it holds sheep together in that space, constantly bringing back strays; it protects the boundaries of that space to keep dangerous predators out; and when the grazing ground is depleted, it moves with the sheep to another space where they can get the food they need.

It is obvious, I suppose, where I am going with all this, though when I began exploring the image it was not obvious to me. From the crude and uncomfortable image of myself as a sheepdog, I evolved a more refined image of teaching ...: to teach is to create a space in which the community of truth can be served.

My task in the classroom, I came to see, parallels this imaginative rendering of the sheepdog's task. My students must feed themselves—that is called active learning. If they are to do so, I must take them to a place where food is available: a good text, a well-planned exercise, a generative question, a disciplined conversation. Then, when they have learned what there is to learn in that place, I must move them to the next feeding ground. I must hold the group within those places; paying special attention to those individuals who get lost or run away—and all the while I must protect the group from deadly predators, like fear.⁸

Once you've finished exploring your metaphor, why not invite several colleagues to do the same and then meet to share what you've discovered? That could offer everyone imaginative fuel for discussing how we teach and learn, together with an appreciation for a variety of teaching styles.

3. Compose a Job Description

In her thoughtful and provocative book, *Radical Presence: Teaching as Contemplative Practice*, Mary Rose O'Reilley describes returning to teaching from a sabbatical in a Quaker community and finding that it “had pretty much unfitted me for the academic world I had left behind ... I was no longer able to tell my students

what they needed to know, because I didn't know what they needed to know, though only a year ago, I had been quite sure."⁹

Despairing about being able to do her job, even to know what her job required of her, O'Reilley asked herself a question that echoed what her spiritual director had been asking her in her Quaker community. "*What are you doing? What are you really doing? What is your deepest sense of call? Your true vocation?*"¹⁰ She decided to compose a job description, to "write down a sentence that reflected my clearest sense of the task."¹¹ O'Reilley wrote "*Peaceful listening ... The only thing that needs to happen is peaceful listening.*"

We think O'Reilley's question is a wonderful one, worth trying to answer for yourself. Here's how in a recent essay Mark responded to her question.

I like O'Reilley's response and could adopt it for my own. It's certainly become a central part of my self-understanding as a teacher. But if I were to respond to O'Reilley's question today, I'd choose as my job description: *Giving permission*, or better, encouraging my students to give themselves permission. Permission to bring yourself to your work, to step forward, to risk being present in what you write and what you say. Permission to care. Permission to take your classmates and yourself seriously: as writers, as thinkers, as individuals responsible for the shape of the law. Permission to set your own goals and see what it might mean to work toward accomplishing them.

When in my [Lēgal Imagination] course students have taken that permission, I've been rewarded, we've been rewarded, with lively, funny, provocative, thoughtful, humane essays, deeply reflective about the law and about each individual's place in it, and with similarly lively, provocative classroom conversations. They've confirmed me in believing that it's worth taking the time to try to listen and respond to each voice as it presents itself. To be heard, or seen, can be a profoundly moving experience:

affirming, encouraging, sometimes leading to dramatic, and positive life changes.¹²

Try composing your own job description, your clearest sense of your task. Not the task that someone or some institution has imposed on you, but the one you'd choose if you had nothing to prove. How does it compare to the one your institution or department head would write? If they differ, can you imagine doing your job as you've described it for yourself? What would change from how you now work? What would remain?

4. Visit or Write Your Future Self

The following meditation by Karen Saakvitne and Laurie Pearlman invites you, through guided imagery, to an encounter with your future self. To transition to the guided imagery, you may want to start with a few minutes of quiet breathing or meditation. If you want to stay with your eyes closed during the meditation, consider taping it, with pauses after each sentence, and using the tape in a quiet moment.

Imagine entering your future self's office or work space. As your future self welcomes you, look around. What do you notice about the space? What object do you see? What do you notice about your future self? What do you look like? How have you changed, grown, and matured? Take some time and notice the feelings you have in the room. Breathe in the air, and take the opportunity now to find a place to sit opposite or beside your future self. Feel your body supported in the seat you have chosen. Notice the temperature in the room. Look at the light and colors; notice any smells.

Listen now as you and your future self converse about your work life. Are there any questions you wish to ask your future self? Go ahead and ask those now ... And listen to your future self's thoughtful response. How does your future self feel about the work? What is most rewarding? What are some proudest memories? What is most comforting? (Pause—5 mins.)

How does your future self feel at the end of the day of work? Listen and ask any questions that come to mind. (Pause)

Is there anything your future self would like to ask you? Anything she or he wants to tell or suggest to you, or to give to you? (Pause—5 mins.)

Although only a short amount of clock time has elapsed, you can sense that you have had all the time you need for now with your future self. Your time together is almost complete and your future self invites you to bring back with you anything you wish. Is there something in the office, some aspect or object, that will help you remain connected to your future self? You may pick it out and take it back to the present with you. (Pause)

It is time to say goodbye. (Stand at door.) You know you will meet at some future point.¹³

At our last retreat, several participants saw powerful images in this meditation—of their office door and themselves. One got a clear answer to a current vocational dilemma. Others preferred to ponder their experience privately. What is *your* experience?

We have also benefitted from writing letters to ourselves, written in a lucid moment or a moment of transition to yourself at a fixed point in the future. Jean and her family attend the summer Northfield conference, where letters are collected to be sent back on Valentine's Day; the conference calls them "Roses in Winter." Have a friend or officemate keep it and send it to you. It can remind you of deep commitments and insights over time.

