James Ruenz

2/14/2017

Heather Petzold

Assignment 2

Each destination on the journey of Wheatley and Frieze is a lesson creative ingenuity. Traditional thought and societal norms become comfortable, and the mere thought of change strikes fear in those that resist. A special type of courage is required to turn away from ingrained processes or adapted behavior. Change is incremental, and often the destination is invisible or obstructed from view. The stories in Walk Out Walk On, helped me to envision successful community interventions, which often began with creating a space where sharing and caring drive the conversation toward mutual consensus. The intense commitment toward the end goal is necessary with the heart mind and body working in unison. A positive attitude that celebrates the success of others shows the authenticity of a movement motivating others to join in the effort.

The most positive transformation in my life has been the accomplishments of the last five years. After the passing of both my parents, a nurse shared a piece of advice, “you never really grow up until both of your parents have passed away.” The liberty to make decisions based on what I believed, and not parental expectations relegated by social constructs. While I enjoyed nearly three decades of laborious work in residential, commercial, and industrial phases of construction, my passion lies with helping others. Deciding to enter community college at age 49 is what I would consider the point at which I walked out on traditional thought. Refusing to return to the same line of work for less pay and dropping from the workforce required great sacrifice. The security associated with steady income was the first comfort that would be relinquished. I am very grateful for the chance to rediscover and re-create myself for the second half of my life journey.

When I think of the sheer number of classes to complete my bachelor’s degree, I remember how overwhelming the thought of what a challenge was in store for me. The very lowest math, reading, and writing classes were the point I would begin. Next semester will finish the psychology portion of my double major. The second half is conflict resolution, and will be completed before next June. My intentions are to gain employment in an entry-level position in my field, while finishing the last year. In the past when employment or a relationship did not work out the normal response from me was to “walk on.” Refusing to walk away from the goal of completion can be listed as one of the accomplishments I am most proud of. Much of the credit should be given to the people around me that believed in what I was pursuing.

The story that I can most relate to is Joubert Park, because they walked out of focusing on the problem, and walked on by focusing on something. Gains in one area motivated change in other areas. My favorite quote is “…we have everything we need to create the world we wish for” (p.95). The stories all taught me lessons in the value of taking a multi-dimensional approach that is flexible, because the problems being addressed are complex and ever changing. The movement became self-perpetuating gathering energy from with inside itself. I can also relate to the Zapatista way of life, and I appreciated the authors mentioning Rage Against the Machine (p. 34). I saw The Prophets of Rage last Summer, and they donated a guitar to P:ear to be auctioned off at a fundraiser. A system that oppresses human beings requires agitation, and when we “refuse to stand on our silent platform,” we take the first step toward helping others to liberate themselves.