

INTERN MINISTER

Greetings from the Twitter-verse!

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As a reminder, I explore each month's Soul Connections theme on my Twitter account (@kellieuukelly) using a hashtag (#) and the month's theme (example: "#Identity"). I also would love to join your explorations of the monthly themes—simply include my Twitter handle at the beginning of your Tweet: "@kellieuukelly" or post to my Facebook wall. For those of you who aren't interested or able to sign up for a Twitter account, I include some of my favorite tweets here in our newsletter.



So this month, we explore #Transformation.

True confessions from an intern: I am typing this column at 6:00 a.m. and it is officially six days late. I am in my fourth day of intensive classes at my seminary, Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago. I get up at 4:30 a.m. to work and get ready. Then I leave for school at 7 a.m. and hope to be back home by 7 p.m. I am immersed in transformation, hehe!

All kidding aside, my class this term is Dr. Mark Hicks' "Method Is the Message." Mark (as he encourages everyone to call him after the introductions) modeled this class on the work of the innovative UU religious educator Angus MacLean. Mark explains, "MacLean had a strong hunch that we act our way into being differently in the world — that people make meaning by interacting with problems, and wrapped inside that process, come to new levels of understanding.... MacLean proclaimed that how we teach is often more important than the content itself."

Although the school considers it a "religious education" class, Mark has not used those words once. Mark is training ministers to see religious education as lifelong faith development and deepening... as transformation. He sees faith formation as the main responsibility of all ministers and directors of religious education. It is not something separate—something that only happens in the children's classrooms.

In this "methods" class, we are learning how to lead and facilitate, as opposed to "teach." We are learning this through the experience of being the congregant. For example, Mark does not give us a list of dos and don'ts for facilitation. He does not list out the steps of each group activity or exercise. Instead, Mark takes us on the transformation journey, acting as

our facilitator and guide. We don't learn how to lead the True Colors activity—we do the True Colors activity as our congregants one day will do.

We, as the congregants, are making the content of each activity. Mark provides us different frameworks to draw our learning from ourselves—different trails, handles, strategies, tools, or lenses. Congregants are their own teachers (content-creators) and the facilitator is the guide. As you might have already guessed, this is deeply personal work, hard work.

Transformation is hard work.

Often when people talk about the metamorphosis from a caterpillar to a butterfly, people describe the caterpillar stage in detail and only words like mysterious and amazing for the cocoon stage. For most of humans' time on earth, this was all we knew. Something happens in the cocoon and the caterpillar comes out a completely different creature, a butterfly.

Science now can tell us how the process works. Digestive enzymes break down the caterpillar body and turn those cells into undifferentiated cells. The caterpillar is a soup until its cells can transform into something completely new. As a human who has gone through personal transformation, I can tell you that the caterpillar soup stage is pretty horrible. Luckily, I discovered the soup metaphor and that allowed me to stop fighting the process and have faith that I would survive it and emerge as a butterfly. You too will survive your transformation and fly.

True confessions from an intern: I am no longer in the transformation soup. I am a fully formed butterfly. However, I'm not yet ready to leave my cocoons: Unity Temple and Meadville Lombard. My wings are still wet. I am grateful we have another year together.

May you find courage to do the hard work of transformation and faith to know that you will survive it and fly!

With gratitude,

Kellie

Kellie Kelly @kellieuukelly · 4m
Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage. ~ Anais Nin #RISK @utuuc

← ↻ ❤️ 1 ||

Kellie Kelly @kellieuukelly · 3m
#RISK loving the other or the enemy, @utuuc

← ↻ ❤️ ||