C. A Life Lived in Vocation: Implications

When we speak of our professional life, we tend to frame that conversation in terms of a career. By contrast, Christian theologian James Fowler suggests that framing our life in terms of vocation would radically reorient our self-understanding.¹⁴ Fowler offers seven consequences of living a life in vocation instead of a life in career. In the following chart we've juxtaposed Fowler's views on a life in vocation to a life focused on career:

From Career to Vocation: A Paradigm Shift

CAREER Who am I? What's in teaching for me?	VOCATION Whose am I? Who am I in teaching for? (James Fowler)
Vindicating our Worth through Achievement	Nothing to Prove
Success is zero sum, won through competition, over the defeat of others. Other talented, like-minded people are our rivals for scarce resources, jobs, prestige.	1. Called to an excellence that is not based on competition with others. Called to a vocational adventure that is distinct from that of anyone else.
	2. Freed from anxiety about whether someone else will beat us to that singular achievement that would have justified our lives.
	3. Freed to rejoice in the gifts and graces of others. In vocation we are augmented by others' talents rather than being diminished or threatened by them. An ecology of giftedness.
Seeking skill, talent, opportunity, money; "dying with our options open"; limits are frustrating, must be overcome.	4. Freed from jealousy and envy, we are freed from the sense of having to be all things to all people. In vocation we can experience our limits as gracious, even as we can experience our gifts as gracious.
Work and home are separate; work comes first. Maximize billable hours.	5. Freed to seek a responsible balance in the investment of our time and energy. Vocation is the opposite of workaholism (vocation encompasses career and home, daily life).
Time is our enemy—too much work, too little time.	6. Freed from the tyranny of time. Time is our friend.
Personal life is straightforward, shouldn't interfere with work.	7. Freed to see vocation as dynamic, as changing its focus and pattern over time, while continuing as a constant intensifying calling.

In universities we tend to measure our successes comparatively. Our differential salaries reflect judgments of our “merit.” We compete against each other for a fixed pool of financial resources. We measure ourselves by our success at being published in the most prestigious journals. And we pass that competitiveness on to our students. As Mary Rose O’Reilley puts it: “[T]hat’s what teaching *should* be about ... discerning the gift. Too often, by contrast, the central discipline of our craft is judging.”¹⁵ We discern the gifted, not the gift.

In vocation, since we have nothing to prove, and since each vocation is unique, we aren’t competing with each other. Everyone is following their own path, a path they have no need to justify. Consequently, rather than ranking ourselves and others, we’re free to recognize, enjoy, root for and feel enriched by each person’s gifts.

In a world of infinite gifts, we “are freed from the sense of having to be all things to all people.”¹⁶ No more trying to be Atlas.¹⁷ Instead, we can welcome, even embrace, our limits, as well as our own gifts.

“We are freed to seek a responsible balance in the investment of our time and energy.”¹⁸ In vocation we aren’t workaholics. Rather than enforce a rigid separation between our professional and personal lives, a life in vocation can be an integrated life.

Living in vocation, we change our conception of time. Consider this postcard.

Postcard from the Edge

Dear C.,

Do you remember once we were having a telephone conversation about how busy we were? You were worrying about how you were ever going to finish that critical biography you’d been working on like a dog for years. We’d been talking about our families, when suddenly you burst out with: “I don’t know what I would do. If my parents should die I wouldn’t have time.”

I’ll never forget that moment, or the sound of your voice.

Jane¹⁹

Unlike life for the author of this postcard and the one beginning this section, for whom time is a tyrant, in vocation, time can be our friend. With nothing to prove, we can let go of some of the “shoulds” that devour our time.*

Finally, our vocation is dynamic. As we grow and develop, so will our vocation. While remaining a constant calling, its shape and textures may change, reflecting the changing patterns in our lives.

II. Nurturing Vocation in Ordinary Times: Two Sets of Processes You Can Trust

There is a profound connection between the large lifetime issues of vocation we’ve been exploring and the routines of daily life. Vocation calls us to live our lives in this moment. An event like September 11, 2001, can make us starkly aware how important it can be to live each moment fully; after that day, many of us were asking ourselves: if I were to die today, would I be doing what I am meant to be doing? Vocation promises that consistently focusing on the present will eventually add up to a life’s work, because *how we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.*²⁰

How best can we be engaged every day nurturing and executing our vocation? To help us do that, we might use what we call “daily processes you can trust.” We’ve identified two sets of these processes. The first set is internal, involving daily practices that help a vocation seeker focus without outside interference on her deep gladness, her concerns about world’s deep hunger, and the place where they meet. In this process you can trust, your internal voices are strengthened and heard regularly, separate from the external voices, which tend to drown out internal messages.

* Of course, we can’t ignore them all; as university teachers, we have obligations that define our work, obligations we must fulfill, no matter how distasteful. However, this chapter urges you to consider how seriously those obligations interfere with your deep gladness and to eliminate as many as possible from your day. For those that remain, as you respond to them, we encourage you to use only processes you can trust.

In the external processes you can trust, a vocation seeker takes action in the world and uses time-tested methods for planning her work, interacting with others, teaching her students, pursuing her scholarship, and attending to her chosen path. While the first process requires engagement with the self, the second requires engagement with the world.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt provides a fascinating study in both processes you can trust. An extremely gregarious man, he organized his actions in the world around social gatherings, having a daily cocktail hour with intimate friends and housing close friends in the White House for years at a time. He clearly was a man capable of extremely hard work, as his twelve years in office during the most turbulent times of American history demonstrated. And yet, at one critical moment during the war years with England, he just stopped working.

