

Critical Assessment Form

List the 8 books (3 required, 5 chosen) and/or any handouts, articles, blogs, videos you've read/watched:

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| 1. A Creative Minority | 5. Boundaries |
| 2. The Gift of Being Yourself | 6. The Road Trip that Change the World |
| 3. Try Softer | 7. It's Time for a Change |
| 4. Difficult Conversations | 8. Designing Your Life |

1) Why were these chosen?

These books were chosen because I was looking for material that would cultivate the most life change so to be effective in leading others down this same path. When looking through the given list, I selected the titles that spoke to my current life situation the most, which tended to be focused on areas of weakness. Through class, there has been an increase in awareness to the most damaged places of my soul, which I believe the selected books could bring about healing. Ultimately, I know God is my great physician, but one of the main ways that He communicates is through people.

2) What was challenging? What was the most helpful? What was not helpful?

The most challenging was plunging the depths of my false self (soul) to discover more of who I am. What I discovered was painful because of how sinful and human I am at my core. But with this increased awareness, I discovered more revelation of God's grace and love. This pushes me out of the status quo and into the realm of radical abandonment to the loving union with God. I now know that I find my true self by seeking God. I had a hard time following some of the exercises, specifically in "Try Softer." Felt like I'd rather spend time in the spiritual disciplines instead of secular self-help practices.

3) How have the readings continued to develop your approach to working with people? Were there any paradigm shifts for you? If so, what?

I particularly thought the principles in "Designing Your Life," such as reframing failure as opportunities to grow than setbacks, can be taught to the younger generation of whom I have great influence over as a Pastor/Teacher. The major paradigm shift is the freedom to go deep into my emotions with God and others, especially because we men like to cover up emotions and stay intellectual. By reframing negative emotions to unwanted emotions, I believe I can lead other men into these truths. I am convinced that if we want to grow spiritually, we need to mature as emotional beings. It is costly but worth every tear.

4) How will the readings be applied to your personal and professional life?

From reading "It's Time For a Change," the truth about the religious spirit broke me. Through surrender/repentance, I no longer want God in my life on my own terms, but rather I want God in my life on His terms. I know this will be a daily walk of surrender and I desire nothing else than to abide in His love. I believe there are many Christians that are deceived by this works-based Christianity, and through my own transformation, I can lead others into a loving union with God. The main application from "Creative Minority" will be having a covenantal community that is both vulnerable and committed to one another. God has ordained the perfect situation for me for this to become a reality, as we plant a church in my town. But remember the church is the people, not a building!