

Jeff Hottinger – MSOD 612 - Upsilon Prime – Post Session Reflection – November 15, 2016

1.a.- see figure 1. **1.b.** There are many concepts that I will be taking forward for my own learning and self-development practice, chief amongst them our exercises on narrative and state integration and the concepts of the *ladder of inference* and how *the method* can be used to counter over-zealous climbing of said ladder.

I found our explorations of my personal narratives to be highly useful and enlightening as a method of discovering the latent identity I was carrying around with me without full awareness of its totality or impact. For instance, in the course of exploring my narrative at Pajaro I was able to first more fully integrate aspects of my story that I carry with me quietly, namely that I think about myself as a failure as a long-time college dropout, into my public and self-aware narrative. Combining this with our exercises related to Siegel's concept of state integration (2010, p. 199) proved to be a valuable tool of introspection for me that allowed me to develop a new version of my narrative where my earlier failure to complete college became just an inability to choose a focus. I then realized I had since resolved this indecision with my growing interest in group dynamics and organizational development up to my enrollment in grad school.

Going forward with these techniques, I have already begun to use them to further examine and refine my narrative but also to focus on more specific areas where I also bring a narrative along with me such as my workplace and my relationship with my wife. In both cases I believe I carry a certain view of myself that hasn't necessarily been checked for accuracy in a long time and I'm starting to repeat my narrative explorations in these subcategories to see what else I may bring to light and how these work and marriage narratives reflect my overall story.

Focusing more on in the moment techniques, I am also already calling back to our classwork on the *ladder of inference* and trying to bring awareness of my own ascent of this ladder when forming beliefs about situations or others I am interacting with; primarily but not exclusively at work. When I find myself rapidly assuming and concluding near the top of the ladder quickly, I am using methods of inquiry presented in class as *the method* to check my assumptions, test meanings I have taken, and hopefully to even check for additional data before I commit to an action. I find this practice to be somewhat *unnatural* for me so far, but I have observed an additional consequence of following these steps of decisions feeling more like teamwork and less like my dictums when I involve others in testing for understanding before proceeding.

2. One aspect of my mindset and a resulting pattern that I've been paying more attention to since Pajaro is my carefulness and resulting behavioral patterns from overuse such as lack of personal impact. I realize that my fear of failure and being wrong has created a tendency towards being careful; one which is not always wrong but is overserving my desire to not make mistakes by preventing my from having an impact at all. I have come to see more clearly that I have a pattern of giving more attention to the responsibilities I feel more confident in and allowing difficult relationships to stay unresolved while I continue to invest in less risky areas.

Utilizing some dynamic attention practices to bring these matters into awareness, I am attempting to revisit a challenged boss relationship I have in order to better contribute and unlock the passion I have for my work that I find currently has few outlets. Helpfully in approaching my own patterns of avoiding this relationship, I also have the explorations we did on posture and stance to help inform my approach to improving this relationship.

3. After a recent post-Pajaro review with my SPINE accountability partner about my action plan and first week progress, I am both pleased to have started initial work on some aspects of my whole-personhood and reminded that other areas remain murky for me. I would like to develop all 5 areas of SPINE, but the two which I feel I will have to do more exploration on are *spirituality* and *intuition*. Of the two my spirituality is probably the most accessible and clear to me, but I still recognize that I have not taken the time to clarify and articulate my beliefs—even to myself—in ways that would help bring them into focus and just be active in my mind more often. This is the access to spirituality that I desire currently and I think I am in a place where this is more attainable for me than it has been in the past.

My intuition, on the other hand, has undergone a shift in how I feel it in recent years; much to my surprise. I realized during the SPINE explorations at Pajaro that at some point relatively recently I had started to doubt and mistrust my intuition—perhaps mistaking it for habit—and that I was no longer as tuned into my intuition as I once had been. Logically, this makes little sense to me as I feel that the experiences and values fueling my intuition have grown significantly especially recently, but nonetheless I find myself in need of more exploration to even understand how I am treating my intuition these days. My action plan establishes steps I can take for these aspects of my SPINE this month so hopefully those will be a good start.

4.a. Self-reflection has long been an enjoyable and accessible activity for me, although typically in a retreating and private way. While at Pajaro I found having the time specifically set aside to engage in self-reflection was immensely helpful and allowed me to gain significant insights over my stay there. My anticipation for the whole week requiring self-exploration also definitely primed my ability to do so when I arrived. The benefit of having a whole week of time

set aside shows by contrast how important and difficult it will be for me to carve out time for continued self-reflection while re-immersed in my daily work, family, and social life.

In addition to having the time, I found the exercises and frameworks we used to be immensely helpful ways to encourage and frame my self-reflection. Specifically, the narrative and state integration series of activities both profoundly impacted my experience of self and allowed the work I was doing to be fruitful. These concepts were both introduced in Mindsight (Siegel, 2010) where I enjoyed how they were presented, yet the activities themselves allowed my to accesses information about myself that did not surface while reading.

Lastly and most importantly, the learning groups were instrumental for my experience of self-reflection by making the process social as well as providing keys to further insight that I did not have access to on my own. The slight courage required of me to share my self-reflections with my group was paid back 100-fold by the acceptance and transparent courage in sharing of themselves that my group partners engaged in consistently. As I mentioned, my group was able to provide perspective and insight about me that I could not access before I heard it from them, but even more significantly the safety they proved was possible while being my authentic self in full view of others will be even more transformational if I can let it resonate going forward.