It is 1940, and Britain, trying to stave off German victory at sea, is desperate for American help. Two things are clear: Britain can't do it alone, and despite Roosevelt's sympathy, the United States Congress and much of its population are unwilling to enter this war. Although the situation is dire, Roosevelt decides to go on a ten-day Caribbean sail on a navy cruiser. On the first days he fishes and enjoys his leisure in the company of his friends. One evening, after receiving a letter from Winston Churchill, he has a vision: Lend-Lease, or the lending of war supplies, including aircraft and land vehicles, to Allied Forces. In his fireside chat, several days later, Roosevelt explains the concept:

Suppose my neighbor's home catches on fire, and I have a length of garden hose four or five hundred feet away. If he can take my garden hose and connect it up with his hydrant, I may help to put out his fire. Now what do I do? I don't say to him before that operation, "Neighbor, my garden hose cost me \$15—I want \$15 for it." What is the transaction that goes on? I don't want \$15—I want my garden hose back after the fire is over. All right. If it goes through the fire all right, intact, without any damage to it, he gives it back to me and thanks me very

much for the use of it. Of course, the neighbor would replace the hose if it couldn't be returned.

This was the concept of Lend-Lease, which Churchill hailed before Parliament as "the most unsordid act in the history of any nation."²¹ Many believed this decision was a turning point in World War II.

The internal processes FDR could trust included withdrawing from the scene of active work, deep rest, relaxation and meditative recreation, and the company of trusted friends. After many days of these processes, he got the inspiration the world needed. To introduce the idea to America, he resorted to a critical external process he could trust: the fireside chat, in which he explained his concept with a folksy metaphor accessible to all Americans.

What are the processes *you* can trust? The next two segments offer some questions you might consider as you identify your established, trusted processes.

A. Internal Processes You Can Trust

The internal processes you can trust focus on orientation: getting your bearings. In quiet solitude one asks: am I headed in the right direction? Am I attuned to my own true instincts and desires? In contrast to a life in the world, efficient, and constantly pressed, during the internal process you can trust, you're trying to be open-minded, open to inspiration, sensitive to messages from within.

Here are several useful components for constructing and sustaining a process you can trust.

- Solitude or the company of an absolutely trustworthy companion;
- Sufficient time to enter a proactive state of thinking (perhaps, a minimum of 15 minutes?);
- A spirit of non-judgment towards oneself and a clear sense of nothing to prove;

- A meditative process—running, praying, meditating, yoga—any repetitive process that engages the entire mind.

In Chapter 2 we offered several suggestions for discovering or creating internal processes you can trust for your daily life:

1. *Investigate your daily routines.*
2. *Identify trustworthy interlocutors.*
3. *Identify the processes you can't trust.*
4. *Remember an inspired moment, and work backwards to recreate the processes that led to it.*

Here are several others.

5. *Consider adding processes to your day that complement your current routines.*

Looking at the whole of your daily activities—the balance of work and play, the balance of input (the reading, lectures, listening) and output (writing, lecturing, opining)—consider what is missing and how it might be added. For instance, if your examination of your daily routine shows that you spend many sedentary hours with others in dialogue, adding a short quiet solitary walk could enhance your process.

6. *Pay attention to clear, even if seemingly random, directives, past and present.*

Vocation often calls in the guise of serendipity, coincidence. Think of the way your career, and the careers of those around you, have evolved. Often, invitations to new paths come quietly, without fanfare. And although you may not know why, you feel you must take up that invitation. Jean remembers hearing an announcement in church in 1983, about the new asylum law and the need for lawyers to be trained in the field. At the time, she was a full time Legal Aid lawyer working with children, but something impelled her to go to the daylong training. She returned to her full time work, couldn't figure out how to incorporate her training, and forgot it. Until 1992, when her clinical teaching led her into asylum practice and teaching, which she continues to this day.

Similarly, Mark remembers seeing an announcement for the inaugural Canadian Law Teachers' Clinic, to be held in the spring of 1979. Always interested in teaching, and curious, but without any idea what shape the week-long Clinic would assume, he decided to attend. He could not have known that participating in the Clinic, re-experiencing himself there as a student, would lead him to radically revise his conception of himself as a teacher, to realize that in insisting on a fierce, argumentative style of conducting classes, he wasn't thinking of his students' needs, as he had told himself, but rather was driven by his fear of being inadequate, his need to "prove" to his students (and himself) that he knew what he was talking about.²²

When seen in hindsight, clear, seemingly random directives sometimes turn out to be preparation in advance, as they did here. A call from a future time, if you will. Can you remember a clear, seemingly random directive that turned out to be preparation in advance? Are you hearing any clear, seemingly random directives now?

Here's one extended example from Canadian writer Wayson Choy. As a creative writing student at the University of British Columbia in 1958, Choy wrote a story that was published in the UBC journal *Prism*, and later anthologized in *Best American Stories for 1962*. His teachers encouraged him to continue writing, but he became discouraged, and feeling he had nothing to say, he stopped. He became an English teacher in Toronto. In 1977, his mother died, and he took a sabbatical to be with his father in Vancouver and to enroll again in UBC's Creative Writing program. Choy continues the story:

... As luck would have it, Carol Shields was the nonsense short story instructor. She believed that if you were going to be a writer, you should be able to create a story from any source. For one assignment, she tore up pieces of paper, each marked with a colour, and set the rule: whichever colour you picked up, that colour had to become a major part of your next short story. I got pink.

