AUTHENTIC MASCULINITIES:

A Dialogical Narrative Study of College Men Exploring
Gendered and Spiritual Identities

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A Dissertation

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by

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ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: AUTHENTIC MASCULINITIES: A DIALOGICAL
                          NARRATIVE STUDY OF COLLEGE MEN EXPLORING
                          GENDERED AND SPIRITUAL IDENTITIES

                          Christopher L. Wilcox Elliott, Doctor of Philosophy, 2011

Dissertation Advisor: Professor Carol Anne Spreen
                              Social Foundations of Education

This study investigated gendered (masculine) and spiritual identity intersections among an interfaith group of college men. Utilizing a unique dialogical narrative research methodology, the following primary research questions guided this study: (a) How do college men understand their gendered (masculine) and spiritual identities? (b) How are college men's commitments to spirituality and/or religious faith associated with centricity, citizenship, and an ethic of care or service? The emerging theory was grounded in participant surveys, interviews, dialogue sessions, and narrative analysis of seven traditionally-aged college men all identifying with different religio-spiritual faith traditions. Themes of meaning-making, self-authorship, connectedness, care, centricity, and gender role conflict generated both tensions and congruencies for participants, all from a selective four-year institution in the Mid-Atlantic region.
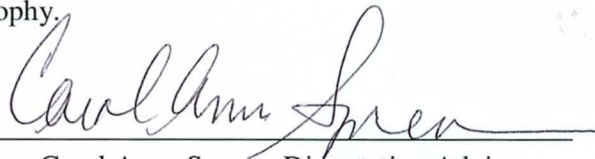
The resulting Transcendence Model of Identity Construction offers a conceptual framework for understanding participants' social construction of multiple intersecting identities. The model includes dimensions for the inner self, one's relationships, communities, and enduring transcendent commitments and beliefs. Participants described how they mediate across dimensions, often with the help of trusted others, and make meaning of these experiences and

relationships in order to transcend meeting their own immediate needs. Identity archetypes were found to orient participants toward roles, traits, behaviors, or Ultimate beliefs ascribed as such by the participants themselves or the communities with which they associate. This Transcendence Model of Identity Construction offers a snapshot of college men exploring gendered and spiritual identities, with implications for student affairs practice, religious and spiritual organizations on campus, and academic service learning.
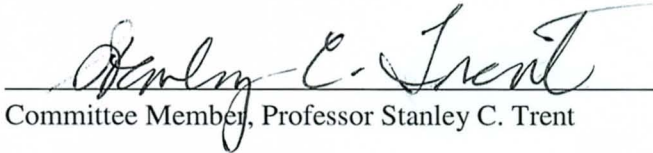
Social Foundations Department
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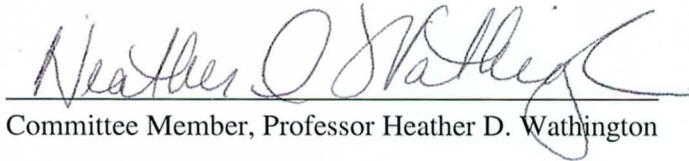Charlottesville, Virginia

APPROVAL OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation ("Authentic Masculinities: A Dialogical Narrative Study of College Men Exploring Gendered and Spiritual Identities") has been approved by the Graduate Faculty of the Curry School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Professor Carol Anne Spreen, Dissertation Advisor

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Committee Member, Professor Stanley C. Trent

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Writing a dissertation is like setting off on a cross-country road trip. And in this case, it would have been a very short journey had it not been for a slew of travelers who have helped me in countless moments along the way. First, this trip would not have been possible without the courageous college men who I will introduce to you shortly. They inspired me, challenged me, and gave me hope throughout this process. The depth of their intellects and generosity of their spirits are something I am fortunate to have encountered, and for these I am truly appreciative.

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Thoreau says that we should come home from adventures, perils, and discoveries every day with new experience, wisdom, and character. I am fondly grateful to those who have shared in my adventures, and those who continue to influence who I am becoming.

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Chapter 1 : Introduction

College men are at an impasse. Historically, men as a group have benefitted disproportionately from a system of higher education that recruited, admitted, and graduated more men. Women caught up to men in U.S. high school graduation and college continuation rates in the late 1970s, and more women graduated from U.S. colleges and universities than men for the first time in 1982 (NCES, 2008). In 2010, men make up 42% of college students in the U.S. (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2009) – a share of the overall college attendance which has declined steadily from 76% since the GI Bill was first introduced following World War II. College men now earn 50% of the doctoral and professional degrees, but only 42% of the bachelor's degrees awarded in recent years, and 39% of the associate's and master's degrees. These comparative statistics tell better stories about women's rates of college attendance and graduation sharply increasing over the last three decades, while men have steadily, but only marginally increased their numbers attending college annually. This alone is not necessarily bad news for college men in general, though there are inconsistencies across specific populations of college men. However, attendance, persistence, and graduation rates do not tell the whole story.

Review of Literature

How do a majority of these college men spend their time while in school? Recent studies have shown that college men spend more time playing video games, partying,

watching TV, or playing sports and less time studying, volunteering, or participating in student clubs than their female classmates (Mortenson, 2006). College men also study less; participate at lower rates in study abroad, community service, and precollege programs; use career services or counseling services less; and vote less (Kellom, 2004). They are more likely to come unprepared to classes, not complete homework or turn it in late, and to oversleep or miss class entirely (Sax & Arms, 2008). Psychologically and emotionally, the story does not necessarily improve. While college men do self-report higher levels of academic self-confidence and both physical and emotional health (Pryor, et al, 2006; Sax, 2008), they are more likely to consume alcohol at higher risk levels, to perpetrate or become victims of non-sexual violence, to struggle unnoticed with depression, and even to commit suicide at much higher rates than college women (Capraro, 2004; Pollack, 1999; Mortenson, 2006).

But again, as in the cases above, these data are most frequently positioning college men in comparison to college women. If we were to focus just on the men in one 2006 national study of college freshmen - without necessarily comparing them to women - we notice that male college freshmen study with only slightly more frequency than they play video games, more of them choose to volunteer compared to those who party, and they exercise, play sports, and participate in student clubs at higher rates than all of the above (Pryor, et al, 2006). So the same data set, sorted differently, tells a less sensational story, but does help to explain the priorities and value choices of college men in more nuanced ways. Those priorities, values, and meanings are the real stories that are often untouched or miscast by large scale data sets involving college men that may only scratch the surface.

Following closely on the heels of many of these findings, there has been a ground swelling of both interest and alarm over at least the last decade. Researchers and authors started asking "what is the trouble with boys and men? How can we protect or rescue our sons from this erosion of morality and achievement? Who or what is to blame for these problems? And how can we change our schools and institutions immediately to better serve young men?" (Gurian, 1996; Pollack, 1999; Kindlon & Thompson, 1999; Hoff Sommers, 2000; Tyre, 2008). This boys-in-trouble crowd, according to Thomas Barlett (2009) in the *Chronicle of Higher Education,* has two common threads. They emphatically assert that 1) boys are definitively not girls, and 2) boys and men are in peril. First, I do agree with the premise that there is something troubling happening with boys and men. We see evidence of these perilous trends in school dropout rates, prevalence of violent crime, social disengagement, emotional illiteracy, and the range of behaviors in colleges as described above. But I hope that our knee-jerk reaction to this peril can be tempered by a nuanced understanding of how race, class, sexuality, religious faith, etc. all intertwine as aspects of identity for these boys and men. Secondly, most of these articles and experts are very quick to draw lines in the sand between boys and girls, attempting to illustrate that girls have come so far but we are leaving our boys behind. This attachment to comparative gender binary thinking is problematic for two reasons: a) because it tends to undermine the social progress of recent decades, largely at the hands of feminist and women's movements, and b) because it continues to reinforce the pervasive social messaging that gender is somehow mutually exclusive with only one way to be boys in direct opposition to the one way to be girls. As I will discuss in the next chapter, we must complicate our thinking about limiting gender binaries and be

willing to take responsibility for the damage we all have done by constructing gender in this traditional, hegemonic manner. The literature and popular media are rife with explanations and accounts that blame parents or families for the problems with boys, while others point to schools or communities. Some do interpret these as socially constructed problems that require that we confront contemporary masculinity as the culprit, while others claim that misguided feminism has distracted boys from becoming true men. I would add a third commonality to these interpretations that may stretch us outside of the boys-in-trouble camp. I would characterize the most fundamental pieces of this puzzle as *authenticity* problems for boys and men, specifically traditionally-aged young men in college.

Authenticity can simply mean that what you see is what you get. To seek authenticity means to align what I believe with what I say and what I do. It means that there is congruency along cognitive, narrative, and behavioral aspects of one's life. When I say that boys and men struggle with *authenticity problems,* I mean that they experience disconnections between what they believe about themselves and the world and cannot find socially acceptable outlets to enact those developing beliefs. Michael Kimmel (2008) recently authored *Guyland: The perilous world where boys become men (Understanding the critical years between 16 and 26).* Kimmel argues that the traditional markers for adulthood (education, marriage, parenthood, career, and residential independence) have become stretched out over more than a decade, meaning that late adolescence lasts longer. Unfortunately for young men caught in this world, late adolescence is typically a time when some of their more destructive, unhealthy, risky, and anti-social patterns have developed and continue to reemerge. But it is also a time of

experimentation, when young men try on a sampling of identities to see which ones might fit. Some would now call this late adolescence more of an emerging or young adulthood, as a developmental period of its own, since it does now stretch beyond the ages of what we once thought to be adolescence. Because there is less pressure for young men to fully become adults during this period, with all of the rights and responsibilities therein, there is little impetus to actively pursue and commit to an authentic voice.

Most adolescent boys and college men crave purpose, and they struggle internally and externally in whichever ways they know how to try, sometimes desperately, to establish and sometimes to recover a sense of self and purpose (Damon, 2008; Gurian, 2009). This is an identity struggle that is not uncommon in history, but it has proven to be one that we have ill equipped our adolescent and young adult men to manage in contemporary U.S. society. Young men are rarely deliberately welcomed into adulthood by communities through ritual or rites of passage, and older men are increasingly absent from the schools and family contexts in which these adolescent boys find themselves. Kimmel (2008) argues that young men are more disconnected from society than they ever have been, compared to previous generations and older men. They are more disenfranchised with political, social and economic institutions, less likely to vote or even read a newspaper or online news. Young men also attend church or religious services less frequently, they are less likely to belong to a religious group at all, and they are less likely to affiliate with civic/service organizations or political parties (p. 40). For most college men, their world is uncertain and unstable, certainly with some exceptions. I am interested in how college men navigate this uncertainty, learn the codes to organize it, and establish roles for the authentic expression of their own versions of masculine

identity. These versions - or gender narratives - are shaped by biological, social, and

experiential realities of individual men, and for that reason no two narratives are exactly

alike.

Very closely tied to that authentic narration of masculinities is how the same

college men develop purpose, construct meaning, and chart direction for their own lives.

Terry Eagleton (2007) would argue that the timing for a meaning-of-life query in young

adulthood for college men could not be more ideal. He suggests that these questions arise

when "taken-for-granted roles, beliefs, and conventions are plunged into crisis" (p. 18).

College student development theories often describe moments of identity crises, and

college students are no strangers to challenging social roles or conventions. Narrating

this authentic self and ascribing it with personal meaning is a spiritual exercise. Self-

discovery requires that one probes deeply into one's identity (or multiple social identities)

and across one's beliefs, commitments, and ideas about the world and where we belong

in it. Sharon Daloz Parks (2000) would join James Fowler (1981) in calling this "faith

development" in young adulthood. Parks claims that in the modern landscape of

religious pluralism, it is even more essential that we understand faith in its broadest and

most inclusive form, as the activities of making meaning that all human beings share. It

is important that we decouple the terms faith, religion, and spirituality, while

simultaneously recognizing that for some people, these are very much the same things.

Whereas Parks discusses "faith development," I will use "spiritual identity development"

as the same operating term (described in more detail in chapter 2). She defines the

process of faith (spiritual identity) development as a spiritual quest to make sense out of

life experiences, to seek patterns, order, coherence, meaning, and relationships among the

otherwise disparate elements of human living. Love & Talbot (1999) generally concur, but expand their operational definition of spiritual development as a process that involves deriving meaning, seeking authenticity, connecting through relationships, transcending loci of centricity, and exploring nonmaterial ('higher') powers. I will use their operational definition most frequently in this study since it captures intra-, inter-, and extra-personal aspects of spiritual identity most vividly.

I would establish that everyone has a spiritual identity, though some may call it something different (a center or core, a self, a soul, that which animates, motivation, etc.). For some people, spirituality is an intensely private matter that is rarely if ever discussed in public spaces, while others practice their spirituality openly and publicly, wearing their spirit on their sleeve. This certainly presents some challenges for research, which are addressed in this study through varied individual, interpersonal and social experiences as well as observations, allowing space for self-expression and a combination of guided and participant-initiated reflection. I am interested in how spiritual identities develop for college men and how that developmental process is related to their masculine identity. Through this dissertation, I studied the intersections of gendered and spiritual identities among college men. In order to do so, I had to close gaps in literature tying spiritual identity content in higher education together with interdisciplinary masculine identity literature. These two fields of literature do not often talk to one another, so my hope is that through this writing, we might build bridges.

Purpose of the Study

Eboo Patel (2007) suggests that reconciling the 'faith line' will be the social identity struggle to define the 21st Century – a line not drawn to divide faith traditions, but one between religious totalitarians and pluralists. Colleges and universities – public and private alike – are being asked to provide services and spaces for students to explore big questions, engage in meaningful discourse about spiritual and religious identities, and connect to communities and causes beyond themselves (Chickering, Dalton & Stamm, 2009). These are not always discussions *about* religion as much as they are discussions about things that matter to students and the lenses through which they view the world. Prior to entering college, students' worldviews were most commonly influenced by families or communities. In most cases, these communities and their influences change rather dramatically when young people become college students. Students find themselves confronted with new applications of their existing beliefs and opportunities to strengthen or modify those beliefs and/or adopt new ones. These applications and opportunities are presented to students in academic courses, but also quite prevalently in relationships with peers, involvement in student organizations, and settings as casual as the dining halls, the bus across campus, or the residence hall lounges.

New studies of men & masculinities have begun to explore identity subgroups of college men, but there has been little to no work identifying spiritual identities among men in this young adulthood era. The few studies specifically about gender and spirituality in higher education (Lottes & Kuriloff, 1992; Bryant, 2007) are comparative studies using biological sex as one if not the only filters for sorting large quantitative data sets. Through this qualitative study, I wanted to understand the ways in which college

men engage what they consider to be their spirituality, how that relates to their masculine

self-concept, and to find connections between those spiritualities and self-transcendent

implications for commitment, care, service, and citizenship.

Research Questions

In this study, I addressed the following research questions:

1. How do college men understand their gendered (masculine) and spiritual identities?
How does this understanding translate into behaviors?

2. How are college men's commitments to spirituality and/or religious faith associated with
centricity, citizenship, and an ethic of care or service? How do these associations change over a
college career?

Theoretical Framework

I approached these questions from a social constructivist worldview, maintaining

that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and function

(Cresswell, 2009). As humans, we engage with our world and make sense of it based on

our social and historical perspectives. Some of this meaning-making is offered to us by

the culture(s) into which we are born and raised (p. 8), while other meanings are

generated by us as individuals or communities as we engage with the world we are

interpreting. I am very much interested in how college men develop subjective meanings

of their gendered and spiritual experiences. Again, these meanings are negotiated

socially, historically, and through one's cultural and experiential backgrounds.

Throughout this study, I asked college men to interpret their own stories about gender

and spirituality. This was done by observation in social settings, individually in conversational interviews with me, and in a dialogue group with other college men.

This research was simultaneously self-reflective and dialogical, using narrative as the analytical tool to tie aspects of identity together. As a social constructivist, I claim the assumption that the attribution of meaning is always social (Crotty, 1998) – that we as human beings are most self-aware and capable of understanding our own identities when we find ourselves in relationship with other people. This social construction of identities can also present significant challenges, especially with a topic as deeply personal and perhaps unrefined for some participants. If I am a college man participating in the study, for example, and I recognize that other participants seem to have more sophisticated language to describe their identity experiences, I may disengage from the dialogue, use similar language as my peers though it may not accurately capture my own experiences, or perhaps move the dialogue into a different area where I feel more comfortable.

This study is situated in grounded theory and contains elements of participatory and advocacy approaches (Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998; Heron & Reason, 1997). Grounded theory is an inquiry strategy through which I derived a general theory of a process or model grounded in the expressed or observed views of participants in the study (Cresswell, 2009). One key characteristic of grounded theory is the constant comparison of data with emerging categories or themes throughout both data collection and analysis. As a University administrator and a student affairs professional, I recognize that college men take advantage of few opportunities to discuss identity issues. I expected that as the college men in this study thought through and communicated their identity stories, they would also be working through wide-ranging histories of empowerment, alienation,

privilege, domination, suppression, or marginalization. I consider myself to be a feminist

researcher in that I use a gendered lens as a primary filter for analyzing social problems.

I believe that to fully understand contemporary social construction of masculinities, we

must acknowledge its relationship with histories of patriarchy, violence, and oppression

of women in society, as well as benefits accrued by men at the historical cost of

advancements for women. This makes the current male underrepresentation in higher

education a complex issue, but the proportion of men and women attending college has

not proven to completely mitigate social privileges – economic, social, or political

opportunities and glass ceilings for example – afforded to men within these institutions

and society writ large (Foucalt, 1976; Blau & Ferber, 2005; Render, 2006). By

acknowledging and reflecting on these experiences, participants in this study had an

opportunity to move along a trajectory of self-knowledge that may have powerful

implications for their lives. The process of self-study through narrative can be

transformative, allowing us to view ourselves as actors in a drama that is at least partly

self-authored. When we tell our stories, they become us, and we become them. I utilized

a dialogical narrative approach in this research to evoke those stories using a rich

combination of reflective and interactive practices.

Overview of the Study

Combining elements of action research, group dialogue, and narrative analysis

methodologies, I refer to my research method as a dialogical narrative approach. I was

interested in understanding the identity narratives of a sample of college men, and I could

not do that without involving them actively in constructing their own histories and

beliefs. Through prompted questions, discussions, interviews, observations, and artifact collection, college men told their own stories. Using grounded theory and analytic induction, I used these narratives to generate themes across participants. The seven (7) college men participating in this study were intentionally selected from a representative group of faith traditions at the University so as to include the experiences of non-majority religious faiths in addition to Judeo-Christian students.

All participants completed a preliminary survey and a pre-interview. These were both used to collect more specific information from participants about their backgrounds, strength of commitment to specific religious traditions, adherence to traditional gender roles, etc. But also importantly, the preliminary interview presented a way for me as the researcher to build rapport with participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) before they join our dialogue group sessions. This individual contact was invaluable for me to understand what participants were willing and free to discuss in private about their spirituality compared to that which they were willing to disclose in the group. Following individual interviews, the small group of seven college men met over four consecutive weeks for dialogue sessions co-facilitated by myself and a 4th-year college student. These dialogue sessions concluded with a potluck meal where all participants brought a food item to share with the group. Shortly after the conclusion of dialogue sessions, I interviewed all participants again to follow up on any unresolved issues or points of interest that emerged from the survey, interview, or dialogues. These multiple and varied points of individual and group contact added texture to my dialogical narrative approach by providing ample space and time for participants to engage reflectively in both the content and process of self-study.

One overarching theme in this study is plurality. I will reference the plural form of *masculinities* frequently. By this, I intend to differentiate the many ways that an individual can internalize and/or perform their own masculine narrative, based on how they socially construct its meaning. This is presented in stark contrast to the singular form of masculinity, which is referred to in literature as traditional or hegemonic masculinity. This singular version is hegemonic and traditional in that it is reinforced as the one way to "be a man" in one's culture, which typically in the U.S. involves toughness, independence, emotional restriction, and unwavering confidence to name just a few traits. In a community where the hegemonic norm is strictly followed, there are typically social consequences for behaving in ways that are not consistent with the singular hegemonic version of masculinity. As such, I worked diligently to establish rapport and a welcoming environment so that students felt comfortable expressing themselves regardless of where they identify in relation to this hegemonic norm.