4.b. Inquiry came easiest for me when I recognized something (at some point) that someone had said that resonated with my own experience. For example, I came to Pajaro hoping to explore some areas of discomfort for me personally and I noticed that I would ask others about the areas they had publicly shared they found uncomfortable when we had the chance to talk one on one. In every case happily this lead to a willing discussion about those issues for both of us (in many different pairs) and I was thrilled to have serious and open

conversations about challenging areas that felt productive for both myself and the partner in inquiry. This positive experience helped me stay engaged with less comfortable conversations as well, such as when I realized I had offended my roommate and was able to ask more about what I had done and how it impacted him even though I was uncomfortable with the feeling that I had hurt someone. Lastly, the three-person activity where we listened and clarified our understanding was an excellent example for me about how forcing myself to pay close attention can allow me to be a helpful participant in someone else's challenges by way of engaging them with a new perspective.

5. The personal strength that was most evident from myself by the conclusion of the first Pajaro session was that the way I am able to, but often don't, show up in groups can be helpful to the individuals and the group itself in a way that validates and improves the experience of all involved. This is very gratifying to me personally, and most notably so in a way that is ego-free and uncompetitive. Knowing and reminding myself that I have this skill is a compelling call for me to ensure that I am making efforts to show up this way for myself and others in situations outside of the MSOD program such as my workplace and my friend and family relationships. For me this carries a significant component of sustainability because without deeper group participation I am not allowing an important part of myself to breathe and grow and I also am holding back what I believe to be a clear benefit to the group itself that would assist and sustain the work of the other group members. This primarily resonates at work for me but also feels relevant to my personal life. I hope to channel my experience from the first MSOD session into these other areas of my life and also cannot wait to arrive with an open mind to discover the ways in which I can be of service to future MSOD sessions and my cohort.

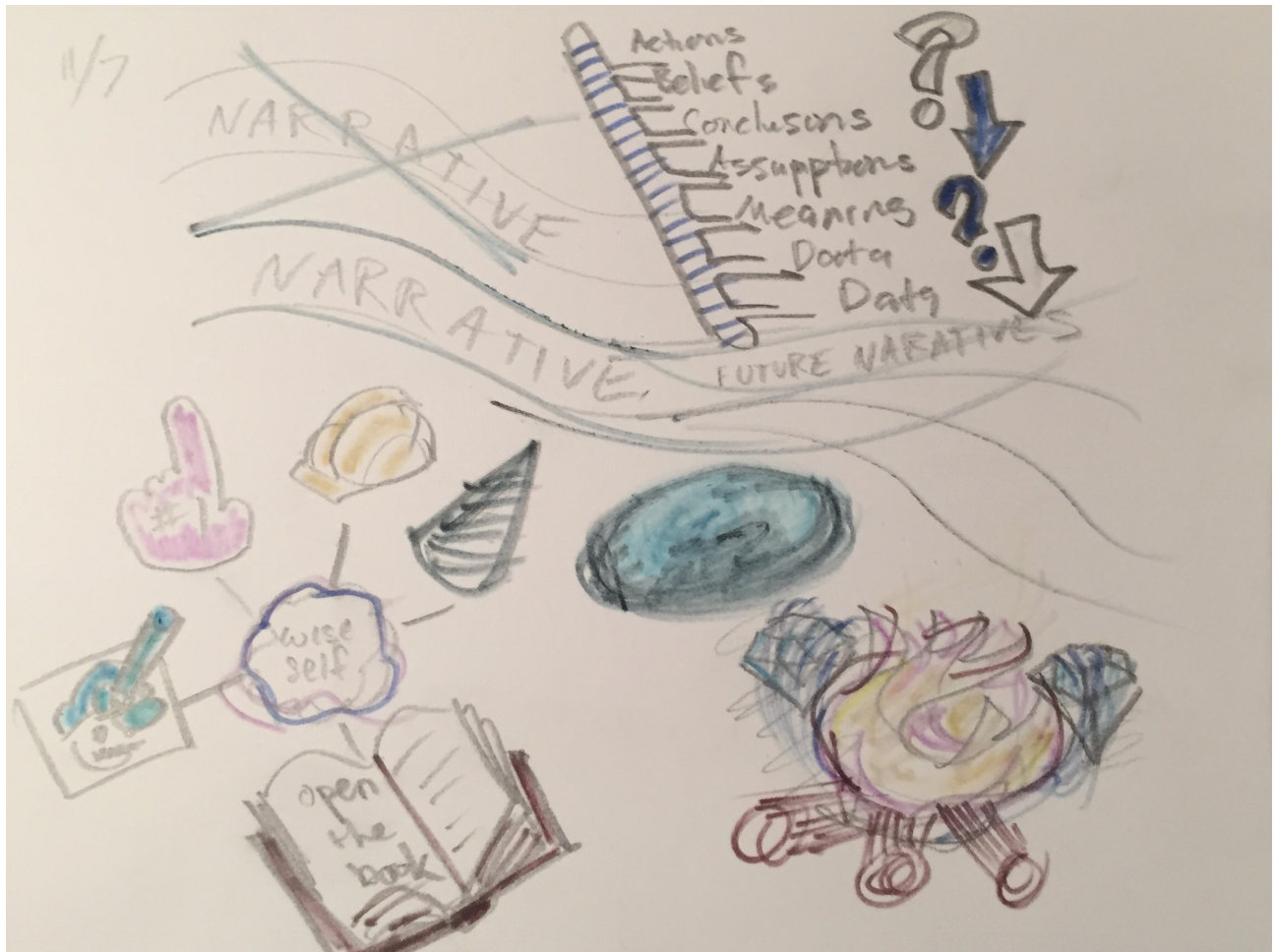


Figure 1

Works Cited

Siegel, D. J. (2010). *Mindsight - the New Science of Personal Transformation*. New York: Bantam Books.