Unknown to me, my chance selection of pink turned out to be a sign. Let me explain about 'signs.' My immigrant parents were working all hours during my childhood in the 1940s, so I was partly raised by some of the last sur-

viving pioneers of Vancouver's Chinatown, the elders who originally sojourned from Old China villages. They imbued in me the folk wisdom of paying attention to signs; that is, to note events and coincidences that would prove meaningful to my fate. For example, I didn't know what picking up 'pink' might mean. I sensed the colour had some significance, but I was stuck. I walked into the kitchen where my two aunts and my father were mulling over my mother's pieces of jade. I overheard one of my aunts mention that as well as the usual green jade, there was pink jade. I left the kitchen. After about an hour, I walked back in and they were talking about the peony heads blooming in my aunt's garden. For some reason, the phrase 'jade peony' gripped me, and I immediately saw in my mind's eye an elderly hand shakily pressing an object of pink jade into a small boy's open palm. The first sentence came to me. That night, I typed out ... "When Grandmamma died at the age of 83, our family held its breath."

The story, "The Jade Peony," was one of two selected by Carol and my classmates to be submitted to the UBC Alumni Chronicle writing contest. It won, and the story was published a year later. I thought that would be the end of things, but the story appeared at a time when multicultural voices were gaining attention. "The Jade Peony" became a favorite of anthologies, and then, in 1992, Patsy Aldana at Douglas and McIntyre offered me a contract to write a book. Three years later, the novel *The Jade Peony*, was published. I'm amazed to think where my writing life would be today if, more than 25 years ago, Carol Shields hadn't challenged her students by tearing up those pieces of paper. Her no-nonsense ghost must be smiling.²³

In the end, what do these processes yield? At their best, they can keep our eyes on the prize—orient, or reorient, us to vocation before we head back into the world to try to pursue that vocation. At

least, they can help us regroup our energy, get quiet, hear our own thoughts, even regain our sense of humor.

B. External Processes You Can Trust

I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve (or save) the world and a desire to enjoy (or savor) the world. This makes it hard to plan the day.

—E. B. White²⁴

Using external processes you can trust to execute your vocation means that you need not choose between saving and savoring. At work, even with a clear sense of the day's or even our life's vocation, we must choose what processes we use to pursue that vocation. Here we are looking for a different set of processes: ones we can deeply enjoy and successfully use to muster our best working and interpersonal skills in service of our vocation. Explore which ones work best for you.

Consider the following exercise:

1. Make a list of all the different processes in your work day (meetings, class, labs, committee meetings, telephone calls, writing time, email correspondence, talks at the water cooler). Think about the way you spend your work day. Do you have days that are spent, say, entirely in meetings? Is the day you teach class a good day, or a dreaded one, or something else? Do you meet with students often? Seldom? Never? How is your writing time structured: in small bursts? In long reflective passages of time? Do you lunch with colleagues, or alone at your desk? Brainstorm the various ways you spend your work time. Challenge yourself to make the list as long and as complete as possible.
2. Circle the processes that you enjoy. If you enjoy some meetings, and not others, make a list of enjoyable ones and circle them.
3. Draw an X through the processes that you do not enjoy.

4. Once you have exhausted both lists, review your information, and look for trends. Are there clearly processes that work for you, that you can trust, and processes that clearly don't?

Consider Jean's recent experience as her vocation took an unusual turn. After eighteen years as a clinical law teacher, in which her classroom teaching took place exclusively in the context of representing clients in actual cases, Jean's internal processes she could trust led her to a clear, seemingly random directive. Jean had represented children in child protective proceedings for many years, and had written a book on the subject; at the time, she also was teaching a clinic at her law school, supervising students doing that work. As she completed a draft of an article on international developments in the field, developments that she had been unaware of until recently, she got a clear message during her journaling and prayer time: investigate how the countries of the world are assuring that children's voices are heard in child protective proceedings, and create a website with your global findings.

Although the reason for the message was not clear, the directive was strong enough that Jean decided to follow it. Doing so required her to teach her first non-clinical seminar, in which class discussion and supervision of major papers replaced one-on-two supervision of student work for clients. At first, she was terrified. However, excitement replaced terror whenever she had a new idea of how to teach in this new format. As part of the course she decided to hold individual meetings with her students; to help them write their papers, she organized a peer review process, which required students to work on their writing in teams; and to vary the learning formats in class, she used interactive classroom techniques. In each case, her "new" strategy was in fact an old one: exported from her clinical teaching, with which she was entirely comfortable, into this new, unfamiliar setting.

Just as vocation is born in gladness, it must grow through the gladness of a daily life. If you have always detested meetings, execute your vocation another way, through a process that you would love. Although most books are written in solitude, this one

emerged through a process of collaboration between Mark and Jean that involved weekly telephone calls, readings that seemed off-topic, "aha" emails, voice recognition software, meetings with research assistants, presentations to groups, three retreats, as well as the hours at the word processor we usually associate with writing. Beware of hamstringing your vocation with processes that do not work for you.

III. Some Elements of a Teacher's Vocation

So far we have looked at a teacher's vocation writ large—its substance and its processes. Many of the strategies we've suggested for looking at the larger issue of your vocation as a teacher you also can apply to its differing dimensions. For instance, imagine that you're struggling with the question of how you should approach your university administrative duties (committee work, faculty meetings). Consider using a prompt you've found useful earlier—for example, reviewing high points and low points in your teaching—and extrapolating it to that specific dimension of your work. The exercise then would become: reflect on the high points and low points in your experience with administrative duties.