Individual pre-interviews were extremely valuable as my first points of significant contact with participants. During these interviews, I framed my questions around masculinities and spirituality in such a way that helped participants to use a common vocabulary before they even began dialogue sessions as a group. Additionally, because we focused on an interfaith dialogue among participants, it is important that we recognized and honored a plurality of truth claims and worldviews as they were presented by participants. This is not to say that everyone agreed at all times, but if we held the common goal of discovering multiple personal and shared truths, we perhaps focused less on moments when those truths came into conflict with one another. Some of this was achieved by carefully designing the group dialogue process – using "I" statements,

sharing personal experiences, claiming beliefs as your own instead of arguing on behalf of a faith tradition, etc. Plurality of religious and spiritual backgrounds added a crucial element to the study by including the experiences of both majority and marginalized social groups. Work had to be done, however, to encourage participants to come to the table and understand that differences do exist – and with differences often comes differential social power - and our common objective is not to "correct" but to hear, listen, and understand the many facets and meanings of others' experiences (Smock, 2002).

I hope that this study is useful on a number of levels. First, as a bridge between two different sets of literature, I hope this study introduces themes of spirituality and meaning-making into masculine identity literature, and vice versa. As a relatively new consideration in social identity research, I believe that spiritual identity has much to offer in terms of understanding students' motivations, beliefs, and ultimate purposes. Second, I hope that the findings of this study will be used to enhance existing and launch new programs and services geared toward supporting the diverse and perhaps overlooked needs of college men. With college men more frequently disengaging from college campuses and communities, it is increasingly important that we find new and creative ways to connect and support them. Third, I hope that this study generates more interest in using sustained dialogue groups as research methodology. And finally, I hope that participants in this study, myself included, continue to be transformed through our rich discussions and evocative truths.

Chapter 2 : Review of the Literature – Spiritual & Masculine Identity

Preface

Identity development literature is not new to the scene in higher education. In the past few decades, research in student development has expanded general developmental theories by Jean Paiget, Erik Erikson, William Perry, and Arthur Chickering to include more specific identity developmental theories for race or ethnicity, gender, class, faith or religion, and sexuality just to name a few. These theories often have common origins, but often do tend to build identity towers without bridges – rarely focusing on identity intersections and holistic development. Realistically, a college man will experience a number of salient social identities throughout his college career and it is increasingly more important for us to understand the ways in which students develop an understanding of those intersections. But again, literature rarely makes these connections obvious. As such, this chapter is written in two parts – the first building the tower of spiritual identity literature, and then a second tower for masculine identity literature. It is important to recognize how literature has tended to compartmentalize identities to make them more easily studied and understood. This study is designed to build bridges from one literature set to the other, with the end goal of studying these identities not as separate towers, but as faces of the same building in the lives of real people. But we begin with the first tower.

Part One: Review of the Literature – Spiritual Identity Development

As college students progress through formative late- or post-adolescent years, they almost always struggle with big questions such as "Who am I and where am I from? Where am I going and what is my purpose? And who or what drives me to those purposes?" These are not just big questions, they are among the biggest and most meaningful in what we understand to be our human existence. I will call them spiritual questions, knowing that we will unpack that term shortly. Regardless of how we classify these questions, young people are given sadly few opportunities to engage them deliberately with adults who have charted similar paths. Over the past few decades, we have come to understand the developmental trajectories of college students with an ever-increasing degree of sophistication. Recently, this sophistication includes a burgeoning array of literature, particularly through higher and adult education disciplines, addressing spiritual identity needs of young and emerging adults. This review of literature highlights the major theoretical guideposts for what we now understand to be college students' spiritual identity development.

Defining Spirituality and its Kinfolk, Faith & Religion

Before discussing early developmental theories in depth, it is important to clarify what exactly I mean by spirituality, faith, and religion. Of course, there are countless definitions for these terms, and no single authority on endorsing any of them as more or less accurate. But there are general convergences in literature that can be our starting point. First, religiosity is simply the quality of being religious and subscribing in various degrees to one's religion. Religion is an institutionalized system grounded in beliefs, values, and practices which acknowledge supernatural power(s) as creator, animator,

and/or governor of the universe. Though religion is a system of beliefs, it can nonetheless also be a very personal adaptation of an institutionalized system of beliefs. Religion is often misperceived to be a system entirely external to an individual, but it can also have very strong roots in an individual's sense of self. But the defining feature remains that there is a connection to a larger body or system of shared beliefs which comprise that religion. Faith is a strong belief or trust in the truth or trustworthiness of a person, concept, or system of beliefs. One can have faith in his ideas, faith in her minister, faith in one's gods, or faith in one's religion. Faith is something that one possesses, which links that individual to an externalized concept, person, religion, or system of beliefs. Spirituality presents a number of challenges in its definition, which seems to have quite a bit less convergence in literature.

For the purposes of this study, I make no distinctions between spirituality and spiritual identity. I employ five considerations suggested by Love & Talbot (1999), who claim that spiritual development involves 1.) deriving meaning, purpose, and direction in one's life, 2.) an internal process of seeking personal authenticity, genuineness, and wholeness as an aspect of identity development, 3.) a greater connectedness to self and others through relationships and connection with communities, 4.) the process of continually transcending one's locus of centricity, and 5.) an openness to exploring a relationship with an intangible and pervasive power or essence that exists beyond human existence and rational human knowing. Love & Talbot suggest that these considerations are not stages, not linear, nor hierarchical, but each is a process that may be interrelated and often is evidenced concurrently with one or multiple other considerations. In order to be considered "spiritual," therefore, one only need develop through at least one of the

five considerations. Therefore, I would argue from the outset that based on this definition, everyone develops spiritually. Minimally, since we all connect *somehow* with others, there is at least a fraction of this definition that establishes a baseline for human spiritual development.

This processual definition of spiritual development is a moving target with five independently moving pieces that may change in priority and clarity over the lifespan. For the purposes of this study, the small lifespan window to be examined is young adulthood for college students, which may carry a very specific set of priorities (in education, vocation, relationships, life expectations, etc). Though these processes are iterative and nonlinear, I list them here in order based on their focus of development, where the first two (purpose and congruence) focus on intrapersonal development, the third (relationships) focuses on interpersonal development, and the fourth (transcendence) transitions to the fifth (higher power) extrapersonal focus. These five considerations will be used as a starting point for analysis of other developmental theories as they pertain to spiritual development of college students.

Developmental Theories Pertaining to Spirituality

There are thousands of theorists in psychology, religion, philosophy, sociology, etc. who have contributed to our collective understandings of spirituality over the course of recorded history. But five theorists in particular have offered what I would consider to be among the most cogent developmental frameworks for understanding spirituality in its modern usage.

I begin with a momentary visit with Abraham Maslow and his hierarchy of developmental needs. Though he was developmental psychologist not focused exclusively on college students, Maslow's contributions as a stage theorist and humanist psychologist laid a foundation for later work. Maslow's early hierarchy

Figure 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
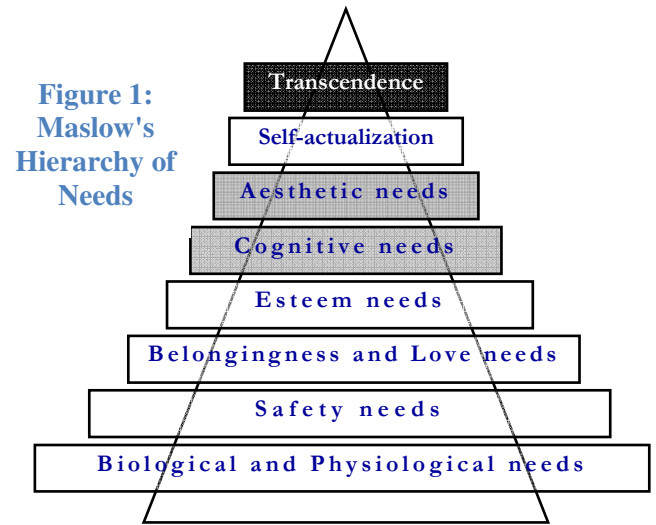
included five basic needs, including four deficiency (physiological, safety, love, and esteem) needs and one growth (self-actualizing) need (1943, unhighlighted in figure 1). Certain aspects of Maslow's self-actualization are useful for understanding spiritual development. Particularly, Maslow characterized self-actualized people as 1) being problem/solution-focused, 2) persistently striving toward personal growth, 3) cognizant of one's peak experiences, and 4) becoming everything that one is capable of becoming – to fulfill one's greatest potential (1943). Here we can see intersections when a student strives to improve himself, he must develop a degree of self-awareness (or "greater connectedness to self," as Love & Talbot describe above) as well as the parallel between Maslow's model of fulfilling one's potential and Love & Talbot's developing student seeking authenticity, genuineness, or congruency. I will return to this idea of authenticity repeatedly as we consider other theorists below. Maslow later separated growth needs into cognitive (the need to know and understand) and aesthetic (seeking symmetry, order, and beauty) needs as lower-level growth needs just below self-actualization (1998, grey

highlighting in fig 1). Atop his hierarchy, and mostly hidden from popular discourse, Maslow claimed there was one more human need above self-actualization – self-transcendence (1971, black highlighting in fig 1). He argued that once an individual reaches her potential, the final human growth need to be fulfilled is to connect to something beyond the ego, to help others fulfill their potential, and to share one's wisdom.

Within Maslow's description of deficiency and growth needs, we find more intersections with spiritual development as I have framed it above. At one of Maslow's lower levels, the need for belongingness and love is described as a deficiency need, which is also listed by Love and Talbot as "a greater connectedness to self and others through relationships and connection with communities." This being one of his deficiency needs (or D-needs), Maslow claimed that in the absence of loving relationships or a shared sense of communities, individuals tend to develop anxiety or other psychopathologies (1943). This idea that developing interpersonal relationships and a sense of community is critical to one's (moral, identity, faith, or cognitive) development is certainly reinforced by other development theorists (Erikson, 1968; Kohlberg, 1981; Gilligan, 1982; Kegan, 1982; Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Considering the very top of his hierarchy, transcendence is described as the highest growth need by Maslow, whereas Love & Talbot refer to this aspect of spiritual development as "transcending one's locus of centricity" – moving from narcissism to healthy egocentricity to communi- or humanicentricity in order to transcend one's own needs (see Figure 2 below). Similar to Maslow, Love & Talbot argue that an individual begins a spiritual development trajectory as a narcissist (fulfilling basic needs and self-interests), then begins to transcend basic needs to focus on self-improvement, then turning outward to focus on other people, communities, traditions, or ideas. This transcendence, according to Maslow, is very rare. He claimed that under 10% of the population might reach the developmental need for self-actualization, and hence even fewer would

Cosmocentricity

Geocentricity

Humanicentricity

Communicentricity

Self Actualization

Aesthetic Needs
Need to Know & Understand
Esteem Needs

Healthy Egocentricity

Safety Needs
Physiological Needs

Unhealthy

**Figure 2: Expanding Loci of Centricity (Love & Talbot)
with Maslow's Hierarchy Superimposed**

transcend it. Love & Talbot suggest using transcendence not as the uppermost level of development, but as an indication of progressing from one's current state to the next level of centricity or centeredness. This enhances the accessibility of the concept of transcendence so that we no longer have to be self-actualized, according to Maslow's

rather population-limiting description of this developmental need, in order to pursue purposes beyond our own narcissistic self-interest. So any student genuinely interested in service to others has begun to develop spiritually just by the fact that they are pursuing an interest beyond themselves. Maslow's hierarchy does focus indirectly on a number of our considerations for spiritual development, but other early theorists focused more deliberately on structural, cognitive, and relational aspects of human development in their stage theories.

Early Developmental Theorists: Carol Gilligan & Lawrence Kohlberg

Following the lead of the Piaget's structural-stage theory of cognitive development, Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) proposed that all humans variably progress through six main stages of moral development across their lifespan. Because of its exclusively cognitive-structural emphasis, Kohlberg's stages are more accurately a theory of moral reasoning or moral judgment (Helminiak, 1987). Carol Gilligan argued that Kohlberg's moral reasoning theory was incomplete because it was a study sampling a group of all men. She published *In a Different Voice* (1982) to situate women's voices alongside men's in the existing dialogue on psychological development and its moral dimensions in particular. Gilligan suggests that Kohlberg's morality has an endpoint of universal principles of independence, fairness and justice, whereas these (western, male-privileged ideals) do not entirely encompass the experiences of women. Her theory emphasized an ethic of care as the pinnacle of moral development, in contrast to Kohlberg's isolation of justice as the pinnacle.   Since they both use pre-conventional,

conventional, and post-conventional labels in their theories, I will present them here in tandem.

Kohlberg's six stages and Gilligan's three stages hierarchically progress as follows. When an infant is cognitively capable of responding to stimuli, they begin pre-conventional morality. Kohlberg's stage 1 emerges with a focus on obedience and behavioral responses to reward or punishment. A child then progressed to stage 2 where their own self-interests rule in making moral judgments, and fairness and reciprocity become guiding principles. Gilligan's pre-conventional stage mirrors Kohlberg's pre-conventional stage in that it focuses on the egocentric child, deriving moral constructs from individual basic needs. She mentions that the child transitions to a conventional morality when they shift from selfishness to a responsibility to others – a move toward social participation.

Around the early teen years, a student typically enters into conventional morality. Gilligan's conventional stage is based on the shared norms and values that sustain relationships, groups, communities, and societies. Kohlberg's stage 3 is where the student learns to engage in mutual interpersonal relationships. External validation reinforces what they consider to be good behavior, hence governing moral judgment in terms of what pleases or helps other people. During late adolescence, the next stage of Kohlberg's conventional morality involves law and order as the dominant concern, where a student determines right behavior by doing what they understand to be fixed rules or social conventions in order to maintain order. This conventional stage marks the most significant departure from Kohlberg to Gilligan, where Kohlberg's student is drawn to an overarching ethic of fairness while Gilligan's student is drawn to responsibility in

relationship with others. Gilligan would argue that social pressure for women to define

their worth through their ability to care for and protect others from harm often

predisposes them to succumb to a morality of self-sacrifice in lieu of hurting others (p.

80), whereas men often experience the opposite pressure to reject obligation to others

through the conventional stage. Gilligan articulates a conflict during the conventional

stage between the "passivity of dependence [in relationships] and the activity of care"

resulting commonly in a "paralysis of initiative" (p. 82).

Gilligan describes the transition from conventional to post-conventional morality

as a shift in concern from goodness to truth. Some students may never progress to post-

conventional morality, where Kohlberg's stage 5 says that right action is defined

according to its benefit to the larger society. This social contract orientation determines

standards by critically reflecting on what determines a good society, not just an orderly or

efficient one. Kohlberg originally suggested that the morality of stage 6 was the final

stage, including an individual's commitment to universalizing ethical principles of justice

as it relates to individual rights. Kohlberg (1981, p. 311-372) then proposed a less well-

accepted seventh stage including an individual's struggling with ultimate questions of

life's meaning, perhaps even questioning "why be moral at all?" Gilligan's post-

conventional morality also adopts a reflective perspective on societal values and

constructs moral principles that are universal in application. The linkage (for women)

between unselfishness and goodness is shed as the student critically evaluates what

constitutes an ethic of care, and accepts responsibility for one's choices. The men also

shed their ethic of noninterference in relationships and develop their social contracts and

universalized ethical principles grounded in mutual relationships. Kohlberg briefly

considered these relationships in stage 3 as a vehicle to transition the morally-developing man into social systems and larger universal principles. Gilligan suggested that her ethic of care and maintenance of mutual relationships is necessarily strung throughout the lifespan for both men and women as they morally develop.

Both Kohlberg's and Gilligan's stages are all relevant to college student development because of the critical issues and life experiences that students undergo during this time period. Specifically as it pertains to spiritual identity, the morally developing student must engage in a degree of self-reflection as he considers what constitutes good behavior and how he sees himself compared to those social standards. In my study, I will use Gilligan's concepts of an ethic of care and a relational model of faith development, but also consider how the college men identify with Kohlberg's idea of committing to universal principles as a pinnacle faith development experience. I expect to find a combination of both, and a relationship between the college men's acceptance of traditional masculine gender roles of restrictive emotionality and affectionate behavior (see Gender Role Conflict Study in next chapter) and their adherence to Kohlberg's less relational model. Again, Love & Talbot's second (authenticity, congruence) and third (connectedness to self and others) considerations for spiritual development ring true, particularly in Gilligan's heavily relational model for moral development. Both Gilligan and Kohlberg focus significant attention on the morally developing student bringing oneself into alignment with social conventions, then adapting those conventions to balance meeting one's own needs and those of the greater society, hence making the transcendence of egocentricity the hallmark of a morally developed student. These arguments for moral development, as cognitive-structural

theories, laid the foundation for James Fowler, a theologian, to expand on them and build

his constructivist-developmental case for a theory of faith development.

Stages of Faith Development: James Fowler

James Fowler became interested in faith development in the late 1960s when he

was working in the continuing education of clergy, listening to over two hundred stories

of people's pilgrimages of faith. He used Erik Erikson's psychosocial stages of human

development to help organize all of the stories, after which he became quite familiar with

Kohlberg's work while teaching at Harvard Divinity School. For Fowler, faith is more

than the colloquial (religious) use of the term indicating belief in a specific religious

tradition. He claims that faith is:

"not a compartmentalized specialty. Faith is an orientation of the total person, giving
purpose and goal to one's hopes and strivings, thoughts and actions… Faith is a universal
feature of human living, recognizably similar everywhere despite the remarkable variety
of forms and contents of its practice and beliefs" (1981, p. 14).

So the central issue concerning faith is the meaning and purpose around which

every person constructs her or his world and life. This means that every person has a

faith around which they organize their world, and that those faiths are recognizably

similar yet infinitely distinct in both form and content. Fowler is well-aware of the

complexity of faith, and the enormity of its reach throughout history. As such, he makes

it clear that his theory deals only with the "human side of faith – on persons engaged with

and involved in shaping their lives in community in relation to shared visions of

transcendent value and power" (p. 32). Note that here we see fragments of a number of

Love & Talbot's considerations again. As a theologian himself, Fowler is deliberate in

mentioning that his stages of faith are not theology, which is a systematic study of the transcendent (powers, deities, essences, etc.) to which persons of faith are related. Instead, it is very much a constructivist theory of human faith development using psychological inquiry as its disciplinary vehicle. Fowler's idea of faith is triadic by nature and function in that it connects one person to others through shared meanings and values. This concept of faith (see 99Figure 3: Triadic Nature of Fowler's Faith), in its broadest sense as described above, is used in the same way that I will use "spirituality," meaning that we can also directly apply Fowler's stages of faith development to the more modern "spiritual identity development." Fowler's stages of faith are:
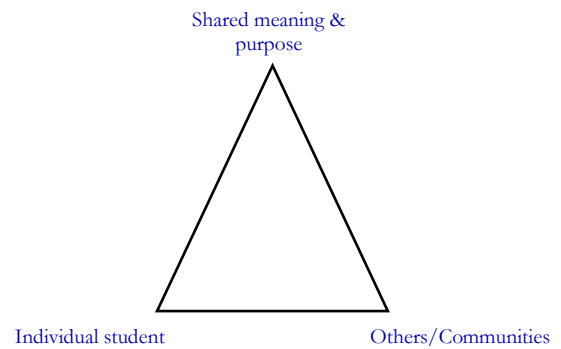
Figure 3: Triadic Nature of Fowler's Faith

Stage 0 (0-2yr) – "Primal or Undifferentiated" faith (birth to 2 years) is characterized by an early learning of safety and trust in their environment (ie. warm, safe and secure vs. hurt, neglect and abuse). The transition to stage 1 begins with thought and language emergence, leading to use of symbols in speech and ritual play.

Stage 1 (3-7yr) – "Intuitive-Projective" faith (ages of three to seven) is fantasy-filled and imitative. There is an emerging self-awareness, simply as distinct from others. Transition: emergence of concrete operational thinking.

Stage 2 (mostly in school children) – "Mythic-Literal" faith involves internalized stories and beliefs appropriated with literal interpretations and moral rules. Transition: clash of contradictions between stories and beliefs, leading to deeper or critical reflection on their meanings.

Stage 3 (arising in adolescence) – "Synthetic-Conventional" faith characterized by overlapping spheres (family, peers, school, etc) which continue to drive tacitly-held

beliefs/values, little independent identity or autonomous judgment. Transition: contradictions with authority source, leaving home (emotionally, physically, or both – p. 173).

   Stage 4 (young adulthood) – "Individuative-Reflective" faith requires the individual to take personal responsibility for their beliefs and feelings. Self (identity) and outlook (world view) are differentiated from others'. Symbols are translated with personalized meanings, which leads this also to be called the 'demythologizing' stage. Transition: Stories, symbols, myths, or paradoxes break up the neatness of one's own constructed meanings.

   Stage 5 (mid-life) – "Conjunctive" faith acknowledges paradox and truth in contradictions relating reality behind the symbols of inherited systems, rise of the ironic imagination, commitment to justice, appreciation for symbols, myths, rituals (its own and others'), torn between broken world and transforming vision of something greater, emerging generativity.

