

Autobiography Paper

Katie McCoy
ATS/NY City

Course Title: Personal, Professional, and Theological Foundations For Ministry
Course Number: SF505
Spring 2020
Professor: Dr. Ronald Walborn and Guest: Dr. Wanda Walborn
April 27th, 2020

Introduction:

Writing this paper in the midst of living in COVID-19 has changed maybe a few of my answers to certain areas. While I'm still reflecting on how I function socially, physically, cognitively, emotionally and spiritually, I hope that through goal setting and writing out observations in these areas that I can continue to develop and grow as a daughter of Christ in each area.

Evaluation

The first area is social. I have always seen myself as a fairly social person. By hosting game nights and potluck dinners at my apartment regularly. I am blessed with a large network of friends from my undergrad that still live in New York City, my friends from my church, and now friends from Seminary.

I went to Florida to stay with my parents before the full peak hit New York City. Living in Florida during quarantine, I have noticed a lot about myself. I love not having plans, and I don't mind spending all day in my room, not having zoom call after zoom call on the weekend, and not having to go out and entertain people. This social schedule is vastly different from when I am in New York City.

I have not yet hit a point where I am dreading isolation, I do miss parts of what my normal life was like. However, I do not miss how busy my social calendar was. I was speaking with my friend Lupe about this. Part of me socially always felt the need to be the mother, leader, the host of the party at my apartment, or an entertainer in game nights. I did this because I like the attention and I like hosting; however, I think I was more drained from people than I like to admit. I think that I need more balance when it comes to my life socially and understanding that is ok to say no.

A challenging area for me socially is how I relate to my family. I currently am at home in Florida living with my mom and stepdad. Right now, I am struggling in my relationship with my dad and my stepmom. I haven't been able to see them since they are both over 65 and my dad is a cancer survivor and diabetic. I don't know why but as time goes on it seems like my dad and I have drifted farther apart. My family is not a regular tight knit family that does game nights and go on vacation together. However, I don't want there to be a growing distance between those members and myself.

During class discussion and through the lectures I think I'm harboring emotions against my dad and stepmom. While I don't know quite yet the resentment and bitterness, I have been trying to unpack more about my emotions, and the need to both forgive and ask for forgiveness.

The next area of evaluation is physically. I am going to be extremely honest this area of my life is one that I have struggled with since I was a child. My entire family struggles with weight. Since living in Florida, it is frustrating because I don't get to grocery shop and meal plan for myself. Since 2016, I radically changed the way that I eat, but while being in Florida I have gone back to eating poorly.

One area physically that I have yet to make into a good habit consistently is working out. I hate it with all my being. I do well for a few months or a few weeks or maybe a few days and then don't have the motivation to doing it anymore. The most successful workout activities have been soul cycle and yoga. I did those for the longest period of time.

Other areas physically I want to evaluate is how much water I drink in a day and sleep. I know, I need better hydration habits. I have never liked drinking water even as a kid. Sleep I think I do ok in. I do not like to get less than eight hours of sleep; I have never functioned well if

I don't get enough sleep. What I do want to get better in is not staying in my bed after I wake up; sometimes I lounge for one or two hours before getting out of bed. .

The next area of evaluation is cognitive. Since being back in school, this area is up for me. I highly value learning and participating. I thrive in academic circles, but it is also because most of my life I have spent in school. While I think I do well in school and that being in seminary is advancing me there are other areas that I think that I can improve in.

One area that I want to study and make sure I'm more aware in both world and local news. Being in Florida, my parents have cable, and my stepdad has the news on almost too much. However, I realized back in New York City I rarely tune into the news. It makes me closed off to both local and world news and makes me ignorant. Unless something becomes viral and I happen to see an article on it do I learn about what is going on in the news. I think I can become more aware to what is going on outside of my social and local bubble.

The next area is the emotional evaluation. This year being in therapy, PPTFM, and spiritual formation has helped me so much because it made me analyze how I act emotionally. I'm currently processing a few things about myself and trying to figure out where it stemmed from. I have a problem speaking up when I need something emotionally; and I also have fears of being wrong and rejection. These fears make me at times emotionally closed off and unwilling to share how I am feeling emotionally.

It is because of seminary I have started emotionally unpacking my heart and soul. I'm not done yet, but I think I'm getting better and I know that if I put more time into processing through my emotions that I will continue to grow as a more mature persona emotionally.