In addition to suggesting you adapt earlier prompts for reflecting, in this section we introduce the voices of several teachers describing how they have pursued their vocation in two dimensions of their teaching lives: writing and classroom teaching. What these teachers say and do probably diverges from standard practice, and you may find their words and actions provocative. They certainly represent distinctive perspectives. Whether you feel supported by the views expressed, challenged by them, or even hostile to them, we hope reflecting on them will help you clarify your own views about these dimensions of teaching. While we agree with many of the choices these teachers have made, in this section our goal is not to bludgeon you to agree, but rather to offer rich, detailed, provocative examples to prompt your reflection. However, if you don't find this strategy useful, please return to others more suited to your style.

A. Writing

As a writer, what if you had nothing to prove? Would you write your articles as you now do? Use the dispassionate, “objective” style favored in so many academic journals? Or would you prefer to be more present in what you write? Consider these excerpts from an essay by law professor Patricia Williams.²⁵ As you read, ask yourself whether you think they’re appropriate for a journal article, which is how it first appeared. Is the essay an example of someone writing as if she had nothing to prove?

The Death of the Profane

(a commentary on the genre of legal writing)

Patricia J. Williams

Buzzers are big in New York City. Favored particularly by smaller stores and boutiques, merchants throughout the city have installed them as screening devices to reduce the incidence of robbery: if the face at the door looks desirable, the buzzer is pressed and the door is unlocked. If the face is that of an undesirable, the door stays locked. Predictably, the issue of undesirability has revealed itself to be a racial determination. While controversial enough at first, even civil-rights organizations backed down eventually in the face of arguments that the buzzer system is a “necessary evil,” that it is a “mere inconvenience” in comparison to the risks of being murdered, that suffering discrimination is not as bad as being assaulted, and that in any event it is not all blacks who are barred, just 17-year-old black males wearing running shoes and hooded sweatshirts.

The installation of these buzzers happened swiftly in New York; stores that had always had their doors wide open suddenly became exclusive or received people by appointment only. I discovered them and their meaning one Saturday in 1986. I was shopping in Soho and saw in a store window a sweater that I wanted to buy for my mother. I pressed my round brown face to the window

and my finger to the buzzer, seeking admittance. A narrow-eyed, white teenager wearing running shoes and feasting on bubble gum glared out, evaluating me for signs that would pit me against the limits of his social understanding. After about five seconds, he mouthed “We’re closed,” and blew pink rubber at me. It was two Saturdays before Christmas, at one o’clock in the afternoon; there were several white people in the store who appeared to be shopping for things for *their* mothers.

I was enraged. At that moment I literally wanted to break all the windows of the store and *take* lots of sweaters for my mother. In the flicker of his judgmental gray eyes, that saleschild had transformed my brightly sentimental, joy-to-the-world, pre-Christmas spree to a shambles. He snuffed my sense of humanitarian catholicity, and there was nothing I could do to snuff his, without making a spectacle of myself.

I am still struck by the structure of power that drove me into such a blizzard of rage. There was almost nothing I could do, short of physically intruding upon him, that would humiliate him the way he humiliated me. No words, no gestures, no prejudices of my own would make a bit of difference to him; his refusal to let me into the store—it was Benetton’s, whose colorfully punnish ad campaign is premised on wrapping every one of the world’s peoples in its cottons and wools—was an outward manifestation of his never having let someone like me into the realm of his reality. He had no compassion, no remorse, no reference to me; and no desire to acknowledge me even at the estranged level of arm’s-length transactor. He saw me only as one who would take his money and therefore could not conceive that I was there to give him money. In this weird ontological imbalance, I realized that buying something in that store was like bestowing a gift, the gift of my commerce, the lucre of my patronage. In the wake of my outrage, I wanted to take back the gift of appreciation that my peering in the window must have appeared to be. I wanted to take it back in

the form of unappreciation, disrespect, defilement. I wanted to work so hard at wishing he could feel what I felt that he would never again mistake my hatred for some sort of plaintive wish to be included. I was quite willing to disenfranchise myself, in the heat of my need to revoke the flattery of my purchasing power. I was willing to boycott Benetton's, random white-owned businesses, and anyone who ever blew bubble gum in my face again.

My rage was admittedly diffuse, even self-destructive, but it was symmetrical. The perhaps loose-ended but utter propriety of that rage is no doubt lost not just to the young man who actually barred me, but to those who would appreciate my being barred only as an abstract precaution, who approve of those who would bar even as they deny that they would bar *me*.

The violence of my desire to burst into Benetton's is probably quite apparent. I often wonder if the violence, the exclusionary hatred, is equally apparent in the repeated public urgings that blacks understand the buzzer system by putting themselves in the shoes of white store owners—that, in effect, blacks look into the mirror of frightened white faces for the reality of their undesirability; and that then blacks would “just as surely conclude that [they] would not let [themselves] in under similar circumstances.” (That some blacks might agree merely shows that some of us have learned too well the lessons of privatized intimacies of self-hatred and rationalized away the fullness of our public, participatory selves.)