   Stage 6 – "Universalizing" faith, or what some might call "enlightenment," involves a disciplined, activist incarnation of the imperatives of absolute love and justice. Spending oneself for the transformation of present reality toward one transcendent human community.

     As he developed his stage theory for faith development, Fowler aligned his stages

with Piaget's stages of cognitive development (1932), Erikson's stages of psychosocial

development (1968), Kohlberg's stages of moral development (1958, 1981), and

Levinson's life cycle eras (1978). The resulting stage theory, therefore, allows us to

pinpoint the stages which Fowler more commonly attributes to traditional college-aged

students.   He proposed that the synthetic-conventional stage (3) of faith arises during

adolescence for all students as transition into Piaget's stage of formal operational

thought, characterized by logical thought, deductive reasoning, and systematic planning.

These young adolescents (Piaget & Erikson both begin their 'adolescent/formal

operational' stages around age 12) have begun to think about stories that organize their

world and have also begun to challenge the literalism which characterized their younger

faith (mythic-literal – stage 2). The young adolescent transitioning between stages 2 and

3 experiences conflict and disillusionment with teachers, other adults or authority figures,

and teachings or concepts in general as they learn to question and create meaning for

themselves (Fowler, p. 150).

Fowler would argue that a traditional student entering college at age 18 would be

completely immersed in the synthetic-convention stage of faith. The student's experience

of the world now extends well beyond the immediate family, as they learn to negotiate

the physical and sometimes emotional distance that now separates them from the home

and family they experienced in high school. Fowler claims that the student's faith is the

tool used to "provide a coherent orientation in the midst of that more complex and

diverse range of involvements [including family, school, work, peers, society and media,

and perhaps religion]. Faith must synthesize values and information; it must provide a

basis for identity and outlook" (p. 172). This synthetic-conventional stage of faith is still

a conformist one in that the student is still attuned to the judgments and expectations of

significant people in their lives, and Fowler considers those in this stage to not yet have a

firm enough grasp of one's own identity to build and maintain an independent

perspective. That is not to say that the student does not have an "ideology" (p. 173) – a

relatively consistent clustering of values or beliefs – but that ideology is still created and

maintained by an external authority (a peer group, faith tradition, valued other person,

etc).

Also in the synthetic-conventional stage, the student forms a 'personal myth' or a

type of self-narrated story of one's own becoming that incorporates one's past and

envisions an anticipated future in light of the student's perceived personality. This reinforces my research methodology of using personal narratives to frame identity construction of college men in this study. The combination of dialogue and individual interviews combine to elicit the men's stories of their own becoming and the role of external authorities in that story, as described here by Fowler. The danger of this stage may manifest when judgments from others are compellingly internalized, causing a hindrance of autonomous self-evaluation. If I believe what other people say about me, I will not learn to trust my own judgment about my beliefs and self-image, limiting my ability to envision a different, more autonomous future.

Fowler suggested that while virtually everyone in his sample entered stage 3, some mature adults found equilibrium in this stage throughout their lifespan and never progressed beyond it. Factors initiating the transition out of the synthetic-conventional stage may include: serious clashes or glaring contradictions between the student's perceived sources of authority, marked changes in practices once considered sacred or unbreachable (i.e. marriage/divorce), or an encounter requiring critical reflection on the formation and relative (group-specific) nature of one's beliefs or values. Chickering & Reisser contribute to this idea of the college student moving well beyond the mythic-literal faith to resolve cognitive dissonance and arrive at their own commitments.

"In the earlier developmental stages, moral rules and religious teachings are interpreted literally, but if the stories are seen to contradict each other or if the teachings contradict life experience, literalism breaks down. New teachers maybe found, but sooner or later, interpreters are bound to differ. As students deal with tensions between ancient traditions and new ideas, conformity and questioning, guilt and freedom, self-interest and unselfishness, they slowly recognize the need to take responsibility for defining their own positions, to commit to beliefs that ring true to their deepest selves, while remaining open and tolerant" (pp. 240-241).

Fowler argues that the experience of "leaving home" (proximally, intellectually, emotionally, or a combination of all three) commonly initiates the type of self-examination that transitions a student toward the next stage, yet he also is clear to mention that some will never pass beyond stage 3. I represent Fowler's caution to attribute ages beyond stage 3 with dotted lines in Appendix I, indicating either that the theorist did not believe that the stage could be classified with a specific age group or that the age of transitions through stages is unclear. I would argue that nearly all college students "leave home" somehow during their years at school. From physical separation, emotional independence, or intellectual exploration, the metaphorical ship leaves the harbor to traverse new waters. Fowler leaned on Daniel Levinson's *Seasons of a Man's Life* as he considered the transition from stage 3 to stage 4. Levinson (1978) suggested that the first life cycle era (childhood and adolescence) began at age 3 and continued through age 22, while the early adulthood era began at age 17 and progressed through age 45. Obviously this leaves a transition gap between ages 17-22, which Levinson called the early adult transition. Both Fowler and Levinson agreed that this transition phase is spent preparing for the next stage or era. Sharon Daloz Parks (2000) disagrees, claiming instead that this transitional phase is a critical one that should stand as its own phase in which we often find college students struggling for identity, testing their sails, and clarifying their values and deeply-held beliefs. All three theorists have valuable insights specifically for college men. As Michael Kimmel (2008) argues in *Guyland,* young men do commonly find themselves caught in transition, without full adult responsibilities while rejecting *some* of the whims and fancies of childhood (excluding video games and risk-taking behaviors to name a few). These college men have indeed "left home," and

they often now find themselves to be emotionally, physically, or intellectually transient as a result.

Emerging Adult Faith: Sharon Daloz Parks

Sharon Daloz Parks did not believe that Fowler's transition from synthetic-conventional faith (stage 3) during adolescence to individuative-reflective faith (stage 4) in adulthood did justice to the complexities of students' experiences and struggles with faith over the course of the traditionally-aged college years. I agree that it does not serve students well to refer to the entire age range of traditional college students (17-22) as a transition period from one stage to another. The effect of this is that our theories about college students will only either acknowledge the previous stage (childhood/adolescence) or the future one (adulthood), hence ignoring the valuable process of moving from one to another. Parks makes a strong point for studying this liminal period as its own developmental process. Victor Turner (1969), a notable anthropologist known for his research on rituals and cultural passage, defines liminal individuals as "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony" (p. 95). Liminality, derived from the Latin 'limen' meaning threshold, marks a phase of transition where an individual is caught between the "no longer/not yet" of social statuses (Deflem, 1991). Instead of focusing on college students as no longer children/adolescents and not yet adults, it is important that we recognize instead that young or emerging adulthood is now a recognizable developmental period worth taking seriously. It has its own story, and the college men in this study are the best narrators of that story in their lives.

Sharon Daloz Parks is a theologian, a minister, an educator, a counselor, a professor, and

a researcher who integrates student development and feminist theories into a strong

developmental psychology base as she proposes a four-stage model of faith development

designed specifically for the college years. Whereas Fowler grounded his theory in

Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg's work primarily, Parks began with a similar

developmental foundation, then built it further with Gilligan, Levinson, Kegan, and

Perry. She uses three interactive components (forms of knowing [cognitive], forms of

dependence [affective], and forms of community [social]) to define faith development

within each stage:

Stage 1: "Adolescent or Conventional Faith" – Faith is characterized by authority-bound
or dualistic moving toward unqualified relativistic *forms of knowing*, dependent or
counterdependent *forms of dependence*, and conventional moving toward diffuse *forms of
community*. The student's faith or spirituality is centered in sources of authority outside
the self, though they may begin to realize that knowledge is shaped by context. The
student's ideas of self and truth are bound to those sources of authority (dependence) or
perhaps the direct resistance of them (counterdependent). The student begins to shift
from a well-defined set of assumed associations and explore new relationships as they
enter college, making the overarching community feel much more diffused in both
support and belonging.

Stage 2: "Young Adult Faith" – Faith is characterized by probing commitment or
ideological *forms of knowing*, fragile inner-dependence *forms of dependence*, and
mentoring *forms of community*. This stage mostly aligns with Fowler's stages 3→4
transition period. The young adult student tests and refines aspects of one's identity by
developing meaningful relationships and faith. They ask big questions of themselves and
envision themselves actualizing worthy dreams. While most students are still somewhat
dependent on their parents, they explore ideas and identities that may stretch them
beyond – similar to Fowler's idea about "leaving home" intellectually. But they have just
begun to depend on themselves in what could in some cases be considered a trial period,
so the inner-dependence and identity formation is a fragile or untested one. Ideally, the
student is welcomed into this stage by committed mentors (faculty, college personnel,
other adults) who will optimally balance challenge and support for the young adult.

Stage 3: "Tested Adult Faith" - Faith is characterized by tested commitment or systemic *forms of knowing*, confident inner-dependence *forms of dependence*, and self-selected *forms of community*. The student is actively reconciling her or his commitments, meanings, and spirituality. They begin to balance external and internal sources of authority, developing a sense of connectedness while maintaining one's own strength of convictions. This connectedness also moves the tested adult to identify with a self-selected group of like-minded people while maintaining an openness to other/multiple truths. This stage is more likely to emerge toward the end if not beyond the traditionally-aged student's undergraduate tenure.

Stage 4: "Mature Adult Faith" - Faith is characterized by convictional commitment or paradoxical *forms of knowing*, interdependent *forms of dependence*, and openness to other *forms of community*. This mature adult faith has endured cognitive dissonance and recognizes complexity and mystery through wisdom, embracing paradox and valuing relativism. He or she acknowledges the interconnectedness of and interdependence to a widening range of communities and individuals, tending toward a commitment to social justice and inclusiveness. Parks mentions that this stage is unlikely to emerge before mid-life because of the need for ample intersections with different others that is necessary to develop adequate intimations of varied truths (p. 101).

While there are many sources of inspiration for Parks' theory of faith development, the influence of William Perry is distinct and exceedingly pertinent to our purpose of applying theories of spiritual identity development to college students. Parks invokes Perry mostly through her "forms of knowing" analyses within each stage. William Perry developed one of the most ground breaking and widely applied studies of human development in the context of higher education. He packaged his forms of intellectual and ethical development for college students in a progression of nine ways in which students construct truth during these formative years (1970).

Table 1: Sharon Daloz Parks' Theory of Faith Development

	Sharon Daloz Parks' Theory of Faith Development				
	Adolescent/ Conventional		Young Adult	Tested Adult	Mature Adult
Forms of Knowing	Authority-bound, dualistic	Unqualified relativism	Probing commitment (ideological)	Tested commitment (systemic)	Convictional commitment (paradoxical)
Forms of Dependence	Dependent/Counterdependent		Fragile inner-dependence	Confident inner-dependence	Interdependence
Forms of Community	Conventional	Diffuse	Mentoring community	Self-selected class or group	Openness to other

Parks took the nine stages from William Perry and repackaged them into five "forms of knowing" as described above in the description of each stage (and in chart 2 below). These forms of knowing map the cognitive shifts a student or adult undergoes as they develop spiritually. She argues that adults who interact with college students regularly have a duty to welcome students into increasingly more complex forms of knowing, which she describes later as a mentoring community experienced by the young adult in faith. This is one example of the necessary interactions between the three forms (knowing, dependence, and community), as well as their practical application for college student personnel. Interestingly, the first printing of her book *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring young adults in their search for meaning, purpose and faith* arrives packaged with a deft review from Fowler; "In this book we are reminded that Parks is a keen observer, a probing listener, a rich and subtle theorist, and a resourceful teacher.

She writes with a spirit that calls forth the best capacities in young adults and in all those who care about their becoming" (2000, book jacket).

For Parks, spiritual identity development involves changes for an individual along these three dimensions: a cognitive shift toward ideological commitment, a shifted source of authority in one's life, and changes in one's embodied faithfulness to interact and empathize with different others (changes in one's sense of community/ies). Parks is subtle yet quite effective in utilizing feminist literature to develop her forms of dependence. Gilligan's research as described above was widely known as a critique of Kohlberg's assertion that independence is the pinnacle of moral development, instead positing that interdependence through an ethic of care is the pinnacle. Parks validates that critique and positioned interdependence as the most developed position among all forms of dependence. She also shifted the language slightly from independence to inner-dependence, which has a much more eloquent, reflective, personal narrative sound to it. And the idea of fragile inner-dependence brings the voices of Gilligan's women into the foreground, particularly one college student named Kate who reported having to learn to take both her ideas and feelings seriously (Gilligan, p. 148), to listen to her own inner voice and to trust it as an authority on herself.

This shift for both young men and young women is a crucial, yet fragile step into a young adult faith and a powerful movement toward developing identity. Finally, Parks' forms of community bear resemblance to racial identity development theories applied widely in higher education literature (Cross et al, 1991; Helms, 1990). For example, Parks mentions that the tested adult develops community with a self-selected group of people with shared ideas, then moves beyond that group to understand and value other

ideas. This approximates the immersion/emersion stage of racial identity development where the student finds commonalities or identification with his or her own racial group before returning back to the larger multi-racial society. This also illustrates the complexity with which Parks integrates content from student development theories, feminist literature, and developmental psychology to expertly assemble her theory of faith development.

Challenges to Stage Theories of Spiritual Identity Development

Chickering & Reisser (1993) contend that stage theories to explain student development are typically oversimplified and do not represent the true developmental pathways for all students. They proposed seven vectors for student development, which include: 1) Achieving Competencies, 2) Managing Emotions, 3) Moving through Autonomy toward Interdependence, 4) Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships, 5) Establishing Identity, 6) Developing Purpose, and 7) Developing Integrity. Again, we can see significant overlaps between these vectors, Parks' theory of faith development, and Love & Talbot's five considerations for spiritual development, mostly because they are cut from the same cloth of student development literature, of which Chickering's is a primary strand. The vectors are not linear, they are not stages, and they are not independent of one another.

Parks' theory of faith development does not explicitly reject the linearity and unidimensionality of stage theories from which hers emerged, but she does recognize that the forms of knowing, dependence, and community similarly reinforce one another through iterative relationships. However, by not rejecting the claims of universality

written into Fowler's stage theory, Parks does wed her theory of faith development to a sequential and relatively linear model. She recognizes that "one of the most serious limitations of this model is the possible implication (and not infrequent charge) that the activity of faith is being represented as linear and fixed, rather than as the dynamic, multidimensional, creative elements that it is in reality" (2000, p. 102). She suggests that a spiral model might capture this creativity and movement more accurately, but that her theory introduces texture to the complexities of young adult meaning-making that have been overlooked in previous versions of developmental stage theories. This contention is quite true, and Parks is wise to bridge the chasm that may exist between stage theories in developmental psychology and student developmental theorists who may tend to reject stage theories as oversimplified and overreaching in their claims of universality of the human (or at least young adult) experience.

Parks considers meaning-making to be the central purpose of faith development. She considers faith to be "the activity of seeking and discovering meaning in the most comprehensive dimensions of our experience. I would add that she treats meaning-making much like Maslow describes his human development needs. In fact, some of the ways in which meaning-making is described do connect with Maslow's cognitive and aesthetic needs, published posthumously (1998). For example, Parks suggests that human beings are unable to survive, and certainly not thrive, unless we are able to construct meaning through seeking patterns, order, coherence, and interconnection among otherwise disparate elements of our experience (2000, p. 7).

New Directions for Research on Spiritual Identity Development

Following the lead of Gilligan and Parks, recent studies and a new generation of researchers have begun to use a much wider lens to understand whether our existing frameworks for understanding college student spiritual identity are capturing all students. For example, the Spirituality in Higher Education Study (Astin, 2004) was the largest national sampling of college student spiritual beliefs and values to date, administering a survey to 112,000 entering freshmen at 236 colleges and universities nationwide (HERI, 2003). This study was also one of the first of its kind to ask students to identify their religious faith backgrounds so that the data could be parsed to more fully understand religious minority students (Bryant, 2006). Following initial reports from the HERI study that peer groups were the most likely place to find discussions about spirituality, Deborah Cady (2006) wrote a narrative study of peer conversations which offers practical suggestions for student affairs educators to enhance opportunities for these discussions. Additionally, a number of recent dissertations have begun to add population-specific texture to our increasingly complex recognition of spiritual identity in college. For example, Jenny Small (2008) recently completed her dissertation qualitatively studying the application of faith development theories to separate groups of Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and atheist students. Camillia Jones (2008) wrote her dissertation studying the religious and spiritual influences on (college) students during the coming-out process. And Matthew Maruggi (2008) just completed his study of transformational educational and spiritual outcomes for college students engaging in service learning. These examples are just a small sample of dissertations written last year on the topic of spiritual identity.

One of the most significant contributions of late came from a trio of senior scholars and University administrators who wrote *Encouraging Authenticity & Spirituality in Higher Education* (Chickering, Dalton, Stamm, 2006)*. This book offers an historical lens to understand religion's influence on the academy, a policy lens to understand legislative and institutional issues, a curricular lens to influence powerful pedagogy, and a strategic planning lens to guide new directions for academic and student affairs units, all grounded in the idea that social change is possible and it is in the best interest of our students and our institutions to encourage and welcome spirituality and authenticity back into our work as educators. We cannot be comfortable with our students progressing through our institutions as ships passing in the night. There is a depth and desire to connect meaningfully to others and to more fully understand oneself, as research indicates that students are craving these types of co-curricular learning outcomes. The past decade has seen steadily increasing interest in the topic of spirituality in higher education, particularly as it can be applied directly to student affairs practice and service learning. As we continue to refine theoretical foundations on spiritual identity development and its social construction in higher education literature, that interest will only continue to grow.

Part Two: Review of the Literature – Masculine Identity Development

One of Carol Gilligan's critiques of Lawrence Kohlberg was that he studied only men to generalize a theory about a whole population. This is different from studying men *as men* (Kimmel & Messner, 2007)*, meaning that a researcher uses gender (masculinity) as a deliberate lens through which one might view the world. Much like one's race,

class, sexual orientation, and spirituality can be organizing constructs around which one develops social identities, masculinity and femininity are used as operational constructs for a gendered identity. These are not synonymous with male and female, with are two biological sex typologies and not gender constructs.

Biologically Male & Behaviorally Masculine

Early efforts to study men focused heavily on biological models and sex differences. Sociobiologists argued that millions of years of evolution have selected certain biological forces to influence social behaviors such as courtship, aggression, and parenting styles. This theoretical position asserts that for generations of early men, hunting behaviors and intimidating violence were bred successfully into the species through genetic representation of those aggressive traits in subsequent gene pools (Wilson, 1975).

Biological models in general focus on innate physiological distinctions between men and women, and how those distinctions lead to variations in social behaviors (Sapolsky, 1997). A very early critique of these biological arguments came from anthropologist, Margaret Mead (1935). Comparing gender role prescriptions across three primitive societies, Mead observed such wide variability that she had to reject any universality of gender roles based on biological or anthropological models. Nonetheless, sex differences and sex role research continues to study men as compared to women.

The most widespread epistemological challenge to this perspective arose in the 1970s, when feminist critiques of gender argued for more socially constructed explanations of identity (David & Brannon, 1976; Pleck & Sawyer, 1974).

Simultaneously, research began to surface that articulated harmful physical and psychological costs for men to adhere to rigid sex role behaviors (Farrell, 1975; Feigen-Fasteau, 1974). Joseph Pleck's *The Myth of Masculinity* (1981) stands out as one of the first and most influential books to explain and criticize the socially constructed, and largely unattainable male sex role. Instead of 'sex differences' or 'sex roles,' Pleck called his model the 'sex role strain' so as to clearly acknowledge the struggle men and women both face to match up with an increasingly unrealistic set of role behaviors.

Social Construction of Gendered Selves

Following Pleck's rejection of role behaviors as inextricably linked to biological sex, a generation of researchers assumed the perspective that gender is something we learn in contexts. Pleck (1987) laid the foundation for studying men *as gendered beings*, not merely as a normative referent against which both men and women are compared. For generations, the terms "male" and "female" had been considered opposites and synonymous with "masculine" and "feminine." As described above, we are separating out the assumption that all individuals with physiologically male characteristics necessarily exhibit masculine traits, while recognizing that there are some intersections between the two. Hence, sex and gender are two different referents – one indicating biological and physiological characteristics and the other referring to one's behaviors, mannerisms, and beliefs about oneself. As we further consider masculinity and femininity, can we really say that these two are opposites?

Prior to the emergence of gender theorists in the 1970s, common beliefs claimed that if one exhibits traits that are more or less masculine, they consequently must be less

or more feminine. These gendered elements or behavioral traits were considered to be

mutually exclusive on a single bipolar dimension, or fixed on the same axis.

