Professional Seminar I: Compassion, Spirituality & Self-Care

SWK649

Personal Rule of Life Paper

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I am so grateful and honored by this experience I received from the retreat. It has been rejuvenating, tranquil, refreshing and enlightening. Practicing self-care and developing a Rule of Life has helped me to acquire a holistic approach to myself for it is this approach that supports my entire being and not just one part of me. It helps to support with the physical mental, emotional, social and spiritual well-being and focuses on self- awareness and self-care which is exactly what the retreat meant to me. In reading *Crafting a Rule of Life by Stephen Macchia* It helped me to connect some of the dots and how some of the examples applied to my daily life, particularly as it relates to roles, relationships, vision and trust. In reading *Self- Care in Social Work A Guide for Practitioners, Supervisors, and Administrators* I've learned the importance of practicing self-care and new skills to practice in the work place. Both books will serve as a reference for me throughout my learning experience and practice as a social worker.

The Lord Is leading me in developing my personal rule of life as it relates to my roles and relationships, gifts, desires, vision and mission which are all interconnected in many ways. For me to sustain healthy relationships with others I must first and foremost be willing to work towards forgiveness of myself, loving myself continue to ask God to forgive me for my sins, have mercy on me and to heal me so that I am able to forgive others. It requires me to relinquish the grudges I've held and continue to hold onto so that I can be the best version of myself. I am conflicted when it comes to my roles and relationships because sometimes, I feel that I am everything for everyone and don't always feel appreciated or acknowledged and other times I feel like I'm pushing the people that love me the most away.

I am the first and oldest of eight siblings, I am a mom of three boys and a bonus mom; I am a wife, a daughter, a sister and a friend. The key relationships in my life as it stands are my three children and my husband, primarily because we all live together, and I spend the most time with them. There are three important people in my life that I would love to repair and rebuild relationships with, my mom, whose relationship is at a level three at the present time. No matter how much I try to communicate with her just to check-in and call her she always sounds annoyed which subsequently makes me shut down. My dad who is at a level two; The relationship with him requires forgiveness on my part. My heart does not seem to be healed from my memory of abandonment from him as a child. His actions does not reflect remorse due to his inconsistency and failure to reach out to me and acknowledge me despite me conveying my feelings to him. I often call him and feel like the feeling is not mutual or reciprocated. My step-son who may also be at a level two, but feels like a level 1. This relationship with him means the most to me because he is the bridge between me and my husband.

The relationship with my two youngest children are at a level four; my oldest son at a level three and my husband at a level four. My role as a mom requires me to be cognizant of the fact that each of my children need alone time with me and even though my oldest son is 23 years old; he too needs love, validation and celebrating from me. In developing this rule of life, it will require me to be vulnerable, to forgive and to let go.

My greatest contributions to the lives around me, particularly my children have been the gift of giving, not in a materialistic way but in a way that manifests and exhibits love, time, patience and memories. The time spent with my children is important because it helps them to feel loved and individualized. Some of my talents are my ability to be a provider, teacher, servant, creative, a designer and crafter, organizer, dancer and domesticated. In Macchia, page

35 it reads " In truth, we cannot become anything other than who we already are, if we wish to be fulfilled in our lives and vocation. We must stop trying to "become" something else, or "develop" or cultivate some trait that we fundamentally lack, and instead start being who we already are by identifying out giftedness and living it out (pg.35) . This quote resonated with me for two reasons, the first validating the gifts that are already instilled in me by God. It helped me to accept who I am and no longer want to force what isn't or trying to be something I am not.

I know that I need to work on my temperament and that it is important to model positive behavior because my children and others are watching. My rule of life as it relates to my gifts, talents and temperament are to acknowledge and accept the way God has made me and not try to be something I am not. To embrace my true self is to accept Gods design in order to fulfill the purpose he has for my life.

My desires would therefore be to "trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:3-4). I would like to develop a more personable relationship with God, to truly know him and to feel him. I trust in him, I believe in him and I have faith. I know he knows my heart. I want to have a better relationship with others and to be released from the burdens of any guilt, pain, anger, resentment and shame that I am harboring within me. I desire to purchase a home, to believe in myself and take risks. What matters to me most is equity and fairness, developing healthy relationships, working on being a better me. Some of my core values are honesty, integrity, humility and respect.

I believe that God has planted in me the ability to help others. I have asked over in over in my prayers for God to show me purpose and my gift. God has forgiven me and has shown me mercy time and time again. I have asked to be healed and renewed, my fear is not fulfilling the tasks

and disappointing him. I believe God has called me into the helping profession of Social work which I have been for twenty years. I have returned to school after twenty years because I feel like God called me to do so. Like Moses, I rose to the challenge God called me to do which was go back to school. For so many years I was afraid and as a result did not go, there were barriers and challenges in enrollment and now here I am with six more months to graduate and receive my Master of Social Work degree. In time, with time on time is my mantra, my vision for my future endeavors are limitless. I pray for clarity, strength and guidance.

My Mission is to find a good church home in order to fellowship, worship and receive the word of God. I know I don't necessarily need to wait to find a church home and that it is about my relationship with God that matters. I feel like it'll be more beneficial for myself and my family to do so. I often feel ashamed and embarrassed for not knowing fully tackling the word God, I have asked for forgiveness as a result. My mission is to finish up the last six months of my education in order to receive my master's in social work, to get my license and open a private practice with my husband. My mission in life has always been to take care of others, participating in this class help to educate me on the importance of caring for myself, that my body is a temple and caring for it is important for my physical and internal well-being. I have made the mistake of caring more about what I look like on the outside instead of pouring into the internal part of me which will feed my soul and is true beauty and recognition.

Perhaps I need to be "born again" in order to be a transformed being. Although I believe God knows my heart and my good intentions, I don't believe It is enough. I have asked to be healed but to truly be healed it will be on me to change my habits, training my mind and my body to what is appealing to him. As I read chapter eight in Macchia on temple helped me to

gain insight as it relates to the caring of your body, mind and heart. Setting financial priorities has been yet another challenge for me. As mentioned in my introduction, I believe that each

As a social work student, spirituality, compassion and self-care are imperative traits to apply for oneself and for the client. The retreat was a great experience for me, it taught me how to fellowship and be vulnerable with others I have never had a relationship with or have known. This will help support my roles and relationships in my personal life. It taught me to trust others, to not be fearful of submitting and to express myself and not feel judged. It helped with my vision, allowing me to become self-aware and to highlight some things within me that I need to change and accept. By making the collage I was able to visualize a lot of my thoughts and feelings which I found to be helpful; visualization helps make goals a reality. Feeling the lords presence as we worshipped and sand helped to rejuvenate my spirit and my soul, it helped me to acknowledge that my physical being (temple) needed to be replenished. I also learned a lot from the testimonies of my classmates and to be purposeful and intentional about developing my personal rule of life. I will engage in self-care to provide the best version of myself in all aspects of my life.

References

Cox, K. & Steiner, S. (2013). Self- Care in Social Work A Guide for Practitioners, Supervisors, and Administrators. Council of Social Work Education.

Maachia, S. (1912). Crafting a Rule of Life: An Invitation to the Well- Ordered Way. Intervarsity Press.