Final area is Spiritual evaluation. Learning the spiritual disciplines was something that I never heard of growing up. I didn't grow up in a Christian household, so we did not go to church,

but I went to the same Christian school for 10 years! I can't tell you how upset I was that the disciplines were something I had never been taught. Seminary has challenged me a lot spiritually because it has made me more aware of the state of my soul. I have realized the areas that I don't surrender to God. I have become better in communicating with the Lord. I'm not perfect but I'm growing. It is not a fast growth, but I can see areas of my life changing and it makes me happy because I don't live in a state of just loving Jesus but knowing and communicating with Him.

Goals and Explanation of Goals

First goal is for my social life is regarding my friendships. So, the specific goal is that every 1st Sunday I will look over and see if I need to cut out or add activities for the month in my monthly planner. I will do this for four months and reevaluate if I think this evaluation has helped me balanced my social life. I will start May 2nd and by August 2nd will see if I should change the day, I do my calendar evaluation and if the evaluation has been affective for me to help to create social boundaries. I will tell my best friend, Michelle, about my goal and will ask if she will be my accountability partner.

For my family social goal, I want to implement more phone calls with my dad and my stepmom. I already call them once a week, but I don't do it consistently. My goal is to call them twice a week, once on Wednesday and Sunday. I also will tell my dad that when I come home from school breaks, I want to hang out with him at least once to have daddy and daughter time. I will tell both my dad and my stepmom of our phone dates. I will tell my friend Makayla my goals and have her as my accountability partner to talk with once a month about how calling my dad and stepmom is going.

Next is my goals for myself physically. I am saying this because I'm trying to believe it, but I put that I want to love exercising and to prioritize it. My specific goal is to eventually get to

exercising three days a week. My first goal though is to build to it so I will start with exercising one day a week for a month for 45 minutes. Then, next month two days a week for one month for 45 minutes at least each day. Then, eventually add the third day after another month.

For hydrating, I am going to start my day with one glass of water before coffee (since I drink coffee every morning). I also won't drink soda or juice at meals but will have water and keep water next to me while working. I will work up to at least the recommended amount of water by one month by keeping a count of how much water I'm drinking on a daily basis. For both exercise and hydration my accountability partner will be my friend Lupe. She also is trying to focus on adding exercise to her routine so, I thought we can encourage each other.

For my morning routine, I am going to tell my mom because she will call me every morning or at least hold me accountable if I am lazy. My goal is to set several alarms in a one to two-minute interval in order to get me out of the bed. I also will set my phone across the room, so I have to physically get out of bed. My goal is once my alarm goes off, I won't spend more than ten minutes in bed and then after a month no more than five minutes.

For my cognitive goal, I signed up for the skimm. It is an email that gives a summary report of global news and news in the United States. My goal is to read it during my morning commute at least three times a week. I also will listen to the NPR podcast news update at least two times a week. My friend, I choose to keep me accountable is Christina. We can talk about weekly world and news updates at least once a week.

For my emotional goal, I will keep going to counseling. I also want to set a goal of journaling at least once a week for one hour. Reflecting on both present and past emotional conflict and baggage. I also want to continue specifically a grief journal that I will write in at

least once a month. My accountability partner will be Katherine. I'll update her on our weekly chat about my journaling.

For my spiritual goal, I will pick one spiritual discipline to develop for six weeks on rotation. Eventually, adding a focus on two disciplines a week for three-week spans. Then, three disciplines on a two-week span. Since learning about the spiritual disciplines, I notice a change in my relationship with the Lord. Something that radically changed how I lived my day to day life.

Conclusion

Something that I realized during small groups in this class was that it wasn't always comfortable to share because I was afraid of judgment. However, I learned more about myself the more willing I was to share. Having small groups since COVID, I have heard people share struggles that we all had. I have been cheered on and encouraged in my calling from my classmates. I can't thank them enough for being willing to listen and offering prayer for me. This course stretched me to step out and be vulnerable and truthful with myself, which sometimes I'm not.

If I can say anything to my future self it is, I hope you aren't afraid of the unknown. I hope you don't doubt yourself and believe in the calling God has placed on your life. Finally, I hope you understand how much the Lord loves you. These are my biggest fears and struggles and my hope and prayer is in three years I can say, "Look what the Lord did." I'm grateful that the Lord let me to Alliance Theological Seminary because it has transformed my relationship with Him, and I hope to continue to grow closer to Him during my time in Seminary. I hope to look back on this paper surprised by how my relationship with Him has grown in ways that I could never have known.