Masculine   Feminine

⟵————————————————————————————⟶

Sandra Bem (1974) and many of her contemporaries (Jourard, 1971; Pleck, 1981;

O'Neil, 1982) complicated this model of gender identity by claiming that it is possible

and even desirable for people to have both masculine and feminine traits. Bem

introduced the concept of androgyny into gender identity literature, recognizing that both

men and women exhibit masculine and/or feminine traits in certain situations as strategies

for adaptive advantage (Kilmartin, 2007). A gender identity is constructed, therefore,

using the orthogonal axes of masculinity and femininity. An individual might exhibit a

number of traits that are considered to be traditionally masculine (physically strong and

assertive) at the same time as traditionally feminine traits (emotionally expressive and

relationship-oriented). As such, androgyny theorists situate the expression of these traits

on intersecting axes (p. 41, see fig. 4).

An androgyny model for explaining gender identity is useful in that it releases

some of the rigidity and strain associated with tradition gender roles. By eliminating the

mutual exclusivity of masculine/feminine traits, androgyny theorists situate the two

orthogonal axes so that there is a wider landscape for the expression of gender identities.

However, the model still uses traditional constructs of socially-prescribed gender norms

attributed to either masculine or feminine archetypes.

High Masculinity

Traditional
Masculinity

Androgynous

Low Femininity

High Femininity

Undifferentiated

Traditional
Femininity

Low Masculinity
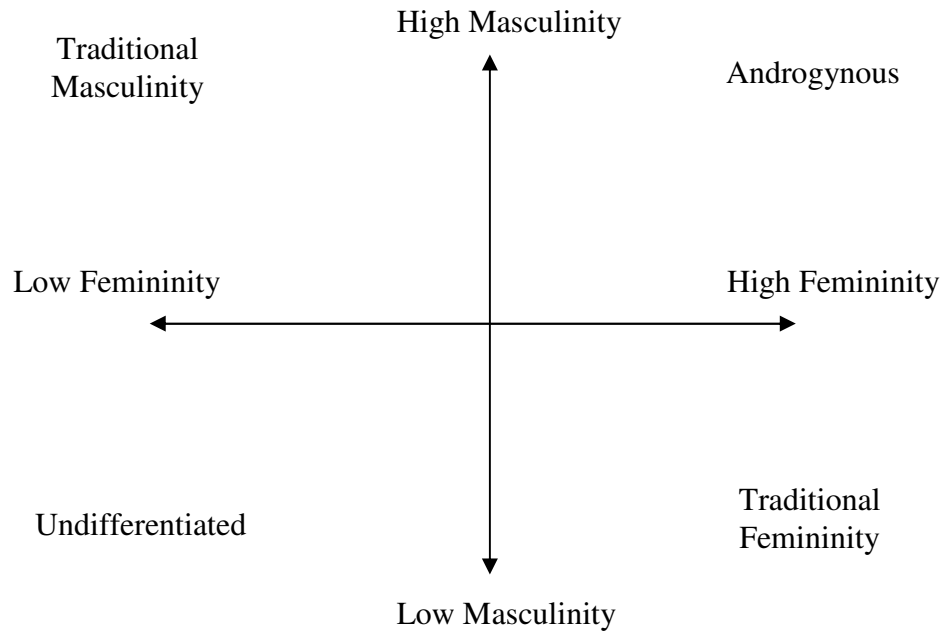
Figure 4: Androgyny Model of Gender

And practically, while there is a general recognition that some people can exhibit
more or fewer masculine traits, there still exists a pervasive social pressure to conform to
social role behaviors. For Kimmel and Messner (2007), a social constructionist
perspective means that "men are not born, they are made. And men make themselves,
actively constructing their masculinities within a social and historical context… Our sex
may be male, but our identity as men is developed through a complex process of
interaction with the culture in which we both learn the gender scripts appropriate to our
culture and attempt to modify those scripts to make them more palatable."

This interaction takes place in both private and public spaces, making the
construction of a gender identity a complex negotiation simultaneously within oneself
and between the person and a society (Josselson, 1996). We have moved away from the
singular, hegemonic masculine archetype, recognizing that this figure is neither realistic
nor healthy. But he lingers. Hegemonic man is introduced to boys at a very young age,

as soon as boys can mimic, process, and internalize role model behaviors. His influence is powerful through peers and media, even families and faith traditions.

Hegemony Dressed as Anti-Femininity and Homophobia

In the United States, we can reasonably say that this hegemonic man dresses himself with the clothing of anti-femininity and homophobia. Boys are socially punished for acting in perceivably feminine ways. For example, the most prevalent insults slung on the average playground, "you throw/act like a girl" or "don't be a sissy," carry strong behavioral repercussions, often retaliation. Of course, "sissy" doesn't just conjure a boy's concern to not be feminine. C.J. Pascoe (2007) writes poignantly about the "fag discourse" that emerges as adolescent boys perform and negotiate gender identities in groups at school. She maintains that "fag discourse is central to boys' joking relationships. Joking cements relationships among boys and helps to manage anxiety and discomfort" (p. 60). They use derogatory language about gay identities as a common lexicon through which to build and reinforce the boundaries of socially-acceptable masculine self-expression. Homophobia is not just fear, but also hostility and intolerance of sexual attraction or behavior between persons of the same sex. In this playground example, the actual sexual orientation of the boy has no relevance, but the socially-reinforced insult of being perceived as gay – to a young adolescent boy – tragically carries more weight.

Take the case of Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover in Springfield, MA in the spring of 2009. Carl was an academically motivated sixth grader in a charter school, an eccentric and polite young football player who endured anti-gay slurs and bullying on a daily basis.

He hung himself tragically in his own bedroom at the age of only eleven years old. Should we not expect – no, demand – something much better for our young people?

Brannon (1976) claims that the traditional hegemonic version of masculinity fits into a narrow box, whose boundaries are reinforced by anti-femininity, homophobia, physical strength, success, and breaking social rules/conventions. More recently, spanning decades of research on Gender Role Conflict (GRC), traditional conceptions of masculinity have been described as encouraging boys and men to be emotionally restrictive, controlling, competitive, avoiding affectionate interaction with other boys or men, power- and status-seeking, and defining one's personal success exclusively through work and financial gain (O'Neil, et al., 1986). These characteristics further explain and reinforce the narrow box described above by Brannon. Boys and men experience psychological conflict as a result of having to fit their behavioral selves inside a box that does not fully describe them, if at all. Depending on the strength of social pressure (reinforcement) pushing up against the edges of the box, that psychological strain or conflict can result in a range of outcomes, including but not limited to social condemnation, depression, exaggerated and inauthentic role behaviors, anxiety, compensatory hyper-aggression, or sexual promiscuity.

Gender Role Stereotyping and Adolescence

These social pressures and gender roles are not experienced exclusively by men and boys. The larger patterns of gender roles and gender stereotyping have been researched extensively since the 1970s when feminist researchers began to examine ways in which people – boys, girls, men, and women – develop knowledge about gender,

particularly sex-role stereotypes (Deaux & Kite, 1993; Ruble & Martin, 1998). This research provided evidence that gender is one of the first social categories recognized and learned by humans at a very young age (Levy & Haaf, 1994). Young children learn early that (traditional) male stereotypes are built around power and independence whereas female stereotypes display helplessness and dependence (Ruble & Martin, 1998). Children establish stereotypes early and rigidly hold onto them so that differences across gender are perceived to be extreme and binding (Huston, 1983).

Children continue to learn and internalize stereotypes through the end of childhood, when gender stereotypes roughly approximates that of adults (Signorella, Bigler, & Liben, 1993), reinforcing that this knowledge is relatively rudimentary. Somewhat surprisingly, adolescents do not typically learn many new gender stereotypes since they have already learned most of these through childhood. However, adolescence does commonly represent a time when gender stereotypes become more flexible meaning that there is recognition that roles are socially constructed, non-rigid conventions that involve behavioral choices (Carter & Patterson, 1982; Katz &Ksansnak, 1994; Neff, Cooper, & Woodruff, 2007). Though adolescents experience some flexibility in their understanding of the stereotype, they also experience more social pressure from peers in general during this time, causing wide variations in behavioral outcomes related to gender expression.

Recapitulating Power & Privilege

In terms of content, the chief mechanism linking all of these stereotypes about traditional masculinity, Connell (1987) argues, is the oppression of women. The

marginalization of non-traditional masculinities is an important representation of the performance of male power over women. In other words, when men claim power, even over other men, they are in fact simulating the systematic marginalization of women that they have learned through socially-constructed hegemonic masculine role training in a patriarchal society.

Patriarchy is a system in which a society confers greater influence, economic power, or prestige on males as compared to females (Kilmartin, 2007). Patriarchy is expressed in cultural values, social customs, socio-financial relationships, rituals, faith traditions, and cultural systems of meaning. Androcentric systems of logic have been employed in the U.S. and around the world to disproportionately bestow power and privilege on men, granting them exclusive access to education, property rights, economic mobility, voting, and legal rights. Bell hooks (2004) calls patriarchy the "single most life-threatening social disease assaulting the male body and spirit in our nation." She calls men to do the hard work of understanding what benefits patriarchy bestows upon men, and to become comrades in struggle alongside those who have fought against gender inequality for decades. Connell (2000) refers to these as the *patriarchal dividends,* or the benefits accrued to men from a history of unequal shares of social labor and capital.

Plural Masculinities

Despite this imbalance of patriarchal dividends, Kaufman (1994) highlights the fact that many individual men do not feel powerful. Intra- and inter-group variations abound among and between groups of men. These variations align with social identity

privilege dynamics based on race, class, sexual orientation, religion, ability, etc. Erving Goffman spoke to these privileged social identities in his book *Stigma* (1963):

In an important sense there is only one complete unblushing male in America: a young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual, Protestant father of college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight, and height, and a recent record in sports. Every American male tends to look out upon the world from this perspective, thus constituting one sense in which one can speak of a common value system in America. Any male who fails to qualify in any one of these ways is likely to view himself – during moments at least – as unworthy, incomplete, and inferior. (p. 128)

Of course, with each category that Goffman lists, the conjunctive list of realistic male matches grows shorter and shorter, ultimately representing a very small percentage of the population. In some ways, as we consider privilege across more social identities, we open the door so that nearly everyone can experience some type of privileged identity. However, that would assume using a union ("or") function instead of the conjunction ("and") suggested by Goffman.

Fortunately, research on men and masculinities, particularly in higher education, in recent years has begun to include diverse groups and subgroups of men, including Latino, Asian American, and Black men as well as those identifying as gay, bi, trans, or queer (Mirande, 1997; Liu, 2002; Harper, 2009; Stein, 2005; Stevens, 2004; Beemyn, 2003). It is abundantly clear from this and other new social research that there is no singular pattern of masculinity that is universal or generalizable to all of those who identify as men. Gender is constructed very differently across cultures, geographies, and even time periods (Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994), so we use the plural form "masculinities" to reflect this diversity and rejection of the singular, limiting, hegemonic form. Critically examining the idea of plural masculinities, as well as the influences of

race, class, and sexuality on gender identity, will prove to be an essential topic in the dialogue groups and interviews with college men in this study. From my experience, many male homosocial groups tend to reify the traditional hegemonic masculine gender roles they purport to deconstruct. On the contrary, groups who continue to discuss those roles through a critical lens, and who model self-reflection and honoring authentic voices are more likely to welcome the more plural masculine forms.

College Men Seeking Authenticity

Interviewing men from a variety of backgrounds for his dissertation, Keith Edwards (2007) described a common performance among college men in social settings. This performance of a masculine identity was perceived to be necessary for the men to be accepted *as men,* despite the fact that they did not always act in ways that were consistent with their own beliefs. His participants likened this experience to putting on a mask, calling it "putting my man face on." All college men in this group shared the experience of not fitting neatly behind the [traditionally masculine] mask that they felt compelled to wear. For example, most of the men felt tremendous pressure not to publicly express emotions aside from anger. One student recounted an experience where his professor recently passed away. "And that hurt me. I wanted to cry. I really felt like it was in me, but I couldn't. And then Friday there was a memorial service in the chapel and like, they were describing her life and I really felt - I felt like real down. But I just - I don't know why I didn't cry" (p. 154). This student realized that every trigger pointed to what should have been an emotional reaction for him, but he could not publicly express his grief that

he knew he felt. The mask is held on tightly over his face so as not to break the masculine code of restrictive emotionality.

The performance of "putting on a man face" is a striking example of how college men feel compelled to adhere to the strict dogma of Masculinity regardless of how well that code of conduct actually resonates with oneself. Edwards also describes how these college men could take off the mask in some cases, mostly in private or with close friends or family. Supported by personal influences, literary or historical figures, exposure to transgressive social role models, critical events or academic courses, some men learned to temporarily remove the mask and shed the performance of social expectations, enacting a more authentic self.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, seeking authenticity is an internal process of identity development that is also comparative in nature. For example, as a young man in college, I might know that I have a strong interest in cooking. Perhaps I love to explore food flavor profiles and prepare elaborate meals, but I was raised in a family where only women do the cooking aside from grilling outside and an occasional Hamburger Helper meal. My understanding of men's gender role repertoires does not include cooking, which creates dissonance for me. Additionally, I am concerned about how my college peers will respond if I tell them about my interests. I weigh the personal consequences and decide to start by talking more about food with my group of friends. I listen to and watch the reactions of my friends when I talk about meals we share in more detail, giving them hints about my interest. I can tell that I have thought more about flavors and cooking than many of my peers. This gives me pause initially, but I realize that it is just because I enjoy it and it seems to feed a deeper part of me. This example,

though it may be trivial, illustrates how self-discoveries are often cautiously tested in comparison to others.

We know that young adults are frequently re-negotiating important questions about their future, about happiness, ethical dimensions of their choices, and refining their answers to match ever-developing beliefs about the world and themselves (Dalton, 2006). "Many students carry with them a deeply felt sense of hope and freshness, and they hold the expectation that college will be not only a place to learn but also a place to *become and belong*. They want college to be a time of personal transformation, a time when they will become the person they long to be" (p. 154, emphasis added). Young men and women both hold these same expectations of college, so how does this relate to what we have just discussed about men and masculine identity development?

Gender Role Conflicts with Spiritual Identity

A college environment becomes a perfect developmental stage upon which both college men and women perform their self-authored narratives. We might consider this practicing and experimenting with gender, though we know this experimentation had already begun well before college. As mentioned, the masks worn by college men have a tendency to control their public discourse and limit authentic connections they might make with others. Jim O'Neil has been studying gender role conflict for thirty years. His research using the Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS) implicates traditional masculinity in encouraging men to be emotionally restrictive; seeking power, control, and competition; avoiding affectionate and sexual interaction with other

men; and defining one's personal success through work status and financial gain (O'Neil, Helms,

Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986).

In the previous chapter, I discussed spiritual development in terms of seeking personal authenticity, genuineness, and wholeness; deriving meaning, purpose, and direction in life; developing a greater connectedness to self and others through relationships and community; an openness to exploring a relationship with a higher power or powers that transcend human existence; and transcending one's current locus of centricity (i.e., recognizing concerns beyond oneself) (Love & Talbot, 1999). We can compare these considerations for spiritual identity development with O'Neil's (1986) components of gender role conflict, where men are expected to be power- and status-seeking, emotionally restrictive, competitive and controlling, defining one's personal success exclusively through work and financial gain, and avoiding affectionate interaction with other boys or men. Disconnections between these gender roles and considerations for spiritual identity development are widespread, but fall into three general areas: self-authorship, connectedness, and ethic of care or centricity. These three disconnections in literature will be used as starting points in my study to explore the intersections for college men between what they consider to be their spiritual and masculine identities. They are presented in order such that self-authorship deals more with intra-personal or intra-psychic phenomena, connectedness deals with inter-personal interactions and relationships, and centricity deals with the extent to which spirituality and masculinity both drive college men to consider extra-personal or transcendent themes through care and service.

Disconnection #1: Self-Authorship

Many students enter college seeing the world in binaries of right/wrong or good/bad. Their initial ways of knowing are externally received in dualistic terms (Perry, 1970). As they progress through college, their ways of knowing typically become more relativistic, socially- or separately-constructed, and contextual (Baxter Magolda, 1992). Self-authorship is the process of developing internally-defined perspectives used to guide action and knowledge construction (Pizzolato, 2003). This process transpires along a developmental continuum moving from a student feeling unsatisfied and in need of self-definition, through actively working to develop internal perspectives and self-definition, to actually having a set of internally-defined perspectives used to guide action and learning.

A young male student receives an endless stream of contextual cues about how one is supposed to be a man in college and beyond. He is forced to interpret the subtle or blatant gender role expectations that men are only successful if they are in positions garnering status and social power. This may lead him into a limited number of academic majors or to join only those student organizations which will grant him that status, despite interests he may have in other areas. For example, Frank Harris III (2009) tells a story about a young man named Steven who entered college in a nursing program because he wanted to make a difference through close patient interaction. He was criticized by peers and his father for two years before changing his major three times and academically disengaging. Eventually, Steven settled for a major that he was not as interested in because it would not "call his masculinity into question." He struggled to conform to the socially-dominant expectations of masculinity and failed to establish

meaningful relationships. Steven, like most of his peers, is working through big questions about who he is in comparison to others while learning to make decisions (and compromises) based on his clarified values. As is common with many male students, he failed to engage effective help-seeking or coping strategies (p. 3), and he spiraled into a crisis state both psychologically and emotionally.

Baxter Magolda (2001) claims that there are two catalysts of the trajectory toward students' self-authorship. First, students must realize that they are unhappy with their current situation and recognize an alternative path. Second, students must be compelled to make decisions leading to actions on their own for which there is no externally-stated formula for success. Steven knew that he was unhappy, even depressed, but he could not see an alternative path and he was never challenged to make academic or vocational decisions that aligned more coherently with his values. His was an authenticity conflict that forced Steven to make choices between a field of nursing that felt more genuine and a socially-imposed expectation that he needed to choose a "more manly" vocation. He chose inauthenticity over expected negative social consequences – a choice that is made early and often by too many young men in college.

Kegan (1994) suggests that students often enter college viewing knowledge as externally-validated and possessed by authorities. They gradually shift from viewing themselves as mere receivers to constructors of knowledge, followed by intrapersonal meaning-making based on self-knowledge, and finally connecting those meanings to interpersonal relationships and contexts. A young college man falls somewhere along this developmental continuum, and his choices to accept, modify, or reject the dominant gender role code may correspond with the extent to which he is developmentally ready to

critically consume those messages and act upon them. His perceived ability to self-author his own personal narrative matters intensely as he negotiates both gendered and spiritual identities, among many others. Self-authorship as a construct will be a difficult one to identify in this study, as it is perhaps the most intimate and elusive. This is not a question that can be answered directly on a survey or easily during an interview, and the social forces pulling young men toward uncompromising certainty will likely influence the extent to which dialogue groups can reasonably confront head-on the topic of self-authorship. In light of these challenges, the personal narrative approach becomes much more valuable as I have to connect pieces of stories together across many points of contact in this study.

Disconnection #2: Connectedness

As a young man grows in self-knowledge, he necessarily does so in relation to others. Love & Talbot suggest that spiritual identity involves developing a greater connectedness to self and others through relationships and community. However, several aspects of the masculine gender role, such as orientation toward competition and task completion, inhibit the formation of close relationships between (male) friends (Kilmartin, 2007). Males are often socialized to view other men as competitors. This limits the degree to which one is comfortable revealing one's weaknesses and vulnerabilities, therefore preventing the establishment of intimacies with one another (Jourard, 1971). Additionally, the gender-role demand for self-sufficiency and independence inhibits self-disclosure. This has the effect of hindering relationship-building and devaluing those men who do reveal weakness or help-seeking behaviors

when needed (Kilmartin). Despite the fact that there are considerable positive mental health benefits to disclosing oneself and therefore connecting to others (Pennebaker, 1995), men may choose to avoid negative social consequences rather than asking for help or disclosing oneself to another person.

