

DML801: Orientation

Learning Experience 1: Personal & Ministry Goals

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Course Texts

Dreaming Big

Reading this text was really frustrating for me. It felt as if the author was pushing toward accomplishing one specific concrete goal. The quotes, encouragements, affirmations were great but I had no idea where I was headed. As I've continued to process after the class, I have concluded that my big dream is who I want to be. The following chart summarizes some of my processing.

Before class

Fragmented (shot gun blast)
Doer
Operational
I am a burden
Surviving
Non-existent boundaries
Poor self-care
Expecting others to see me
Striving

Now

Focused (laser)
Connector
Organizational
I am a gift
Moving toward thriving
Building fences
By doing less, I can do more
Seeking to understand how God sees me
Seeing & receiving blessings

Walborn Video

My most impactful take away was the explanation of the bounded and centered set. My life was perfectly described by the bounded set. Now my focus is on seeking a deeper relationship with God and striving to be deeply honest as I process. I am being open and as things rise to the surface I ask God to help me see them for what they really are and be brave and follow His lead.

Sanders Video

My most impactful take aways were from the 20/20 Rule and Exploring the 360 Rule: Moving Backwards to Move Forward.

20/20 Rule

- Dirty water/clean water analogy – God is at work emptying out the dirty water so I can see Him clearly.
- As I sit and seek His heart, He has been revealing things and setting me free.

- What is stopping you from receiving the love of your heavenly father? What will it take for you to see yourself the way God sees you?
 - I've been sitting with these questions and asking God to help me see myself the way He does. The key is *sitting* not doing. Learning that God sees me as His "Diamond Daughter" and He likes just hanging out, doing nothing in particular.

Exploring the 360 Rule: Moving Backwards to Move Forward

- The grief journal, family voyage assignment, and Biehl's book played key roles in this process. A more holistic view of adults in my life has prompted understanding, forgiveness and greater freedom.
 - Biggest break through: learning that my actions did not cause the rift in my relationship with my father. He had a lot of baggage and his reaction to me was not my fault. I am asking God fill the "dad holes" in my heart.

Carmen, good and succinct work here – I feel like in your desire to adhere to the succinct page count, you left some of the processing on the cutting room floor, so to speak. In other words, I may be "off" here, but I wonder if you need to sit and chew on these initial observations further. More for your own soul's sake than as part of an assignment. Just a thought. Let me know if you need something of a jumpstart doing that.

Course Assessments

The 16PF revealed a new insight, a sensitive heart. I never really thought about myself in this way. I want the things on God's heart to be reflected in me. I am acutely aware of the experiences of the people in my life, sometimes too much so. When God brings someone to mind I pray for them and often send a card or text. Many times friends/family have let me know that hearing from me arrives at the exact time they needed a word of encouragement.

So a doctoral level of depth here, for example, would be to name that as discernment and pray into the idea of what it could look like to lean into that more and really “own” it as the gift that it is, if that makes sense in your new centered-set mind 😊

The other assessment/coaching feedback confirmed things that had already been brought to my attention. I’ve been told before that I need to articulate and stop when sharing information. Also sharing interesting insights and shepherding abilities have been affirmed in the past as well as a need to be more of an organizational as opposed to an operational leader. I have been reading extensively on organizational leadership, self-care and the dark side of leadership.

Burnout due to lack of self-care, co-dependency and a failure to set boundaries led to counseling sessions in Fall 2019/Spring 2020. Counseling equipped me with tools to get in touch with my emotions, work on boundaries and my self-worth. I have followed recommendations from my coaching session to spend time with God seeking His face and seeking validation from Him and not people. It has been an interesting journey. For six weeks, following our class session, I spent a day with God each week. I adjusted my work schedule, working 10hr days, so I could have one weekday to devote to God. I’ve recently had to adjust my God Day schedule to every other week.

Initially my meetings started with my plan – Bible reading, prayer, journaling. About four weeks ago, God prompted my heart to ask Him what He wanted to do during our days together. I would never spend all day with a human and not ask him/her what they wanted to do but I had been doing that to God. So, I asked Him, and a day with Him has not been the same since. Following my work on the family voyage assignment, I spent a day with Him remembering my childhood and re-processing memories. I was expressing my thanks at the end of one of our days together and was delighted to hear God say “my pleasure”.

I’ve also been meeting with a coach, specifically on self-care. I have been making space for me and creating emotional boundaries. I continue to take things off my plate to make space. It’s a struggle but I am working on it. My time with God is helping me see that my worth is not determined by what I

do. Another part of my self-care is learning how to feel again. My partial emotional shutdown occurred after my mom died. Looking back, it was likely too much for my sensitive heart to handle. The adults in my life did not provide the tools or space to process the pain, so likely I did the only thing I could to survive – shut down part of my feelings.

As a result of lifestyle changes, processing and more time with God I've experienced more peace, increased communication from God and an emotional reserve. In the last month I've had two phone calls, lasting 2-3 hours, with distressed friends. In the past, I would have been totally exhausted after these calls. I was really surprised to find that at the conclusion of these conversations I was not tired at all.

Next steps:

- Continue God Days
- Quarterly meetings with mentor
- Establish long term relationship with executive/leadership coach
 - She Leads Conference provided a few good options
- Develop circle of like-minded, healthy friends
- Closely monitor self-care and boundaries
 - Prioritize my well-being and development
- Read widely on organizational development & women in leadership
- Consistently go on retreats with God – first one scheduled for 3/18 - 3/20
- Meet with counselor as needed

Carmen, this is good – way to take steps and show a willingness to adjust. You may want to move (somewhat) towards a coach more than a mentor if you want to push yourself in that way. I am thinking less about developing you as a person in this comment, and more about your development as a leader. You decide if you're seeing a distinction between those in this season and whether or

not it's the appropriate time to consider this. Also pay attention to how God will / is moving in your context and possibly opening doors into other areas or venues – it might not be clear now, but He generally works in that direction when we start getting some of the pieces you list here more centered. Glad you're in the program – press on!

Dr. S