On the same day I was barred from Benetton's, I went home and wrote the above impassioned account in my journal. On the day after that, I found I was still brooding, so I turned to a form of catharsis I have always found healing. I typed up as much of the story as I have just told, made a big poster of it, put a nice colorful border around it, and, after Benetton's was truly closed, stuck it to their big sweater-filled window. I exercised my first-amendment right to place my business with them right out in

the Street. So that was the first telling of this story. The second telling came a few months later, for a symposium on Excluded Voices sponsored by a law review. I wrote an essay summing up my feelings about being excluded from Benetton's and analyzing “how the rhetoric of increased privatization, in response to racial issues, functions as the rationalizing agent of public unaccountability and, ultimately, irresponsibility.” Weeks later, I received the first edit. From the first page to the last, my fury had been carefully cut out. My rushing, run-on-rage had been reduced to simple declarative sentences. The active personal had been inverted in favor of the passive impersonal. My words were different; they spoke to me upside down. I was afraid to read too much of it at a time—meanings rose up at me oddly, stolen and strange.

A week and a half later, I received the second edit. All reference to Benetton's had been deleted because, according to the editors and the faculty adviser, it was defamatory; they feared harassment and liability; they said printing it would be irresponsible. I called them and offered to supply a footnote attesting to this as my personal experience at one particular location and of a buzzer system not limited to Benetton's; the editors told me that they were not in the habit of publishing things that were unverifiable. I could not but wonder, in this refusal even to let me file an affidavit, what it would take to make my experience verifiable. The testimony of an independent white bystander? (a requirement in fact imposed in U.S. Supreme Court holdings through the first part of the century).

Two days *after* the piece was sent to press, I received copies of the final page proofs. All reference to my race had been eliminated because it was against “editorial policy” to permit descriptions of physiognomy. “I realize,” wrote one editor, “that this was a very personal experience, but any reader will know what you must have looked like when standing at that window.” In a telephone conversation to them, I ranted wildly about the signifi-

cance of such an omission. “It’s irrelevant,” another editor explained in a voice gummy with soothing and patience; “It’s nice and poetic,” but it doesn’t “advance the discussion of any principle ... This is a law review, after all.” Frustrated, I accused him of censorship; calmly he assured me it was not. “This is just a matter of style,” he said with firmness and finality.

Ultimately I did convince the editors that mention of my race was central to the whole sense of the subsequent text; that my story became one of extreme paranoia without the information that I am black; or that it became one in which the reader had to fill in the gap by assumption, presumption, prejudice, or prejudice. What was most interesting to me in this experience was how the blind application of principles of neutrality, through the device of omission, acted either to make me look crazy or to make the reader participate in old habits of cultural bias....

Spend some time with your journal exploring your responses to this excerpt. If you’re working with a colleague or colleagues, share and discuss your responses; explore how you differ.

Can you imagine yourself writing this way, or do you agree with the editors or have another perspective? How does your personal experience figure into your writing.

One teacher can identify.

... I’ve been thinking about the role of “feeling” in “thinking”-dominated legal scholarship. Lately I’ve been reading books by Mary-Louise von Franz, a Jungian analyst who specialized in the interpretation of fairy tales. She cautioned that “thinking” types are prone to over-analyze the structure of fairy tales and completely miss the “feeling” of the story. It reminded me of the Patricia Williams story about the NY Benetton store. Were the law review editors uncomfortable with her emotional story because it was her personal story, or were they uncomfortable because her story was so full of feeling, which thinking types

don’t “get” or value? Recall that I told the Sleeping Lady group that I included poetry in my law review article on the tax consequences of fertility treatment ... [T]he poetry conveys strong feeling in a manner that is unusual in law review articles. I was free to write my fertility cost article in any way I wanted, because I had been tenured, so I included the poetry without regard for the way in which it would be received by student editors of law reviews. Ironically, the article was accepted by the Cornell Law Review!²⁶

Can you imagine encouraging your students to write this way? You’ve seen some examples of this form of student writing in Chapter 3.

Thinking about your own writing, does it have a distinctive voice, and if so, how would you describe that voice? Can you describe the voice you’d like to have as a writer, or in academic writing, do you think that as an author, you should recede or withdraw as much as possible? Mary Rose O’Reilley argues that voiceless writing is inert, unpersuasive.

But finding voice—let’s be clear—is a political act. It defines a moment of presence, of being awake; and it involves not only self-understanding, but the ability to transmit that self-understanding to others. Learning to write so that you will be read, therefore, vitalizes both the

* Here’s Mary Rose O’Reilley on this question:

... We do not try to teach students a civil tongue (to which I would have no objection) but rather some hideous in-group jargon. Too many of us teachers speak (and therefore pass on) the gabble of sociology or education, one of the new Derridean dialects, or a lumpy feminism. Depending on their intelligence, musical ear, or level of desperation, students do or do not learn to sound like us. The more crafty among them will argue, parroting a professorial opinion, that technical vocabulary is essential to every trade. Because I teach a lot of theology students, I like to tell them that if Jesus had talked like that, he would never have made it out of Nazareth.

O’Reilley, *Peaceable Classroom*, 55–56.

self and the community. Voiceless writing, as Peter Elbow has observed, drains the reader; writing that has a voice in it gives energy ... Perhaps scientists will some day discover that it quickens our heartbeat and warms the extremities. By contrast, as Elbow has also noted, to experience yourself as “voiceless” is a definition of depression, subjugation, and being counted out ... To “have a voice” is to have authority.

The other day as I was reading the first chapter of Mark’s gospel, I came upon the familiar passage where Jesus begins his career of teaching and driving out demons. “He has authority,” the people say. “He doesn’t talk like the Scribes.”

The next question I had to ask was, “How did the Scribes talk?”