Granted, there are considerable variations among men regarding intimacy and disclosure in relationships. Some of this variation can be explained by the degree to which an individual man adheres to traditional concepts of masculinity (Winstead, Derlega & Wong, 1984). For example, a young man in college who adheres to fairly traditional gender role norms might feel more compelled to build a relationship with his roommate by playing video games or watching a sport together, mimicking with Kilmartin refers to as the "decades-long history of entrenched buddyship patterns" (p. 254). Many men experience relationship dissatisfaction even with their best friends (Elkins & Peterson, 1993), leading one to believe that emotional needs for college men are not always prioritized and often go underdeveloped. This challenges the element of spiritual identity development that craves a deeper connection to oneself and one's relationship to others in communities. Many men do satisfy that desire for connections through organizations, sports teams, social fraternities, and other institutionalized settings. These organizations can help to mitigate and/or promulgate men's competitive tendency, serving to limit or deepen relationships among their members. Regardless, it is important to consider the effect of organizations as a vehicle through which men seek affiliation, relationships, and connectedness with others. During both interviews and dialogue groups, we will frequently discuss the topic of relationships and group

affiliations, and how these may or may not foster meaningful connections for the college men.

Disconnection #3: Ethic of Care & Centricity

In her critique of Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory, Carol Gilligan (1982) posited that the pinnacle of moral development for both men and women is an ethic of care grounded in critically-consumed ethical principles of justice and interpersonal relationships. This presents a disconnect for college men, as they must balance the social role norms of being emotionally stoic, independent, and controlling with a developing sense of transcendence of one's own needs. Again, spiritual identity development involves a transcendence of one's locus of centricity, meaning that as young men develop they move beyond their own narcissism to focus on needs of other people, organizations, or communities. This necessitates empathy and a connectedness as mentioned above that may also lie outside the traditional range of masculine role norms. For a young man to genuinely attend to the needs of a friend or a community he must have a deep feeling for and understanding of that friend or that group of people.

Habitual emotional inexpressiveness is known as alexithymia. This begins as a social role performed often by young men, and frequently becomes incorporated into one's personality or masculine identity (Brannon, 1985). Empathy, on the other hand, is the awareness of (and perhaps the identification with) another person's emotional state or distress. History remembers vividly those (mostly male) figures who have used positions of power, combined with a narcissistic egocentricity, to subordinate human welfare in the form of war, violence, unsavory business practices, or other forms of intended or

collateral victimization. It is difficult not to see these at least in part as failures in empathic response, which could have otherwise served as a behavioral inhibitor of said malevolence.

David Lisak (1997) interviewed male victims of childhood abuse. He found that those who acknowledged the physical and emotional pains they experienced in their past were much more likely not to become violent adults in the future. He coined the term "empathy for the self" to showcase his findings that men had to excavate within themselves before they could connect emotionally to other people. This creates a sizable disconnect with the socialized role norm that men are supposed to restrict emotional expression altogether, aside from socially-acceptable anger or righteous indignation.

Interestingly, some men learn to fuse these behaviors and show an empathic response for a person or cause exclusively through anger. For example, a young man watches a video in class about the systematic sexual violence toward comfort women during World War II. He gets angry after seeing the film and wants to do something with that anger. This may develop into a commitment to work on the prevention of sexual violence and human rights violations in the future, citing that initial anger as his motivation. The young man used an emotional response [anger] that he knows is socially acceptable for him to publicly express and develops it into a commitment to care for someone or something beyond himself. This is one way for him to develop an experiential referent to connect emotionally to someone else's pain, but it might still be difficult for the traditionally-socialized young man to connect emotionally to his own pain. He is working against decades of social reinforcement that he is supposed to be tough, strong, and unyielding. As such, he has learned to compartmentalize his more

tender emotions and reserve them for quiet places, in private, if he acknowledges them at all.

Connecting Gendered and Spiritual Identities

In response to research based exclusively on male subjects, a number of feminist theoretical approaches emerged that centered on fostering a "care orientation" (Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987). These perspectives situated the discussion of care orientation on the experiences of women, and few researchers since have utilized their valuable insights to also examine the experiences of men as they develop a care orientation or a locus of centricity that extends beyond serving one's own needs. In many faith traditions, this is commonly a salient behavioral cue for performing one's faith – to serve others and improve human conditions. Throughout this study, I tried to pay careful attention to how the college men discussed their motivations for engaging in service or reaching out to people in need, and how those motivations connected to their grand narratives related to spirituality and masculinity.

Theories of moral, cognitive, and identity development in general have long been criticized for their lack of attention to the developmental differences based on gender (Sax, 2008). Quite frankly, we know very little about the developmental intersections between gender identity and spiritual identity. This study was designed to uncover some of those identity intersections for a small group of college men. How does a male student internalize his search for purpose and align that search with his beliefs about how he is becoming an adult man? How does he see himself in relation to other men, to women, to institutions through which he creates meaning? And how does he show that he cares

about you, about his causes, or even about himself or his own dignity? These are all big questions, enduring ones with deep impact for college men. They are questions about self-authorship, connectedness, and centricity that are often approached for the first time during college.

For young men, these questions can be challenging ones, empowering ones, haunting ones, or debilitating ones. These questions strike at the heart of college students' identity. They are spiritual questions, but they also have a great deal to do with how college men see themselves *as men.* It is imperative that we understand how these types of questions are approached, and how the saliency of identities impacts the manner in which they are approached. This study examines how college men make meaning out of their experiences and align that meaning with their existing beliefs about themselves as gendered beings and the world they know. I consider that to be a spiritual practice, one that connects deep in a person's many layers of identities and sense of self.

Chapter 3 : Research Methods

This dialogical narrative study convened a group of male college students from various religious and/or spiritual backgrounds at a selective medium-sized, public research university in dialogue around their spiritual and masculine identities. Through this study, I wanted to understand the ways in which college men engage what they consider to be their spirituality, and to find connections between those spiritualities, a developing gender identity, and self-transcendent implications for commitment, care, service, and citizenship. Seven students from a number of different religious groups (Nondenominational Christian, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, and a 'multispiritual practitioner') participated in two interviews each and a set of four focused dialogue group discussions. Every effort was made to acknowledge other forms of diversity, particularly cultural backgrounds including race, ethnicity, and country/regions of origin, as well as denominations within the religious groups themselves. The resulting group of seven men all have quite different faith backgrounds, which was the primary criteria for selection. This added a great deal to the breadth of discussion and certainly to the inclusive nature of the resulting theory.

All students were interviewed prior to and following the dialogue group sessions. The dialogue groups included a number of activities designed to elicit guided discussion on different topics each week. I called the series of these sessions a Spiritual Quest Workshop for College Men. The combination of individual interviews and dialogue groups teased out consistencies and inconsistencies between public and private identity construction for the college men in this study. I utilized qualitative coding techniques

throughout the data collection phase of this study, keeping field notes and all artifacts collected throughout the study from each participant. The participant survey proved to be a critical collection of data, which was used as a primary method to present participants' stories in the next chapter. My narrative analysis used the quantitative surveys as one additional piece of data to compile participants' data profiles. This mixed methods approach offered rich context to support numerical scores or call them into question, and ultimately to develop an understanding of the intersections between religious/spiritual backgrounds and gendered (masculine) identities.

Research Questions

In this study, I addressed the following two primary research questions:

1. How do college men understand their gendered (masculine) and spiritual identities? How does this understanding translate into behaviors?

2. How are college men's commitments to spirituality and/or religious faith associated with centricity, citizenship, and an ethic of care or service? How do these associations change over a college career?

In order to answer these questions, I also explored the following secondary questions as more specific elaborations on each primary question. Each added depth to the primary question and served as a launching point for interview questions and dialogue group topics.

Table 2: Research Questions and Methods of Inquiry

Primary Research Questions	Subquestions	Methods of Inquiry
1. How do college men understand their gendered (masculine) and spiritual identities? How does this understanding translate into behaviors?	a. How do college men describe what it means for them "to be spiritual"? (Code: SPIRITUAL)	Participant Survey (HERI) Individual Pre-Interviews Dialogue Group #1
	b. How do college men describe what it means for them "to be men"? (Code: MASCULINE)	Participant Survey (GRCS) Individual Pre-Interviews Dialogue Groups #2,3
	c. To what extent do students' ideas about spirituality influence ideas about manhood – and vice versa? (Code: INTERSECTIONS)	Dialogue Group #3 Debriefing Interviews
	d. How do college men conform to or reject traditional masculine gender roles? Do they experience psychological conflict as a result of this conformity or rejection? (Code: GENDER ROLES)	Participant Survey (GRCS) Naturalistic Observations Dialogue Group #2 Debriefing Interviews
	e. In what ways do students' expressions (and performances) of their spiritual and masculine identities change depending on who they are speaking to? (Code: AUDIENCE)	Naturalistic Observations All Dialogue Groups Debriefing Interviews
2. How are college men's commitments to spirituality and/or religious faith associated with centricity, citizenship, and an ethic of care or service? How do these associations change over a college career?	a. What knowledge or experiences related to spirituality, if any, trigger a student to develop a sense of responsibility beyond meeting/serving one's own needs? (Code: CENTRICITY)	Individual Pre-Interviews Dialogue Group #4,5
	b. How does a student's spirituality contribute to one's understanding of oneself as a citizen in a local or global community? How does gender alter that understanding, if at all? (Code: CITIZENSHIP)	Individual Pre-Interviews Dialogue Group #4 Debriefing Interviews
	c. What factors influence a male student's decision or ability to feel and subsequently demonstrate care toward someone else? How do these factors connect to one's spiritual sense of self? (Code: CARE)	Participant Survey Dialogue Group #2,3,4 Debriefing Interviews

Dialogical Narrative Study Methodology

These questions guide both the research and philosophy of my investigation. I examined the lived realities of how college men come to understand the world and actively construct meaning through both gendered and spiritual lenses. These questions of identity are not necessarily ones that most college men have experience discussing, and research lends us few carins to decipher a pathway by which one comes to understand intersections between these identities. Hence, a more dialogical methodological approach was warranted to help participants reflect on their own stories, tell those stories creatively through multiple group and individual outlets, discuss common elements with a group of peers, and to contribute to the direction of the dialogue group. With these objectives and questions in mind, this research brings together three methodologies: action research, dialogue, and narrative analysis, into what I call a dialogical narrative study.

Dialogical Narrative Approach

I was interested in understanding the identity stories of the college men in the sample, and I could not do that without involving them actively in constructing their own histories, beliefs, and social contexts. One thread that tied throughout this study is the aggressive pursuit of authenticity, both as a desired outcome and a measure of successful data capture. We are most authentic when we listen to our own voice, and act consistently on behalf of that voice. Through activities, discussions, interviews, and artifact collection, there were quite a few opportunities for the college men to express

themselves, to refine self-knowledge, and to gather real-time feedback on their own narrated stories. The "action" of this dialogical narrative approach was developmental in nature, deeply personal and archeological, with the shared agenda of self-discovery and narration. There is a type of active excavation that is required to do this work of identity storytelling and self-study (Pithouse, Mitchell & Moletsane, 2009). When students unearth artifacts (literally or figuratively) from their own histories, they develop a more sophisticated self-knowledge that can be transformative.

Participants in this study engaged actively in telling their own stories, which required an acknowledgement of history, development, and context. But these stories were not idle, unchanging, nor solely inward-looking. We all told our stories in dialogue, a social setting which necessarily influenced them. George Herbert Mead (1934) introduced the idea to social science researchers that we humans hear ourselves talking and responding to research questions, and our listening calls out a response in us that creates an inner dialogue that may or may not match the shared outer one. The process of coming to know more about ourselves changes us, provokes growth, and jolts us out of complacency so that we are irrevocably changed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). And in doing so, the narratives that we actively construct have the power to move us in the direction of a more knowledgeable and useful outward gaze (Mitchell, Weber, & O'Reilly-Scanlon, 2005).

Action research

Action research is a methodological process by which research and development (action) transpire iteratively along a spiral trajectory with the active involvement of both

researcher and participants in knowledge construction. Kurt Lewin (1946) first coined the term "action research" as an oscillatory process going from the researcher's office to the participating group and back. The researcher no longer merely studied and theorized independently, but involved the subjects in the research process by gathering feedback and modifying one's approach based on that feedback. Lewin described a spiral trajectory of action research as if the researcher was walking down a spiral staircase. Each spiral consisted of planning, acting, observing, and evaluating the results of actions, followed by ongoing spirals as the research progresses. Every iteration of the spiral changes and learns from previous sets of planning, acting, observing and evaluating. As such, this Lewinian approach to action research is flexible and responsive, allowing participants to "organize the conditions under which they can learn from their own experience and make this experience accessible to others" (McTaggart, 1997). Lewin overlapped action and reflection components of the process so that action research necessitated learning and uncovering layers of complexity through research which changed questions and directions of inquiry from one step to another.

During pre-interviews with college men, I asked them about what it means to be spiritual and what it means for them to be men. These responses shaped content for later dialogue sessions among all participants. In fact, some of the sessions included compiled lists of responses that generated a starting point for our conversation that day as we looked at all the ways these young men identified meaning in manhood. I also observed a number of participants in a setting that they considered to be a spiritual one. This gave me a chance to join the college men in places of worship, a community garden, or a dinner/discussion with a campus ministry. These 'spiritual settings' were entirely

determined by the college men. Four of the men could not identify any particular place on the campus that they considered to be spiritual, which presented an interesting finding by this fact alone.

Two crucial ideas in action research are group decision and a commitment to improvement (p. 28). Action research begins to blur the distinctions between researcher and participant, creating a democratic process of inquiry (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Action research is often used to improve practices of groups and/or individuals. One aim of this study as it relates to action research was to enhance an individual or the group's capacity for self-understanding (Reason & Lincoln, 1996). Certainly, through interviews, dialogue groups, and narrative writing, participants had opportunities to improve reflective practices related to spirituality and gender. I would not presume to know more about participants' own lived experiences than they do, which makes them the authority and source of experiential knowledge. However, there were some connections that the group and myself as researcher could help participants to illuminate relating those lived experiences to gendered and spiritual identities. For example, during debriefing interviews, I presented compiled participant data profiles to each of the college men. These data points offered valuable feedback, some of which was confirmed as quite accurate, and some of the men identified points to modify using the survey data as a starting point. Even suggesting those modifications requires that a participant reflect on himself and how this data feedback matches his own self-perception. This was not work that could be done without the willing and active participation of the college men.

Narrative Analysis

While the action research approach describes the process of inquiry, a narrative analysis frames the types of questions that were asked as those pertaining to the life experiences as told through stories. This type of inquiry assumes that storytelling is a central method by which people understand their own lives and those of others in communities. People find ways to communicate their narratives as a process of constructing and reconstructing identities (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). While the story itself is obviously important to a narrative inquiry, how the story is told can be equally important (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995). Narrative inquiry typically requires an interdisciplinary approach to examine lives holistically through multiple data points (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). For example, in one of the first group sessions, participants in this study described their life histories by drawing maps to illustrate their spiritual lives and significant gendered experiences. They explained these maps in the group and had a chance to elaborate on them during individual interviews. The narrative analysis included symbolic, linguistic, written, and behavioral elements to interpret a more holistic narration of one's story. These multiple data points also helped considerably to triangulate findings relating to an individual's experiences. Personal narratives are presented for each participant across the entire study using data profiles, written personal credos and This I Believe statements, and centricity maps, and themes across participants are also highlighted in the next chapter. Narrative analysis is a powerful method by which to elicit voice. As such, it is one of the most potent tools available to utilize and interpret signs, symbols, feelings and various modes of self-

expression as participants (narrators) actively construct meaning through social identities (Elliott; 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Participant Sample

This study utilized a convenience sample of seven (7) male college students from various religious and/or spiritual backgrounds at a selective medium-sized, public research university. The seven students from seven different religious backgrounds were solicited to participate in the study following nominations from campus ministers or student leaders, collecting 30 nominations. Most participants were solicited either through religious student groups or my existing associations at the University. My primary criteria for selecting the dialogue group sample was that students must: 1) identify as men; 2) represent a diverse range of religious faith or spiritual backgrounds; 3) be willing and able to participate in all of the group dialogue sessions and two interviews. The age of students and their year in college was also a consideration so as to try to have a balance of academic years represented, which proved to be an interesting marker when analyzing the data set.

I consulted with the United Ministries Group at the University as well as the Sustained Dialogue group for the recruitment and selection of participants. Each were confident that they could help find at least this many participants for the discussion groups and interviews, and their nominations did indeed offer me some great candidates. I decided to recruit the assistance of a fourth-year student to assemble the group. This student had already agreed to participate in the dialogue group and associated research study, and proved to be extremely valuable as a nomination recruiter with so many

connections already as a student leader. He did not personally invite others to join, but

did help considerably to solicit nominations from other student leaders. I also contacted

the campus ministers or leaders of religious affinity groups representing various faith

traditions via email solicitation and personal networking, asking them to nominate men to

participate in the study/dialogue groups (see Appendix A for electronic correspondence).

I then personally emailed each nominee inviting them to participate, describing the

duration of commitment, benefits, risks, etc. as per IRB protocol (see Appendix B). The

United Ministries organization is the "official association of religious organizations,

groups and individuals providing religious services and care to the University of Virginia

community." Though this association is comprised of mostly Judeo-Christian faith

traditions, they were a good starting point for recruitment, and one of their longstanding

leaders sent an email introduction of my study prior to my nomination request email,

which was both generous and quite helpful.

Data Collection & Instrumentation

All participating young men were provided with a description of the types of

activities and questions that they should anticipate throughout the study. Participants

signed consent forms prior to their first interview, and had a chance to ask any questions

about the sessions or study overall. Also prior to their pre-interview, all participants were

asked to fill out a survey to collect data on their age, religious denomination,

race/ethnicity, major, anticipated graduation year, and two short scales related to the

social identities in question (see Appendix C for survey). Students received reminder e-

mails a few days before the interviews and group sessions. All data were kept

confidential, but could not be collected anonymously. In order to ensure confidentiality, I changed the names and any clearly identifiable descriptions of individual participants during transcription from audio tapes and recording of my field notes. Since the group dialogue played a central role in this study, I reinforced that attendance at each session was critical. The final dialogue group was held at the International Center, where we cooked a meal together as a group. During interviews, I asked the participants if they could identify a (local) place that they consider to be spiritual. For those three who could identify one, I asked if I could join them in those places as an observation in a more natural spiritual setting. The overall chronological snapshot for data collection included: 1) a short preliminary survey; 2) a pre-interview for each participant; 3) naturalistic observations in a spiritual setting (anytime during the six weeks of the study); 4) four group dialogue sessions including audio recordings, facilitator notes, and artifacts collected from activities; and 5) a debriefing post-interview for each participant.

Preliminary Survey

A two-page survey was completed by all participants prior to the first interview. This survey (see Appendix A) collected simple demographic information for all participants as well as preliminary indications about identity construction and/or conflicts experienced by participants. Two different scales in particular were used: Gender Role Conflict Scale (O'Neil, et al, 1986) and an assemblage of factors from the Spirituality in Higher Education Study (HERI, 2004). The composite scores from both scales were presented and discussed in comparison to national data sets during dialogue group sessions as a starting point for some of the dialogues.

The Spirituality in Higher Education Study is a national study of college students' search for meaning and purpose housed at UCLA's

Preliminary Survey
Scales/Factors include:
1. Spirituality in Higher Ed Study (HERI)   - commitment, spiritual quest, citizenship, and care

2. Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS)
    - restrictive emotionality, success & power, affection
     toward other men, and conflicts in work and
     relationships

Higher Education Research Institute (HERI). As one of the most expansive quantitative studies of its kind, this line of research has generated considerable interest in how we might come to measure the interests, involvements, and attitudes of college students relating to something as deep and contextual as their spiritual beliefs. The factors of interest for the purposes of this study were centered on commitment, care, and citizenship. As such, I isolated questions from the HERI factor scales tables that address these areas of interest. The questions were designed to elicit responses from college men about their own faith traditions and the extent to which they felt committed to them, as well as to begin to identify loci of centricity, social causes of interest to participants, and some general trends in ways that men enact their faith on a regular basis. The complete coded survey (see Appendix A) included codes for commitment, spiritual quest, citizenship, and ethic of care. These questions provided an excellent starting point from which to triangulate responses to interview questions, artifacts collected, and group dialogue session comments.

The general premise of the Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS) is that men experience varying degrees of psychological conflict as a result of the extent to which they feel compelled to adhere to traditional masculine gender roles. As described in the previous chapter, this line of research over the last 25 years has identified four main

factors of psychological conflict: 1) restrictive emotionality; 2) success, power, and competition issues; 3) conflicts between work and family relations; and 4) restrictive affectionate behavior between men. These four factors were loaded in the preliminary survey with five questions each, randomly distributed through the last 20 questions in the survey.

