

Welcome to Week 12!

Dear Colleagues,

How are you? I can fully respect that you are working with a lot right now. And my hope is to be of service to you in all of this.

Please allow me to begin with a gentle and loving reminder that as we are in this process of becoming the leaders we want to become; we will never get it right 100% of the time. We are human and that means we will experience failing to be that person we want to be. Or we may make choices in alignment with what we know in the moment unaware of what else could become a part of our decision-making process in the future. This is the learning process we are in – ever growing, ever changing - that is if you choose that learning process approach.

The reason we lead within teams is that we hope/trust that a team member will be the leader we need them to be when we are in the beginning, middle, and ending of the yuck of the experience of failing to be what we desire to become or are missing important insights in our decision-making process.

So, for example (using my I language), last Friday in a class that I teach, I was not hearing what the students were feeling or saying. I let them know that and asked one of them to speak to it in a manner that perhaps I could hear it (which more than one did on Friday). This is a process that is especially important if emotions are at a high level or if one is missing important information that should be considered in the decision-making process (I was missing important information last Friday – something that transpired in a previous class with a different professor and was carried into my class).

Remember that when emotions are high, no human can really hear clearly or see clearly. We can't put all the pieces together to make sense out of it; the amygdala has hi-jacked that part of the brain. And also, please remember that if someone is missing information or an insight that another team member has, they can't take that into account in their decision-making process.

Furthermore, varying lived experiences will interpret specific meanings to specific situations differently. Shared values may even play out weighing differently in specific decision-making processes because of differing lived experiences. We won't know what is really happening and who is missing insights or interpretations or who is weighing shared values differently if we can't get into dialogue around the decision that was made and reach understanding, even though we may still disagree with the decision that was made. The big challenge is how do we do this without igniting shame and blame dialogue, especially when shame and blame dialogue are so prevalent in our postsecondary educational settings. The only way I know of is for someone on the team to interrupt it and invite the re-set button.

We know that we can't get into dialogue if emotions are high. The question I always have is who determines whether it is OK for some to take time to process their emotions more before they enter the dialogue? I don't have an answer to that question, but experience tells me some

will always be ready to re-enter while others are not. So, how do we remain out of shame and blame until this time can occur? With practice...

Self-compassion and suspension of shame and blame (mine and others) are crucial parts of my self-restoration practice. Mindfulness is a crucial part of my self-awareness practice; but none of these practices work unless I practice them, fail, learn, grow and remember that the next moment is a new moment and a new opportunity for a new choice.

Please let me know if any of this doesn't make sense... thank you.

As we move into this week's class session – week 12 - it may prove triggering. Why? We talk about diving into “Who am I? What do I want? What is my life's purpose? And for what am I grateful? That alone can be triggering. My invitation is to go there with great self-compassion.

We also discuss the personal responsibility for growing in self-awareness, something I expect each one of you to do – there are no passes on this if you are to be a leader that creates something other than what we have right now.

As leaders, we must practice being the first ones to share what we are hearing and how we are interpreting it IF our own internal resources allow us the opportunity to do so. We know our internal resources are never the same from one moment to the next and we just discussed how color of skin and other identities and their intersections can play into the weight of restoring internal resources as well. Only you know what you need; note that it is YOUR responsibility to discover what you need to restore your internal resources if you don't yet know. Please do make requests of your team members of and of me to support your restoration of internal resources. No human being can go it alone forever; it is just not sustainable.

Furthermore, I invite you into exploring the extremes of your strengths (without causing harm to yourself or others) and the opposite of that strength so that you can begin to integrate the qualities you seek to cultivate as a leader with your strengths in ways that feel authentic and in ways that are also productive. As you practice integrating the opposites of qualities, you may begin to find insight into how to integrate opposites of perspectives into your decision-making also in an authentic manner as opposed to a political manner. Acknowledging the “and” in any given situation can bring about possible solutions that don't happen when we are focused on the opposite perspectives only.

We will practice integration in our online in-class practice this week, which you can access via Zoom - (<https://SDSU.zoom.us/j/187491131>) on November 7th from 12- 1:00 pm pacific time (note we just changed to daylight savings time on November 3, so this may be a different time than you have previously been experiencing if you are in a place that does not practice daylight savings time).

As always, please don't hesitate to let me know how to best support you on this journey.

With loving kindness,

Marilee and Carol