Well, I suppose nowadays we would call it “academic discourse.”²⁷

Do you agree with O’Reilly and Elbow and consequently, think Patricia Williams’s essay has authority? Parker Palmer would.

... Authority is granted to people who are perceived as *authoring* their own words, their own actions, their own lives, rather than playing a scripted role at great remove from their own hearts.²⁸

However, when in a graduate course Mark asked a group of LL.M students to read Williams’ piece, most of them found it totally inappropriate. They felt she was angry, felt a journal article was no place for anger. The piece was too personal. Perhaps you agree? Do the contrary voices in Williams’ piece make more sense to you?

Do these students’ strongly negative responses reflect the culture in which they live, in which “‘Don’t wear your heart on your sleeve’ and ‘Hold your cards close to your vest’ are ... two examples of (the lesson taught) from an early age that ‘masked and divided’ is the safe and sane way to live?”²⁹

Will living by those precepts sustain a life lived in vocation? That’s the question that frames Kazuo Ishiguro’s beautifully realized novel, *The Remains of the Day*.³⁰ It tells the story of

Stevens, an English butler, whose life is a sustained attempt to live by those lessons.* Through a long career serving an English gentleman, Stevens works hard to maintain his conception of professionalism, which for him means rigidly separating his personal feelings from his professional behavior. Adhering to that conception means ignoring his personal objections and following his master’s orders to fire two Jewish maids in the middle of the Second World War. It means remaining at his post throughout an important conference when he knows his father is in a room upstairs dying. It means refusing to express his love for a co-worker, who, frustrated by Stevens’s rigidity, leaves to marry a man she doesn’t love. It even may mean losing his soul. These are heavy losses, and reviewing and attempting to justify his life, Stevens is full of regret.

Are these the inevitable consequences of living a divided life? Parker Palmer thinks so; he suggests that “disappear(ing) into our roles,” as Stevens did, is extremely costly. Among these costs, all of which Stevens experiences:

- We sense that something is missing in our lives and search the world for it, not understanding that what is missing is us.
- We feel fraudulent, even invisible, because we are not in the world as we really are.
- Our inauthenticity and projections make real relationships impossible, leading to loneliness. [Stevens often projects orders or responses onto his master, never checking to determine whether his projections are correct. Throughout the novel he remains alone.]
- Our contributions to the world—especially through the work we do—are tainted by duplicity and deprived of the life-giving energies of the true self.³¹

* On the persuasive power of stories, novelist Tobias Wolff reminds us through one of his central characters that “[t]he truth of ... stories didn’t come as a set of theories. You [feel] it in the back of your neck.”

Tobias Wolff, *Old School* (New York: Knopf 2003), 97.

We agree with Ishiguro and Palmer, and in writing this book, have tried to reflect on a similar message about the virtues of living an integrated life. Do *you* agree? If so, spend some time thinking how what you write expresses yourself and what you might do to enhance that expression. You might identify writing that engages you, try to identify what about it is engaging, and then reflect on whether any of those strategies would work for you. If you don't agree, explore what about your writing sustains you in your vocation.

B. Classroom Teaching

*Teachers teach who they are.**

Consider the following story.

... I had an interesting experience in my Contracts class in August ... It was the first week of school. I teach Contracts three days a week, including Friday. My best friend had been very ill with cancer for three years. She died on the Thursday night of the first week of school. I was at her house most of the night, and I cried for most of the night, but I decided to teach my class on Friday, in part because I felt like doing something positive, and in part because I thought that I (might) have to miss a class the next week for the funeral. I had puffy red eyes and looked a bit strange, so I decided that I needed to tell the students what had happened.

It didn't go quite as planned! I said what had happened in a sentence or two; when I said that my best friend had died the night before, I burst into tears (the unplanned part). It took me a minute or two to compose myself, after which the rest of the class proceeded in the normal fashion. The students were very kind to me after the class.

* Multiple Sources. Compare Parker Palmer:

Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique: good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher.

Palmer, *Courage to Teach*, 10.

One told me how much he respected the fact that I came to teach them; another student offered me a hug ("No, not a little hug" she said. "You need a BIG hug.").

I felt that it was a mark of my growth as a teacher that I didn't feel embarrassed for being who I was at that time. I just appreciated their kindness. The students got together after class and bought me several condolence cards. The entire section signed the cards. I was very touched.

That was all very interesting, but the most interesting thing is the effect that this interaction had on our classroom dynamic. There is a different, and better, dynamic in this class than in my typical first-year class, and I suspect that it is because they fear me less than my students usually do. I never intend for my students to fear me, but they often do fear me; they tell me later that my intensity and knowledge intimidated them. By accidentally showing some vulnerability in front of them early in the term, I came off as a fellow human being, not just a scary law professor. And I saw my students as compassionate human beings in return. The mood in the class is very friendly and supportive. Next year, my challenge will be to try to get to the same place intentionally.³²

It can be as important to be present in your teaching as it is in your writing.* What does or would being present in your teaching

* Gonzaga Law Professor and Director of the Institute of Law School Teaching Gerry Hess puts it this way:

Teacher Presence

One type of communication linked to effective teaching is teacher immediacy. Immediacy refers to verbal and non-verbal communication that brings teacher and student closer together. A teacher's immediacy behaviors reflect a positive attitude toward students and enhance personal relationships with students; they potentially influence students' attitudes toward the teacher and the course and improve student learning. An empirical study of college students revealed the types of teacher immediacy behavior that enhanced learning for white, Hispanic, Asian, and Black students. The

mean for you? Perhaps you make different choices than this writer did. What choices *do* you make?