Preliminary Interviews

All college men in the study participated in preliminary (pre-)interviews prior to entering the dialogue group sessions. These in-depth interviews, described by Kahn and Cannell (1957) as "conversations with a purpose," were intended to last between 30 and 60 minutes, though some definitely continued for up to 90 minutes. They followed a loosely standardized or partially structured format. Some general topics were framed with questions, but the desired outcome for these interviews was to understand how participants structure their thinking in general around spirituality, religious faith, and gender. Specifically, the topics of interest during interviews followed similar lines of inquiry as those in the preliminary survey, though the format for collecting the data is quite different (see Appendix D for a sampling of questions for each topic). Despite these sample questions in the attached interview protocol, the interviews were more conversational than structured, paying close attention to evoke the participants' emic perspective as they responded to prompts and told their identity stories. This partially structured interviewing technique (Krathwohl, 1998) offered me as the researcher flexibility to modify questions and explore participants' responses in more detail as needed, but still offered some topical guideposts as similarities across participants.

Of utmost importance to me as the researcher in this data collection method was

to clearly convey the attitude that the interviewees' views were valuable and useful

(Marshall & Rossman, 2006) by engaging

participants in thoughtful and personalized

conversations. Prior to the pre-interviews, in

order to gain some trust from participants

throughout the study, I disclosed what I was

hoping to learn in general from the college men. I

also discussed

how I intended to compare the college men both

broadly and thematically based on some existing

and some emerging content themes. These pre-

interviews also served as a screening tool. If I

encountered some participants who do not seem

interested or well-suited for interfaith dialogue for

whatever reasons, I reserved the option of not

inviting that student to continue in the study.

This was not an option that I had to exercise, but it

was reassuring to know that it was a possibility.
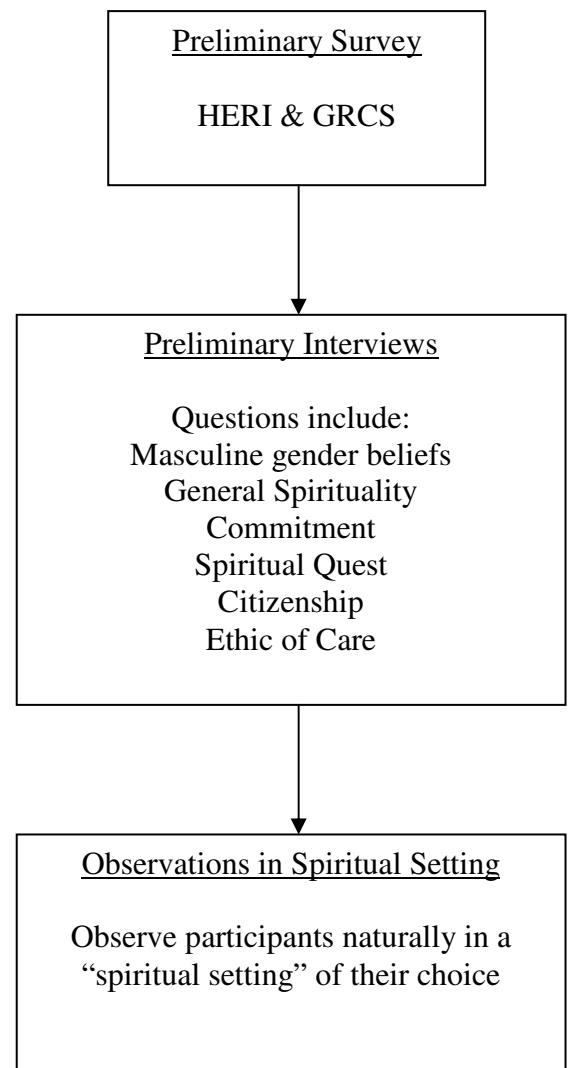
Figure 5: Flowchart of Data Collection

Observations in a Spiritual Setting

During preliminary interviews, I asked each participant to identify a local setting

that they considered to be particularly spiritual, where I could potentially join them. This

might have been a worship service or gathering, it could have been an outdoor place in the woods or a hiking trail, or even a location on Grounds where they connect with peers if they considered that to be spiritual. Only three of the participants were able to identify a setting like this, so I attended a dinner and after-dinner discussion with the Presbyterian Student Fellowship group first, who welcomed me warmly as one of their own. Next, I joined another participant at an outdoor picnic at the community garden that he was very involved in organizing a few blocks away from the campus. And finally, just before the exams began, I attended a Hindu religious ritual called a puja, organized by the Hindu Student Council in the student center. I collected field notes sporadically to the extent that it was possible in this setting, but could not reasonably audio record this setting. It was important that the participant felt comfortable doing what he would normally do in this setting, so I tried to merely observe him in the setting and take notes where possible. For example, at the community garden, I did not spend much time talking directly with the participant, but talked instead with his friends and other guests at the picnic, keeping an eye on how he interacted in this setting with other people and the space itself. These more natural spiritual settings offered me a very good perspective on some of the participants outside of the otherwise contrived dialogue sessions and interview protocols.

Group Dialogue Sessions

The concept of a group dialogue as methodology borrows from traditional focus groups in qualitative research and sustained inter-cultural dialogue groups that have begun to emerge on college campuses just over the last decade (Saunders, 1999; Parker,

2006). The dialogue group as methodology is rooted in David Bohm's (Bohm, 1996;

Nichol, 2003) understanding of dialogue:

"In dialogue it is necessary that people be able to face their disagreements without confrontation and be willing to explore points of view to which they do not personally subscribe. If they are able to engage in such a dialogue without evasion or anger, they will find that no fixed position is so important that it is worth holding at the expense of destroying the dialogue itself . . . What is essential is that each participant is, as it were, suspending his or her point of view, while also holding other points of view in a suspended form and giving full attention to what they mean." (Nichol, 2003)

We used four principles of Bohm's dialogue (1996) to lay the foundation for the

dialogue group in this study. First, no group-level decisions will be made in the

conversation. "...In the dialogue group we are not going to decide what to do about

anything. This is crucial. Otherwise we are not free. We must have an empty space where

we are not obliged to anything, nor to come to any conclusions, nor to say anything or not

say anything. It is open and free." (p.18-19)

Second, each individual agrees to suspend judgment in the conversation. Specifically, if

the individual hears an idea he doesn't like, he will not attack that idea. "...people in any

group will bring to it assumptions, and as the group continues meeting, those assumptions

will come up. What is called for is to suspend those assumptions, so that you neither

carry them out nor suppress them. You don't believe them, nor do you disbelieve them;

you don't judge them as good or bad" (p. 22). Third, as these individuals "suspend

judgment" they also simultaneously are as honest and transparent as possible. Individuals

will be asked to use "I statements" as much as possible, taking responsibility for their

own ideas and attributing sources of material outside of their own experiences

(particularly when those sources refer to one's religious faith traditions). And finally,

individuals in the conversation try to build on other individuals' ideas in the conversation. Since we are breaking new ground and trying to understand larger themes of gender and spirituality, it is crucial that we develop ideas collectively in order to completely understand their potential for meaning-making both individually and collectively.

These principles called into question the purposes for the dialogue group – whether we were discussing topics to arrive at truth claims or to dialogue in order to identify personal and/or shared meanings. Bohm asserted that "you have to watch out for the notion of truth. Dialogue may not be concerned directly with truth – it may arrive at truth, but it is concerned with *meaning*. If the meaning is incoherent you will never arrive at truth. You may think, '*My* meaning is coherent and somebody else's isn't,' but then we'll never have meaning shared. You will have the "truth" for yourself or for your own group, whatever consolation that is. But we will continue to have conflict." (p. 37). These dialogue groups were instructive in a self-exploratory way that uncovered motivations, assumptions, and beliefs that may not have been accessible using more traditional (focus) group interview techniques.

Focus groups can be defined as a "carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment." (Krueger and Casey, 2000, p. 5). This dialogue group was similar in design in that it was a carefully planned series of group encounters. Each session was co-facilitated by myself and a fourth-year undergraduate student with experience facilitating Sustained Dialogue groups. This student's charge was to assist with keeping the discussion moving if it started to wane, but he was also a participant, so I did not reveal the structure of content or my expectations of where it would go. I did, of

course, have defined areas of interest for these dialogue sessions, and I believe we were

successful in creating a non-threatening and open environment. Additionally, the

dialogue groups was used as confirmatory data for triangulating collective themes that

emerged during surveys and individual interviews. But the purposes for the sessions

extended beyond merely obtaining the perceptions of the college men. I expected that the

men would have to think and work through potentially unexplored identity topics, and I

utilized a series of generated artifacts and activities to evoke that spirit of exploration.

The five dialogue sessions were structured as follows:
(*indicates an artifact to be collected or photographed, [CAPS] indicates reference to a
research subquestion)

Spirituality & Gender Identity Dialogue Sessions
Mondays at 7pm
March 15-April 5, 2010

Session 1: Where am I from?
Establish a Covenant among participants (Saunders, 1999)
*Draw Road Maps of Your Spiritual Journey (Wakefield, 1990) & share maps with the group
Discuss extent to which participants feel connected to communities of faith practice
[CENTRICITY]
Introduce ongoing "This I Believe®" (NPR, 2009) Project, beginning with personal credo
exercise next week

Session 2: This I Believe, part I
*Collect personal credos (written anytime between 1st & 2nd sessions)
Add gendered lens to personal credo statement - "This I believe about Men." Does it still work?
[MASCULINE]
How are these sources and messages similar/different from the ones related to masculinities that
we discussed during your individual interviews? (share compiled list of masculine messages from
interviews) [INTERSECTIONS]
Debrief compiled list and reiterate how to expand credo into a This I Believe essay
What do you learn about gender from your spiritual role models? [INTERSECTIONS]

Session 3: Performing That Which I Believe
Follow-up to discussion about masculinities last week (incl. gender role conflicts)
The Maori Candle Exercise [CENTRICITY]

If everyone believed what you do, and followed through with those beliefs, how would the world be different? [CITIZENSHIP]
What rituals, ceremonies, or rites of passage do you find to be meaningful?
What rites do/did you observe in your own passage to manhood? [MASCULINE]
Check in re: This I Believe essays

Session 4: This I Believe, part II
*Share This I Believe essays [SPIRITUAL]
What is your purpose? Discernment and inner voice.
Breaking bread together (at International Center) with 'soulful food'

David Bohm (1996) claimed that dialogue is a way of collectively observing how hidden values and intentions can control our behavior, and how unnoticed cultural differences can clash without our realizing their presence or impact. The dialogue, therefore, can be seen as an arena in which collective learning takes place and out of which might arise a sense of increased harmony, fellowship and creativity. These dialogue group sessions with college men asked demanding and profound questions, and the participants were asked to reflect not just on the answers generated, but more importantly on how they work toward those answers. Since this study was a dialogical narrative one, both the process of self-exploration and the various ways that participants communicate the fruits of that process presented valuable data opportunities. The content expressed and presented through interviews, artifacts, credos, statements of belief, and dialogue participation offered ample collection points for the researcher to check, clarify, and triangulate responses in order to construct coherent personal narratives. All of these responses together built a much more complete narrative for each participant, however, it is important to note that dialogue and narrative analysis both depend on perpetual openness to one's capacity to become someone other than whoever he already is (Frank, 2005). Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), the Russian philosopher and progenitor of the term

dialogical, warns us not to finalize our characters in narrative too quickly (if ever, at all). The voices of college men in this study were juxtaposed with those of their peers, and that context was often just as important to a participant's voice as the words they chose to approximate it.

Debriefing Interviews

The final point of contact with participants were debriefing interviews. This offered a chance for participants to reflect on their participation in the Spiritual Quest Workshop and the overall research study. The format for these debriefing interviews was very open-ended, with few prescribed questions. The only specific ones that were asked of each participant were: 1) What were your expectations of this workshop from the beginning, and what stands out to you from the last month? 2) Do you feel as if you were able to fully represent your opinions/beliefs accurately throughout this workshop? Were there any points at which you would have engaged differently? I used this time to follow up on any items that may have come up for individuals throughout the study, and discuss how participants plan to use any new discoveries they may have found. I also used the debriefing interviews to do some member checking of survey data collected and to ask participants' preliminary feedback on my emerging theory. As I will discuss in the next section, I compiled all participants' responses on the surveys
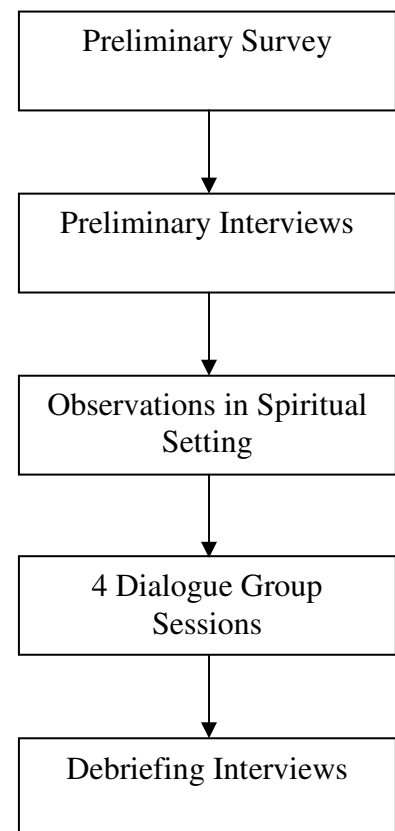
Preliminary Survey
↓
Preliminary Interviews
↓
Observations in Spiritual Setting
↓
4 Dialogue Group Sessions
↓
Debriefing Interviews

into what I called a personalized data profile. These data profiles were presented to each participant during his debriefing interview, and he was given a chance to comment on his 'scores' on each factor, and suggest revisions he would make to those scores based on my description of each factor. These conversations offered some very rich data, which proved to be among the most valuable in constructing the final theory in this study.

Method of Data Analysis

The use of narrative analysis in both individual and dialogue group contexts allowed me to explore the ways in which social actors (college men) produced, represented, performed, and contextualized experiences and personal knowledge through stories and other genres. Denzin (1989) describes a narrative as a story of a sequence of events with *significance* to the narrator and his audience, relating those events in a temporal, *causal sequence of production*. Denzin's description is important for a number of reasons. First, dialogical narrative analysis as methodology acknowledges that people actively construct stories about events that are *significant* to them. They leave out the presumably unimportant details and focus on those moments of saliency which triggered significant changes in one's perspective. Second, the college men in this study recounted stories about their own belief histories *in sequence*. Through both interviews and the road map exercise, they described a sequence of thinking from childhood to present, offering the researcher a sense of the progression of one's thinking. And finally, Denzin reminds us that narratives are *produced* by social actors. As such, it is necessary to notice and understand how each production is scripted, edited, performed, received, and replayed throughout all observations. The college men in this study were the executive

producers of their own personal narratives, and the content and delivery choices they made all mattered to their story. This research was not a formal narrative analysis focusing on the structure of storytelling (orientation, complication, resolution, etc), but instead focused on the functional aspects of formulating and telling one's own stories of belief and meaning-making.

I personally transcribed all interviews and group sessions, assigning each participant with a unique and confidential alias so as to protect their identities from outsiders who did not participate in the dialogue sessions. I also kept a journal with field notes with time markers that could be compared to session transcriptions. Since qualitative research is an iterative process, I used coding early and often in field notes and transcriptions to complicate and expand qualitative data. As Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest, I began analysis with an initial list of codes (Appendix E) that changed as data was collected and analyzed, due to the emergent nature of qualitative research. For example, I changed a number of the start codes to make them easier to decipher, and added others which I came to realize would be useful. Two codes that I added later while transcribing were "service" and "college", representing instances where participants discussed motivations and choices in community service or participants' commentary on the college environment as it relates to supporting or inhibiting identity development. Coding began even before data was collected, as some codes emerged from literature while others were derived in vivo (Strauss, 1987) using the emic perspectives, terms, and language of the participants (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). One code that emerged from participants was coded simply as "Δ". This code was called the "game changers," and came to signify those activities or people (role models) who initiate shifts in one's

attitudes, priorities, or beliefs. I inserted analytic notes into field/interview notes and transcriptions as soon after sessions as possible.

Trustworthiness

Enhancing the trustworthiness of a qualitative inquiry is to support the argument that the study's findings are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). There are a number of steps that I took in this research design to enhance the trustworthiness of this study. Four issues of trustworthiness demand more careful scrutiny: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Research findings are credible if they represent a plausible and substantiated conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participants' original data (p.296). To enhance the likelihood of credible conceptual interpretations, I employed the following strategies in this study: maintained field notes from all interviews and dialogue sessions; used member checking during debriefing interviews; and triangulated data across surveys, interviews, dialogue groups, and artifacts collected.

Transferability

Transferability is the degree to which the findings of a research study can apply or transfer beyond the bounds of that specific study. This can be satisfied by providing dense or thick descriptions of the spaces, social actors, activities, and behaviors (Spradley, 1980; Patton, 1990). When these thick descriptions are provided, other

researchers have access to full disclosure of details so that they might apply the findings of the study in other contexts.

Dependability & Confirmability

Dependability is an assessment of the integrated quality of the data collection, data analysis, and the determination of a grounded theory. Confirmability is a measure of how well the inquiry's findings are supported by the data collected. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) Both of these checks can be appropriately determined through one properly managed audit. A peer debriefer or auditor will be asked to review the extent to which the process of the study was applicable to the research undertaken and whether the analytic tools were applied consistently. The same auditor can confirm that all records of taped interviews, dialogue sessions, artifact photos, and transcripts will be maintained as confirmable records of the study.

Researcher-as-Instrument Acknowledgement of Reflexivity

One central consideration for conducting qualitative research is a recognition of the researcher as the primary research instrument (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). My personal biases, experiences, and perspectives will undoubtedly influence what data is observed or collected and also how it is interpreted. While I cannot completely separate myself from those biases and perspectives, it is important to acknowledge first what they are and how I have arrived at this topic. During the entire research process, I must learn to pay "attention…to who is listening as well as who is speaking" (Taylor, et. al, 1995), and to decipher when and how my own voice is used,

and thereby privileged as the author, to speak on behalf of those comments left unspoken by participants.

Reflexivity requires an awareness of my own contributions to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgment of the impossibility of me remaining outside of the subject matter while conducting research. Reflexivity then, urges us "to explore the ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research" (Nightingale and Cromby, 1999). Reflexivity applies to the entire process of research, from conception to collection to analysis to conclusions. The process of my research is largely inductive, requiring that I generate meanings from observations, discussion, and clarification. Despite every effort that will be taken to check, triangulate, and confirm data and its analysis by induction, these meanings are also subject to my own social, historical, cultural, and experiential backgrounds.

During this research study, I will ask participants to construct road maps of their spiritual journeys as well as "this I believe" statements. I would be remiss if I were not also willing to construct these for myself, at least in part, to frame my own reflexivity.

I grew up in a ritually Catholic family in Lancaster, PA. By ritually Catholic, I mean that we all attended church on Sundays and all kids in the family attended CCD (weekly Catholic education classes fondly referred to as "Catholic Children's Dungeon") until Confirmation in eighth grade. A recited blessing was offered over most shared family meals, and holidays were celebrated religiously through church and secularly at home. My mother and her side of the family held onto that Catholic background, while my father grew up Methodist and attended services with the family on high religious

holidays. Religion was viewed in large part as something one does through a church that may also imbue a moral compass or provide comfort in difficult times, but those were only things I was told. As a child and young adolescent, I had yet to experience neither difficult times nor notable occasions which might warrant a moral compass.

My grandmom passed away when I was fourteen years old. I knew she was an amazing person, a self-sacrificing woman, and a committed Methodist. I thought her fight against cancer was unfair, and it struck me deeply – I remember crying uncontrollably over her open casket during the funeral service. I needed her death to somehow make sense. Over the next two years of high school, which included plenty of experimentation and very little church-going, I eventually stumbled into a nondenominational group called Young Life. It was undoubtedly a good social outlet, but in this nondenominational evangelical Christian youth group for only high school students, I also began to pay attention to the messages. I spent the next two years of high school and all of college in Young Life and then a comparable college version called Intervarsity as a student leader.

These were spiritually and developmentally formative moments for me studying biology and Spanish at the University of Delaware. I became a resident assistant working with all freshman students in my third year of college while still very involved in Intervarsity. The multicultural training and social justice issues in Student Affairs piqued my interest, and I began to struggle with what I saw as prescriptive roles for men and women, an exclusion of GLB people in the church, and the exclusivity of Jesus as one true God. In hindsight, this cognitive dissonance was valuable, and I was torn between what I thought were opposing beliefs, forcing me to choose between them. I led bible

studies and men's groups through Intervarsity, focusing on engaging men in their Christian faith, but grew away from the church because of the conflicts I could not reconcile for myself. My granddad passed away eight years after my grandmother. He was a businessman, a school board member, and a Lion's Club member with perfect attendance for 65 years. While they were far from perfect, I learned the most about quietly living one's faith from my grandparents. My grandmom's passing made me hungry to find meaning, and granddad's gave me the confidence to make it my own.

I wanted to live in a more religiously diverse area, and moved to Arizona following graduate school. I was fascinated to work at a University with 53 different Native American tribes, a significant LDS population, a strong Christian presence, and a neighboring town with a vibrant community of new age and spiritual mystics traditions. It was a wide-eyed experience for me, and I found a welcoming group in the Unitarian Universalist church that resonated more with my own developing beliefs. While I still acknowledge my Christian background, I no longer claim it as my one religious faith. If I had to name a camp that encompassed a majority of my beliefs, I would call myself a Spiritual Humanist with a system of beliefs akin to American Transcendentalists like Theodore Parker and Ralph Waldo Emerson. But my life experiences are vastly different from theirs in the early 19th Century, so instead of elaborating on this camp, let me share my "This I Believe" statement. Again, since this is an activity that the college men will do, I think it is important for me to share my statement at this point in my own spiritual journey.

I believe that I am a part of a world that has emerged as a result of a continuous process – one with a beginning and an end, neither of which are in our sight. That world is here not just for me or us, but I am responsible to it and to the processes that continue to change it. Similarly, I know that my own beliefs have changed as a result of my

experiences, my environments, my social heritage and culture. I believe in realities yet undiscovered, and in the hopes of what we are capable of becoming. Yet above these hopes, I believe in a unifying good, a higher self, a greater spirit, a transcendent God. It is in that place where I believe that human significance reaches its fullest potential. It is not necessarily a sacred place that is distinct from secular ones, but one that occupies the same space and time. I have always separated the spiritual from the bodily, but I no longer find value in that distinction.

I believe that everyone is spiritual. Everyone who constructs meaning, seeks purpose, and connects to other people in relationships and communities is undertaking a spiritual process of attributing significance on higher levels. Everyone who tries to align their beliefs with their behaviors is calling themselves to authentic, congruent lives in a spiritual act. I feel most spiritually alive when I am outdoors, hiking and exploring, but my past experiences with faith and worship also lead me to crave the community of a church and its services. I have found the Unitarian Universalist tradition to be one that most accurately captures my own liberal religious system of beliefs. I believe that a spiritual trajectory points simultaneously toward both developing and transcending oneself – toward interdependence and cooperative social well-being as a peak experience. I move in that direction through education, experiences, rituals, and a rejection of inauthentic realities or delusions of self-aggrandizement.

I believe that I can find joy in achievement, but more certainly in living fully, in realizing my potential and creativity, and contributing my fullest self to the greatest possible good. I am convinced that life is meant to be affirmed, shared, and enjoyed. I am intended to elicit the possibilities of life, not flee from them, and to endeavor to expand those possibilities so that others will join me in affirming that which we are only capable of accomplishing together. This I believe.

I know that my liberal humanist orientation shades the way that I view more conservative faith traditions, but I can also connect to those and other strongly-held beliefs because of my own belief history. I had to work harder to understand the systems of meaning from participants in this study who do not identify with any one philosophical or religious tradition. Clearly, I am not a strong personal supporter of orthodoxy in general, but I can also see how it is useful and meaningful for other people. It is that meaning-making for college men – through both orthodox and unorthodox means - that I am most interested in understanding through this study.

I consider myself a feminist researcher-practitioner who specializes in the pro-feminist, male-positive, and queer-affirming study of men & masculinities. I train and work closely with anti-violence groups at the University focusing mostly on preventing men's violence against women. I have come to believe that violence is perpetrated almost exclusively to claim power. Conversely, I believe that honest self-reflection, self-knowledge, and an authentic or healthy sense of self are inhibitors to that violence because they are ultimately empowering to those who discover them. I am currently the Director of Student Services at a selective undergraduate business school. This professional experience offers me significant student interactions, where I encounter both men and women struggling on a daily basis to find meaning and purpose with few opportunities to pause and carefully examine those big questions. I hope that this study will both inform my own practice in student affairs as well as contribute to the larger body of knowledge. But more importantly, my hope is that we might all recognize those questions that matter deeply, that strike us profoundly, and that we often ignore more diligently than we ever care to admit.

Chapter 4 : Presentation of Dialogical Narrative Data

This study investigated intersections between socially-constructed spiritual and masculine identities for college men. Embedded in this complex investigation are a number of other types of questions. How does a male student internalize his search for purpose and align that search with his beliefs about how he is becoming an adult man? How does he see himself in relation to other men, to women, to institutions through which he creates meaning? And how does he show that he cares about you, about his causes, or even about himself or his own dignity? The literature presented earlier suggests that spiritual development is much more broad than merely describing one's religious affiliation, and gender identity much more involved than one's physiobiological parts. The two separate bodies of literature have the potential for convergence across three dimensions – how men make meaning internally, how they connect with other people in relationships, and how they connect with larger communities and commitments. All men feel varying degrees of psychological conflict as they compare themselves to the culturally or socially hegemonic archetypes for masculinity. This socially-imposed norm has very little to do with who we actually are and how we *identify* as men, though for some men, it can have a powerful impact on how we *express* ourselves as men. Similarly, spiritual role models and archetypes often play critical roles in one's spiritual development, so it is necessary that we consider how these role models – real or conjoint – play active roles in developing one's various identities.

This chapter presenting data and the next discussing findings will both highlight the multiple dimensions of both spiritual and masculine identity construction addressed in this study. One of the most key findings is that it is imprudent and contrived for us as

researchers to presume that we can isolate discrete pieces of one's identity and study them in isolation without considering their context – within the individual and socially. I fall victim to this very contrivance at times in this study as I present data in this chapter that attempts to describe discrete measures of masculine and spiritual identities for participants. But these measures, stories, and data points are intended to all be pieces in constructing a more coherent and contextualized understanding of identity development in college.

Selection and First Contacts with Participants

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, I began this study with a group of seven college men selected from 30 nominations by other students, faculty, and campus ministers. The group of seven was extremely diverse in that they all had different religious backgrounds and present affiliations. Prior to every participant's pre-interview, the seven college men completed a two-page survey pertaining to demographics, spiritual or faith identification, and gender role conflict. Composite factors (four each for spirituality and masculinity) from each of these surveys are listed below in the participant profiles. The spiritual factors, mostly derived from UCLA's Spirituality in Higher Education study, include Spiritual Quest (actively searching for meaning and self-awareness), Spiritual Commitment (trusting in a higher power or one's religious faith), Ethic of Care (sense of caring for others or the world around you), and Citizenship (committing to charitable causes or community involvement). The masculine factors are adapted from Jim O'Neil's Gender Role Conflict Scale, which measures the amount of psychological conflict one experiences as a result of comparing oneself to traditional

masculine social role norms.   Factors include Restrictive Emotionality; Restrictive Affectionate Behavior between Men; Success, Power & Competition; and Conflict between Work, School, Leisure, and Family. These factors will be used below to organize both interview and narrative data.

During their pre-interview, I had a chance to get to know each of the young men better. I will introduce you to each participant shortly, which will include my first reactions and observations upon meeting them. Of course, I used an interview protocol as a general guideline, but mostly tried to engage participants in an extended discussion to discover which topics he would find to be more interesting throughout our dialogues. After all pre-interviews were completed, we gathered for four consecutive weeks of interfaith dialogue with all participants. While structured with prompting questions and activities to lead into discussion, each one of these group dialogues could have gone on for hours once the men started talking.

Dialogue Session #1: Where Am I From?

The first group dialogue was mostly spent discussing our expectations of one another, then building and sharing our spiritual journey maps. We gathered in a small meeting room just large enough for us, with eight rolling chairs around a rectangular table. Each individual was given a large piece of paper to draw the general story of their lives, including life milestones, turning points, mountain peaks and darker valleys, significant people or places, etc. They were all given 20 minutes to draw their maps, during which time I withheld the orange-colored tools. Toward the end of this time,

when it looked like most were nearly finished, I returned all of the orange tools to the

table and asked everyone to add in those people, places, or times which were important to

their becoming a *man*. One participant had noticed the missing orange pens halfway into

his drawing time, but I did not acknowledge his discovery right away. When I emptied

the bag of orange markers and crayons onto the table and explained the second part of the

activity, there was laughter and a collective "Oh…" exclamation from the group.

Through this twist, I wanted to demonstrate that they can expect interesting twists and

unexpected turns during our discussions together. Each young man took at least ten

minutes to describe their map, after which others asked questions about some of the

notable elements of the drawings. This exercise was incredibly valuable to quickly move

the depth of our conversations, disclosure, and curiosity about one another into very

personal spaces. This first dialogue group went well overtime, for two and a half hours.

Dialogue Session #2: Masculine Messages

The content of the second dialogue group emerged from responses during pre-

interviews when everyone had a chance to describe the messages they received about

what it means to be a man when they were young. I compiled the list of these messages

that they shared with me during pre-interviews and showed them to the group as our

starting point for discussion. The group elaborated on some of the items, and added

others. I then showed them another list of the same messages grouped into what David &

Brannon (1976) consider to be the four injunctions of masculinity.

This list of the masculine messages the college men shared with me, grouped into David

& Brannon's four injunctions was as follows:

1. Be the Big Wheel (the Provider, seeking status & success)
Provide for the family (money, food, security)
Need to be useful and productive
Financial Independence
Be in my own shoes
Self-assured and assertive
Work hard
(-) Balance gender roles in home with partner/spouse
Men's work is more commonly outside (mow lawn, work on car, etc). (-) Cooking is more
flexible role.

2. No Sissy Stuff (Anti-femininity & homophobia, avoidance of dependence, warmth, and
empathy)
Emotional stability
(-) Be comfortable and secure with expressing emotional feelings
Emotions can be expressed on occasion, but under control
Man hugs are okay, but scripted – half-hug, double thump on back
(-) Holding hands & hugging can be considered male bonding (in India vs. US)
 "Be there" for your friends, and *show* them loyalty without having to *talk* about it

3. Be the Sturdy Oak (Tough, stoic, & self-reliant)
Head of household, others (mother) may defer judgment to father
Mental & Physical Toughness
Be a solid foundation
Connectedness to the Outdoors
Responsibility to others, accountable for your words
Be a loving father and partner
Maintain strong image in public and with other men, (-) more vulnerable with women

4. Give 'Em Hell (Aggressive, violent, & daring)
Aggressive & Competitive
Hard, cut body
(-) Admit when you are wrong and open self to feedback (in private)
Watch and play sports, be competitive
Toughen up and stay inside the 'man box'

NOTE: (-) indicates an acknowledgement from participants that this comment presents a
counterstory to the traditional masculine norms, based on the four injunctions in this activity.

The young men mostly agreed that these injunctions are still generally accurate in their description of forces that keep men "inside the box." One participant pointed out that he did not see much in these injunctions about "expressing more intimate emotions and the acceptability of expressing emotions other than anger." We spent most of this session discussing these injunctions, how they reinforce the edges of the gender box for men, and how they learned these messages as young people. I also asked the men to identify who was responsible for these messages, and list them in order based on importance for them personally. The group collectively built this list (with only slight variations across participants) in order from most important to least important sources of masculine messaging: Father/Mother, Friends, Extended family, Role Models, College, TV/Media, K-12 Schools, Religious Leaders. This conversation jumped around quite a bit, but stayed on track with the list of (anonymous) masculine messages they provided, and others we wrote on the board during our conversation.

Dialogue Groups #3 & 4: This I Believe

Each participant prepared a personal credo statement (under 150 words, see Appendix E for full description of this activity) prior to this third dialogue group. The credo statements are included below in the narrative profiles of each participant. For the third dialogue group, however, I broke down each of these credo statements into sentences and gave them back to each guy. They each placed them on centricity maps to identify where they thought that sentence most appropriately applied (inner self, friends/family, communities, or beyond). This was a fascinating exercise which proved

to be extremely helpful to understand deeply-held beliefs and motivating values held by the young men in their own voice.

The credos became a very good first step into a more extensive This I Believe statement. Participants prepared This I Believe statements for our final dialogue group. The first three sessions were all in the same small meeting room, but for this final session, I reserved the kitchen and dining room of the International Center for us to share a meal. I cooked two lasagnas (one with meat and one kosher vegetarian Matzoh lasagna since it was Passover), and everyone else brought side dishes or desserts that meant something to them, knowing that they would have to tell the stories of this food. Most of the guys shared food stories about their families, and others shared stories about their travels or working in the food industry. Each of us then shared our This I Believe statements (see Appendix F for description) that we prepared for this final session. This much more homey environment offered a perfect setting for discussing these personal statements around a dinner table. By this point, the guys seemed quite comfortable with one another, and asked probing and clarifying questions of one another.

Debriefing & Observations

I then followed up with individual debriefing interviews for everyone. These final interviews were loosely structured, but did give me a chance to collect feedback on participants' perceptions of their own survey composite factors. You will notice on the data profiles below, participants' scores are listed and highlighted as numbers. The group averages are indicated with an 'x' on each factor scale. And if a participant felt like he

wanted to adjust his score because he felt the numerical score was inaccurate, this adjustment is listed as an "o" on the scale. This offered a very good opportunity to triangulate quantitative survey data points, and continue the dialogue with participants using their own responses as a chance for reflection and elaboration as needed. For some of the participants, I also joined them to experience a setting that they considered to be spiritual, which is described later for those who could identify such a place. This overall format offered me a considerable average of ten valuable contact hours per participant over the course of six weeks. All interactions were audio recorded, transcribed, then coded and compiled into master coding spreadsheets.

Introducing Participants

I will introduce the seven participants in much more detail throughout this chapter. Since this study is a dialogical narrative study, the focus is on both the young men's individual stories around masculine and spiritual identities, but also on the themes that stretch across their stories and the ways in which the dialogue setting reinforces and perhaps complicates those themes. Participants' narratives are assembled from survey data, interviews, reflective writings, dialogue groups, artifact collection, and observations. These multiple points of data collection allow for substantial triangulation or checking of narrative stories. Theories that emerge from data are driven by commonalities and discrepancies across the participants' narratives and will be discussed in more detail in the findings/conclusion.

Table 3: Summary Description of Study Participants

Name	Major	Age	Semesters Completed	Manhood Means	Spiritual/Religious Affiliation	Current Views	What is Ultimate?
Aaron	English (Poetry)	22	7	Self-assured & engaged in relationships	Multispiritual practitioner / devotee of universe	Conflicted, Secure, Doubting, Seeking	Being, Eternal Present, Spirit or life force, awareness
Aman	Commerce, Global Development	19	6	Emotional solidness, provider of security	Sikh	Secure, Seeking	Essence, current of Universe, laws of nature
Cymande	Foreign Affairs , Middle Eastern Studies	22	7	Work hard, be moral (Christian)	Evangelical Christian	Secure	God
Fred	Foreign Affairs, Leadership	21	7	Security, providing for family	Jewish(reform)	Conflicted, Doubting, Seeking	Happenstance, fate, more relationships
Jeff	Biology, BA/MT Science Ed	21	5	Loving, athletic, competitive	Presbyterian	Doubting, Seeking	God & His goodness
Prasham	Mechanical Engineering, Aerospace	19	3	Decisive, in control, expressive	Hindu	Secure	higher powers, all emanating from Ohm (cosmic vibration)
Salim	Religious Studies, Philosophy	22	5	Responsibility, accountable, provider	Muslim - Shi'a	Secure	God

To begin telling participants' stories, table 3 presents summary descriptions of each of the seven college men. Survey responses provided the more demographic data here, including academic major, age, semesters completed, and spiritual/religious affiliation. The survey also asked participants to identify their current views about spiritual/religious matters, offering them a chance to choose multiple options from secure to conflicted, seeking, doubting, or not interested. None of the young men identified that they were not interested in these matters, which I realize may be a product of a nominated/selected convenience sampling bias. During their pre-interviews, I asked participants to identify what manhood and masculinity mean to them. The responses listed in table 3 are compiled from either of the interviews or comments during the

second dialogue group. And during their debriefing interviews, I asked each young man to identify what they considering to be Ultimate – a higher power, being, idea, belief, or otherwise intangible force. Those Ultimates are also listed in the table above so that we can all start to get to know the study participants a bit better. The profiles below also include these Ultimates as well as how each participant seeks access (through prayer, petition, thoughts, interactions, meditation, etc.) to that Ultimate.

Participant profiles below also include similar demographic details and current views, but also a personalized snapshot of composite factors from survey responses pertaining to spiritual and masculine identity. Each participant is introduced with my general impressions over the six weeks of our contact during this study and quotes from the young men themselves which capture those general impressions. All participants are referred to here by their pseudonyms, all of which were chosen for them because they translate into 'peace' in the language pertaining to either their religious or ethnic background. Finally, the profiles below include both the personal credos (150-words or less, Appendix E) and This I Believe short essays (1-2 pages, Appendix F) from each participant. Again, credos were written two weeks prior as a starting point for the more involved This I Believe statements, all of which were shared with the group in dialogue sessions.

An adventurously curious and deeply introspective student, though frequently also a distracted poet

Aaron considers himself a multispiritual practitioner, which I would extend to also include religio-curious. A modest 22-year old white student with glasses and an untrimmed brown beard that bespeak his casual approach to life, he frequently references Buddhist, Sikh, and Native American religious rituals or practices in addition to his own youth history of growing up in a Catholic family. He is a budding cultural anthropologist with an insatiable desire to learn and participate in new cultural experiences. Aaron organized an approximation of an American Indian vision quest with some friends just to experience this rite of passage, complete with drug- and heat-induced hallucinations, and he calls his study abroad experience a pilgrimage to Peru as an escape. Aaron has recently taken a class with Edie Turner, falling in love with the ideas of communitas and passage. He is deeply committed to his girlfriend of 15 months, majors in English poetry as both an academic interest and catharsis, and is moving to New Mexico to Teach for America on a Navajo reservation following graduation.

Aaron says "I have beliefs about a lot of things, but they're in some ways fluid, or at least fluid over time. By that I mean that they change, and I imagine they will continue to change. And maybe I see them more as tools for certain things… I think that is one useful tool of a belief is that it allows you to engage the world in a specific way that you might not otherwise have been able to." This functional relativism extends across Aaron's spiritual beliefs as well as his beliefs about masculinity and other identities, suggesting that "I don't really like identities at all. They're all, like, constructed, and not

true." Aaron identifies his relationships with girlfriends and a feminist theory class, both

in college, as turning points in his thinking about gender and himself as a man.

Data collected from participant's pre-survey:
Current views on spiritual/religious beliefs: Conflicted/Secure/Doubting/Seeking, raised Catholic, currently multispiritual practitioner/devotee of universe

Spirituality in College Factors (derived from HERI, 2004)
Spiritual Quest Composite: Essential-------3.6---------x-----VI----------------------SI-----------------------NI
Spiritual Commitment: Essential----------------------3VI------x---------------SI-----------------------NI
Ethic of Care: Essential------3.7------------x--VI----------------------SI-----------------------NI
Citizenship Composite: Essential----------------------VI-------x---2.5---------SI-----------------------NI
 (Essential=4   VI=Very Important=3   SI=Somewhat Important=2   NI=Not Important=1)
            Highlighted number indicates participant's score, 'x' indicates group mean,
              'o' indicates participant's adjusted score during debriefing interview.

Gender Role Conflict Factors (O'Neil, 1986)
Restrictive Emotionality: SA------------------A-----------3.6-------------D---x--------------------SD
Need for Success & Achievement: SA------------------A-----------x---------------D---2.3-----------------SD
Restrictive Affection Behavior btw Men: SA------------------A--------------------2.8----D---x--------------------SD
Conflict btw Work, School, & Family   SA------------------A----------3.6-------x-------D-----------------------SD
  (SA=Strongly Agree=6, Mostly A=5, Somewhat A=4, Somewhat Disagree=3, Mostly D=2, Strongly D=1)

Aaron - Personal Credo:
1: Take things lightly
2: Try to describe the ineffable
3: Try to understand the incomprehensible
4: But lightly
5: The truth is probably worth pursuing
6: And people are probably worth loving
7: Pay attention.

What is Ultimate for you & how do you seek access to it?

Ultimate = Higher Power, Cosmos, Environment, Being, Eternal Present, Spirit or life force, awareness (nondual)

Seeks access through: paying attention, *Granted* access through Grace.

Aaron – "This I Believe" Statement:

One time in high school, I don't know why, but I think I heard it somewhere, I thought it would be important for me to write a credo. So I did it, I was thinking and reading a lot at the time, and I wrote down some very short sentences that were most important for me. I feel like they offered some balance to the ways I was at the time. Maybe they're not really universal statements, but maybe they were some wisdom for myself.