Not only do we think it's important to be present to our students; we also think we need to be present to our subjects, to establish meaningful relationships with them. The argument for distance in relation to our subjects parallels the ones made for maintaining distance from our students and "objectivity" in our writing. Parker Palmer asserts that as in academic writing, in education, "objectivism" is the dominant mode of knowing.³³ Palmer suggests that this mode dominates, because we're fearful of "contaminating" what we're seeking to know with our own perspective. That leads us to ask a similar question here to the one we asked about our relationship to students: If a stranger were to visit a classroom in which we embraced a meaningful relationship between knower and known, what would they see? If that picture isn't one you recognize, what can you do to enact it?

IV. Conclusion

What if we had nothing to prove? We end this section as we began, where authentic thinking about vocation must end. The question of vocation, as Fowler suggests, is a lifelong one, for everyday. Finding your way to reflect richly about this question,

verbal behaviors that demonstrated engagement and significantly affected learning for all four groups included soliciting alternative viewpoints and opinions from students; praising student work; calling students by name; posing questions and encouraging students to talk; using humor; having discussion outside the class; and asking students how they feel about assignments. Two non-verbal behaviors significantly affected learning for all four ethnic groups: maintaining eye contact and smiling at students.

Another behavior critical to engagement is listening. Teachers communicate their presence to students by listening carefully to student responses and questions. Actual listening takes effort ...

Gerald Hess, "Heads and Hearts: The Teaching and Learning Environment in Law School," *Journal of Legal Education* 10 (2002): 101–102.

daily and longitudinally, will also enrich and enliven your teaching life. We would be delighted to hear about other ideas for supporting this important ongoing inquiry for a reflective teacher.

Notes

1. Wayne C. Booth, *The Vocation of a Teacher: Rhetorical Occasions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 219.
2. Parker J. Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 30.
3. Booth, *Rhetorical Occasions*, 251. And later:
To love students in the sense of wanting to teach them is a virtue; to want to be loved and admired is usually a mistake and often a vice ... When the desire to be loved takes over, it can lead the teacher, as it leads political candidates, into grotesque oscillations from displays of benevolence to excessive gestures designed to prove toughness.
- Ibid., at 253.
4. Jane Tompkins, *A Life in School: What the Teacher Learned* (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1996).
5. Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: The Seeker's ABCs* (New York: HarperOne, 1993), 119.
6. Palmer, *Courage to Teach*, 148.
7. Ibid., 148.
8. Ibid., 148–49.
9. Mary Rose O'Reilley, *Radical Presence: Teaching as a Contemplative Practice* (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1998), 40–41.
10. Ibid., 41.
11. Ibid., 41.
12. Mark Weisberg, "Epilogue: When (Law) Students Write," *Legal Studies Forum* 27 (2003): 421–36.
13. Karen W. Saakvitne and Laurie Anne Pearlman, *Transforming the Pain: Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1996).
14. James W. Fowler, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development & Christian Faith* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 83–85.
15. Mary Rose O'Reilley, *The Peaceable Classroom* (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1993), 90–91. For an exploration of what it might mean in a course to shift from discerning the gifted to discerning the gift, see Mark Weisberg, "Discerning the Gift," *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* 31, no. 3 (1999): 28–37.
16. Fowler, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian*, quoted at 130 above, in "From Career to Vocation," #4.
17. Donald L. Finkel and G. Stephen Monk, "Dissolution of the Atlas Complex," in *Learning in Groups: New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, no. 14, eds. Clark Bouton and Russell Y. Garth (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1983).
18. O'Reilley, *Peaceable Classroom*, 84.
19. Tompkins, *A Life in School*, 48.

20. Annie Dillard, *The Writing Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 23.
21. Doris Kearns Goodwin narrates the tale of the conception of lend-lease and its implementation in, *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front In World War II* (New York: Touchstone, 1994), 190–96, 201–202, and 210–15. Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor had an almost diametrically opposed set of internal and external processes they could trust, also detailed in the history. For another fascinating account of two radically differing working styles, see Ann Patchett, *Truth and Beauty* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004).
22. For a full account of what changing entailed, see Weisberg, "Discerning the Gift."
23. Scott Sellers, "Discovering What Matters: An Interview with Wayson Choy," *READ Magazine*, Vol. 5, Issue 1 (2004), 35–39.
24. A quote attributed to E.B. White in the profile by Israel Shenker, "E.B. White: Notes and Comment by Author" *The New York Times*, August 3, 1997, last accessed January 21, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/books/97/08/03/life-times/white-notes.html>.
25. Reprinted by permission of the publisher from "The Death of the Profane" in Patricia J. Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights: Diary of a Law Professor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Copyright © 1991 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College), 44–48.
26. Katherine Pratt, Law Professor, reflecting on being present in what she writes in an e-mail to Mark Weisberg, November 18, 2004.
27. O'Reilley, *Radical Presence*, 58.
28. Palmer, *Courage to Teach*, 33.
29. Parker J. Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 15–16.
30. Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of Day* (New York: Knopf, 1989).
31. Palmer, *Hidden Wholeness*, 15–16.
32. Katherine Pratt reflecting following the 2003 *Reflecting on Our Teaching* retreat, held in Leavenworth, Washington, in an e-mail to Mark Weisberg, October 1, 2003.
33. Palmer, *Courage to Teach*, 51–52.