Take things lightly.
Try to describe the ineffable.
Try to understand the incomprehensible,
But lightly.
The truth is probably worth pursuing,
And people are probably worth loving.
Pay attention.

My poetry teacher told me once that one of the things he thought was most important in writing a poem, in response to people writing some poems that were criticizing someone in society, he said one of the things that was really important to poetry is something he called tenderness. To me, that seemed like a sort of empathy. So, even if you're writing about somebody who is doing awful stuff, you have to somehow try to imagine what's going on with them, or else otherwise the poem will be completely flat. So that notion stuck with me, not just in poetry, but trying to have a certain, like, tenderness in my worldview so that it would never be at the cost of caring about people. It is making sure that you are not putting up walls between you and them that don't need to be there. That's probably the most important one, really.

CWE: 'And Lightly' is something that you expressed a couple of times…

Aaron: Yeah, sometimes I'm very serious. And it seems like the real trick a lot of time is just knowing or being able to recognize when you get into negative patterns, and not being so attached to them that you can't readjust. So maybe there's also a certain humility attached to that also. If you're open to a slightly new path or direction than the one where you're going, then things don't need to get so oppositional.

Participant Profile: Aman

A creative, compassionate, and committed American Sikh student interested in learning about other faiths

Aman undoubtedly stands out in a crowd, not just for his keen intellect and quick sense of dry humor, but for the dastaar (Sikh turban) he always wears on his head. This tall 19-year-old white young man walked into my office for the first time, and my first thought was that he undoubtedly must have interesting stories of cultural assimilation. Aman grew up in an ashram (Sikh community) two hours from the campus with 20-25 other American Sikh families. His grandparents and parents knew the founder of American Sikhism, Yogi Bhajan, quite well as he was their guru or teacher beginning in 1969. Aman attended a Sikh preschool, then an elite private school for gifted children from first through fifth grades. He moved to India to attend a boarding school through middle and high school in one of the holiest cities for Sikhism. Aman described this time as an incredible opportunity that helped him to really understand his religious and spiritual beliefs and passion, but he often lacked challenge to those beliefs, which he has enjoyed while in college. Aman is studying Commerce and Global Development.

Growing up in a small community, and in a different country by himself, Aman has grown accustomed to looking and feeling different. He believes in living life with courage, compassion, and grace – three words posted on the wall above the desk in his room. Aman is a 19-year-old Sophomore who identifies himself as both secure and seeking in his views on religious/spiritual matters. Some of this reticence around religion emerges from his experiences being so close to the heart of Sikhism, and the political controversy and recent loss of trust in the Unto Infinity Board (corporate board overseeing Sikh nonprofit enterprises, embroiled in lawsuits for impropriety in recent

years). Since being in college, Aman has taken to what he calls a Self-defining Spirituality. I knew I would enjoy spending time with Aman when I first met him and he said "That was an interested survey. I found some of it to be challenging, and the spiritual and religious distinction was more difficult for me in the survey. It makes me wonder how this interview will go." He speaks his mind and knows himself more than most. When thinking about masculinity, Aman often referenced this idea of being SOLID in interviews and dialogues. By this he means that he sees roles of men as being secure, confident, and unwavering in one's beliefs, convictions, commitments, and financial or even emotional stability. At the conclusion of his pre-interview, Aman summarized his enthusiasm for engaging in this dialogue group:

"You know, I really enjoy talking about this stuff. And I think going into college initially prepared me really well for this kind of thing. I obviously look different [points to turban and uncut beard]. I've got to deal with religion and spirituality much more in my day-to-day interactions with people. So I feel like I was bombarded with a lot of questions in the beginning of college that I didn't have answers to. So I feel like I had to really personalize and create a cognitive understanding for myself that I could then communicate to people. I do think that that kind of interaction can have positive impact. I've had to define for myself what exactly I do believe. I feel like my experience, not being a part of the Punjabi culture, and of course being a white man, is very different from other people. I'm only coming from the religious side, without the cultural pieces."

Data collected from participant's pre-survey:

Current views on spiritual/religious beliefs: Secure/Seeking, Sikh

Spirituality in College Factors (derived from HERI, 2004)

Spiritual Quest Composite: Essential-----------------3.2x---VI-----------------------SI-----------------------NI

Spiritual Commitment: Essential------------3.5----------VI------x----------------SI-----------------------NI

Ethic of Care: Essential4--------------x---------VI---------------------------SI---------------------NI

Citizenship Composite: Essential------------o-----3.2----VI-------x--------------SI----------------------NI

 (Essential=4   VI=Very Important=3   SI=Somewhat Important=2   NI=Not Important=1)

Highlighted number indicates participant's score, 'x' indicates group mean,

'o' indicates participant's adjusted score during debriefing interview.

Gender Role Conflict Factors (O'Neil, 1986)

Restrictive Emotionality: SA------------------A----------------3.2------- D---x--------------------SD

Need for Success & Achievement: SA------------------A-----------x-3.4---------- D-----------------------SD

Restrictive Affection Behavior btw Men: SA------------------A----------------------------D---x---2.2-------------SD

Conflict btw Work, School, & Family   SA------------------A------------3.4-----x----- D-----------------------SD

 (SA=Strongly Agree=6, Mostly A=5, Somewhat A=4, Somewhat Disagree=3, Mostly D=2, Strongly D=1)

Aman - Personal Credo:

1: I believe that there is a core essence that pervades through all human beings.

2: This essence is the purest form of the self.

3: The experience of this essence brings peace, content, and happiness.

4: All humans have an equal ability to experience this essence, no matter what religious beliefs or practices they subscribe to.

5: The spiritual experiences that religious rites and rituals induce are experiences of this essence.

6: It [the essence] has many names. Some call it god.

7: It is fundamentally a universal current that flows through all creation.

What is Ultimate for you & how do you seek access to it?

Ultimate = Essence, current of Universe, laws of nature

Seeks access through: removing personality and experiencing essence of existence, by just being

Aman – "This I Believe" Statement:

I believe that we are here on earth to have an experience. We feel love, hate, fear, anger, joy and sorrow. Through it all, we are tried and tested. It is all part of the experience. It is all part of learning what it means to be, to breathe, to exist.

I believe in living life with courage, compassion, and grace.

Courage forces us to stand for righteousness, to be accountable for our actions, and to lead in the face of fear, hopelessness, and defeat.

Compassion means removing the self from the equation. It is sacrifice, forgiveness, understanding, and acceptance. Compassion unlocks the door to happiness.

Grace is often forgotten. It is dignity, regality, nobility, neutrality, tranquility, and balance. It is holding oneself to a set of standards. It separates kings from beggars.

It is important to recognize the power of projection. We are exactly the person we are to ourselves. If we believe in our success, we have already succeeded. Battles are won and lost before anyone steps onto the battlefield. Our personal battles are no different. Therefore, it is immeasurably important to set our personal projection of who we are and then live by that projection.

Participant Profile: Cymande

A fundamentalist, non-denominational evangelical Christian student who resists 'identity compartments'

Everyone in this study had the opportunity to choose their own pseudonym, but only Cymande took advantage of this offer. Cymande is a British rasta funk band with a Calypso name that means Dove, symbolizing peace. This obscure reference characterizes Cymande well, as he often surprised me with interesting facts or interests. Cymande is a 22-year-old Chinese Christian student in his final semester at the time of this study, graduating with a degree in Foreign Affairs and Middle Eastern Studies. He committed himself to the Christian faith in second grade, and his father is clearly a religious role model as he is currently studying in seminary. Cymande had some challenging religious community experiences, with churches and schools that were not entirely welcoming or supportive places. He began college at Virginia Tech, and recalls vividly the shootings in 2007 as a significant moment in his life:

"I'm actually a transfer student. At VT, that's where I found again that strong bond of spiritual faith with people helping each other out. My roommate and I would go to church – you know, not *every* Sunday, but every two Sundays. There we were surrounded by people – faithful people and stuff. Then there was the shooting at VT, [pauses] which was weird because I think for some reason I should have questioned my faith, but I don't remember ever doing that when I was in the moment… I was two stories above the shooting. It was in my building, then the dude ran to the engineering building. I was sleeping when it happened. But yeah, it's still kindof eerie to me. I think the shooting was an important moment for me too, because I never really dealt with death of people I knew. I mean, I wasn't particularly close with him or good friends with people who died, but to see people suddenly disappear who you were used to seeing every day – it changes you and how you view other people… I kinda view manliness as part of dealing with hardship as well. There were these certain ways that you interact with adversity – you know, that idea that men don't cry – and I realized that either I'm not a man or I'm a walking contradiction. So that made me think that maybe manliness is not exactly what I thought it was constructed to be throughout my life."

When Cymande transferred after his first year at VT, he says that he "spiritually dampened," became further in doubt, and just separated himself from religious practice. He stopped reading the Bible, praying, talking to people about his faith, and seemed to stagnate in his beliefs. Cymande has experienced quite a bit of death in the last few years. He also gave examples of two close friends who passed away very unexpectedly. Following these tragic events, he said "I wouldn't say that my spirituality was *gone*, but I probably did suppress it in a deep, dark corner of my mind, never really wanting to discuss or talk about it. And then coming into fourth year, I met this good spiritual group that helped me to foster that growth again. And, you know, it's starting to grow relatively." I appreciated Cymande's courage to disclose such tragic events in our very first dialogue group, and he was entirely candid about how these events all led him to question and disengage from his faith, only to return once he found a more supportive community. As a direct result of these events in his life, Cymande places tremendous value on his Friends, to the extent that he capitalizes Friends to differentiate them from

casual buddies to whom you might not feel particularly connected. He is expressive, emotive, and committed now in his faith.

Cymande struggled to accept social identities around gender as organizing and motivating aspects of one's life, especially when they are restrictive. As one of the oldest students in the group, who has clearly endured some of the more challenging life experiences, Cymande seems to have developed a rather antagonistic relationship with those things (ideas, people, or relationships) which he considers to be artifice, which in this case includes some of the ways in which society constructs and prescribes social identity roles including gendered ones (see also #7 below in Cymande's Personal Credo):

"I reject the idea that being tough, building weights, and being aggressive are part of my experience. Socially, they are imposed on me just because I'm male, but I reject that. So I guess the way I filter things out is by the ones which try to define who I want to be... I simply decide by [pauses] juxtaposing it with the question 'can a woman be like that?' And if the answer is 'yes,' which is always true, then it has nothing to do with being a man or a woman. So I guess I reject them all in terms of masculinity in general. *[This response started very slowly, and once Cymande stumbled into this response of rejecting gender identity, he began to speed up and seemingly gain confidence in this conviction.]* I simply reject it. I don't accept that a man has to be a breadwinner. The head of a household? I don't agree with that either. I guess what I'm trying to get at is that I don't agree with any division that separates man or woman, except for obviously the biological difference. But I do derive therefore that, aside from that biological difference, that women are weaker than men, absolutely not, that's just not true. So to answer your question, I don't categorize those messages because they all fit into the same box for me, and I reject them all if they are gendered."

Data collected from participant's pre-survey:

Current views on spiritual/religious beliefs: Secure, Evangelical Christian

Spirituality in College Factors (derived from HERI, 2004)

Spiritual Quest Composite: Essential-----------<mark>3.4</mark>----x----VI-----------------------SI------------------------NI

Spiritual Commitment: Essential------------------------VI-----<mark>2.8</mark>x--------------SI------------------------NI

Ethic of Care: Essential------------------x-----VI----o----<mark>2.7</mark>-----------SI------------------------NI

Citizenship Composite: Essential------------------------VI---------x--<mark>2.5</mark>--------SI-------- --------------NI

 (Essential=4   VI=Very Important=3   SI=Somewhat Important=2   NI=Not Important=1)

               Highlighted number indicates participant's score, 'x' indicates group mean,

                 'o' indicates participant's adjusted score during debriefing interview.

Gender Role Conflict Factors (O'Neil, 1986)

Restrictive Emotionality: SA------------------A----------------------------D---x----------<mark>1.4</mark>------SD

Need for Success & Achievement: SA------------------A------------x-<mark>3.4</mark>------------D------------------------SD

Restrictive Affection Behavior btw Men:SA------------------A----------------------------D---x-<mark>2.4</mark>---------------SD

Conflict btw Work, School, & Family   SA------------------A-----<mark>3.8</mark>------------x-------D------------------------SD

 (SA=Strongly Agree=6, Mostly A=5, Somewhat A=4, Somewhat Disagree=3, Mostly D=2, Strongly D=1)

Cymande – Personal Credo:

1: I believe in personal salvation in Jesus Christ.

2: Faith is what keeps me going through life and informs how I should act in the world.

3: I believe that Fri...

4: It is important to ...

5: Likewise, it is im... environment around ...

6: There is no value ... space.

7: In terms of identi... religion, culture, ge... define others by tho...

8: These identities ... define who I am.

9: Therefore, I dedi...

What is Ultimate for you & how do you seek access to it?

Ultimate = God

Seeks access through: Prayer, being alive and being curious, living life and taking in the moments, God will come to you – you can't induce it.

Cymande – "This I Believe" Statement:

I believe in personal salvation in Jesus Christ. Faith is what keeps me going through life and informs how I should act in the world. I believe that Friendship is the most important relationship in life. It is important to cultivate and maintain the friendships around you.

Likewise, it is imperative to create and maintain a positive, open environment around you as well. There is no value in bringing people down or creating a negative space. Therefore as friends, we must work together in order to create a positive safe space around us. In terms of identity, I refuse to be defined or limited by race, religion, culture, gender or any other social construct. These identities may inform people what am I, but they will not define who I am.

Participant Profile: Fred

A hyper-involved, exceptionally gregarious, culturally Jewish student with enduring beliefs in relationships, people, stories, and justice.

Fred began both his personal credo and This I Believe statements with "I believe in people, stories, and relationships." Fred loves connecting with and knowing about people, and he hates what he considers to be pretense. When asked how his best friends would describe him, Fred says:

"I hope they would say that Fred is great at keeping in touch. I put a lot more into my friendships in terms of quantity, and I'm really impressed when I know someone puts that in from the other side. I don't think I have only one best friend, but one of my best friends from home, I talk to probably two or three times a day. It's a guy. I talk to my Mom every day too. It's really important to me…but I am really a caring guy. I know when my friends are going through stuff, and I recognize that and I make it a priority in my life. And I think they all know that. And I remember what's important to remember, not just someone's birthday, but other types of things. I don't know, I think it's probably a problem of mine, but I put other people's happiness and concern above my own a lot of the time and I don't think that's going to change anytime soon."

Fred is a 21-year-old reformed/progressive Jewish white student from a relatively privileged background, studying Foreign Affairs with a minor in Leadership. A notably persistent source of conflict for Fred is his belief that "I equate masculinity with security, with providing, with finances. It's just like being in my own shoes." Though Fred spoke frequently about this admittedly self-imposed masculine expectation of establishing one's

financial independence, he also presented an aversion to status-seeking behaviors like social climbing and resume padding.

Fred identifies his current interest in spirituality/religion as conflicted, doubting, and seeking. Fred admits that active pursuit of his religious or spiritual commitment is not a priority at this point in his life, in this last semester before he graduates from college. He chooses instead to put his faith in relationships with family and friends as a deliberate investment in that which he clearly attributes as most meaningful to him. Fascinatingly, Fred presents the highest scores in the group on three of four measures of Spirituality in College, and the lowest score for commitment to spiritual/religious practices. He considers spirituality to be linked with elevated emotional states, and he prides himself on being expressive and emotionally available to his friends and family. Fred graciously served as a co-facilitator for the dialogues. He helped to keep the discussion from stagnating, but not he was not always privy to the content beforehand.

Data collected from participant's pre-survey:
Current views on spiritual/religious beliefs: Conflicted/Doubting/Seeking, Jewish

Spirituality in College Factors (derived from HERI, 2004)
Spiritual Quest Composite: Essential-------3.6---------x---VI----------------------SI-------- ----------------NI
Spiritual Commitment: Essential-----------------------VI------x----------------SI----1.8------------------NI
Ethic of Care: Essential4-------------------x---VI----------------------SI-----------------------NI
Citizenship Composite: Essential------3.7---------------VI---------x--------------SI-----------------------NI
 (Essential=4   VI=Very Important=3   SI=Somewhat Important=2   NI=Not Important=1)
         Highlighted number indicates participant's score, 'x' indicates group mean,
          'o' indicates participant's adjusted score during debriefing interview.

Gender Role Conflict Factors (O'Neil, 1986)
Restrictive Emotionality: SA---------------------A-----------------------D---x--2.2---------------SD
Need for Success & Achievement: SA-------------4.6-----A------------x---------D-------------------------SD
Restrictive Affection Behavior btw Men: SA---------------------A-----------------------D---x-----2.0-------------SD
Conflict btw Work, School, & Family   SA---------4.8----------A-----------------x-----D-------------------------SD
  (SA=Strongly Agree=6, Mostly A=5, Somewhat A=4, Somewhat Disagree=3, Mostly D=2, Strongly D=1)

Fred – Personal Credo

1: I believe in people, stories, and relationships.
2: We are nothing without our past that guides our present and leads to our future.
3: Our species cannot effectively function alone.
4: We cannot raise ourselves to maturity.
5: Life is most simply a question of priorities as to how much value one places upon seeking happiness as well as what that even means.
6: I believe there is a light at the end of everyone's tunnel, though I oftentimes feel dissuaded.
7: I nevertheless believe in optimism, in the ability to grow, love, and cherish one another.
8: I believe in déjà vu, even if I have no idea how to really explain it.
9: And I believe in balance, moderation, and discipline above all other endeavors, never mind if I am not currently living up to my own beliefs.

> What is Ultimate for you & how do you seek access to it?
>
> Ultimate = Happenstance, fate, more relationships
>
> Seeks access through: "Solace. Yeah, I don't identify with this, that's why I said solace. Cause look, I have zero things [credo excerpts] in the outside circle. Yeah, people seeking solace go to church. They meditate. I don't do these things."

Fred – "This I Believe" Statement:

I believe in people, stories, and relationships. I believe in balance, moderation, and discipline above all other endeavors, never mind if I am not currently living up to my own beliefs.

I have long struggled with the idea of tackling the issues that arise in my own life. After all, I'm not starving in rural Africa. I didn't go grow up in a broken home. My parents told me that I could apply to every college that intrigued me.

I have reached an age where I need to start seriously thinking about – and acting upon – a potential career path. I keep saying to myself that I will go into public service of some kind *eventually*. The President (who I obviously voted for) tells me that is precisely what I ought to do.

But I am a product of my background. My perspective and morals emanate from a supportive family dynamic and numerous opportunities to participate in travel and study abroad experiences. I desire similar privileges for my children.

I am a grounded person – whatever that means. I will not get married and start a family until I have achieved substantial financial security – at least I hope not. I do not spend the money I have earned from previous summer employment frivolously. But I don't know what it means to pay a mortgage and health insurance and so much more.

Nevertheless, I'm excited as all hell for my future. I have come to terms with the fact that I will never tell my own rags to riches story to the likes of my eastern European refugee parents and grandparents. But I have a greater chance than any before me to control my own destiny and do such awesome and profound things with my life.

There are more Americans and citizens of the world graduating from universities and professional schools than ever before. This of course breeds competition, but far more importantly, it is a beautiful phenomenon. We are getting smarter! Global problems are becoming more and more serious, but the human race is ready to tackle them with our newfound knowledge.

Whether or not this is my one chance on this Earth, I am trying to seize the damn thing and not look back.

This, I believe.

Participant Profile: Jeff

A mainstream white male Presbyterian with a pragmatic approach to spirituality.

Jeff is a 21-year old third-year student studying biology education. He is the President of Protestant campus ministry on campus, has been involved in youth groups at church for most of his life, goes on religious missions trips and service trips, and he identifies his views on religious/spiritual matters as "doubting or seeking." Jeff is a socially adept guy who is frequently governed by both optimism and pragmatism. He "tries to keep a positive attitude about things" and sees his faith and spirituality as directly related to his works or actions.

"I'd say that intellectual growth and thinking about things and praying about things and talking to others about things is important to develop your beliefs, but I do think that more of the growth aspect comes from applying them. So maybe there's a progression of that growth, where you start with an intellectual stimulation, move to an intellectual commitment, then to a relational interaction (either with God or others, or both), followed by commitment to action, which is the point where you grow."

Jeff is involved in a social fraternity on campus, and attributes most of his learning about masculinity to sports, coaches, youth ministers, and older male role models. I was surprised in our first meeting to hear Jeff talk about not feeling like he was taught to "stay inside the man box," and his male role models (in church and his father)

seemed to have impressed upon him that men are expected to be loving and be able to

express themselves. Then Jeff reported learning through sports that men are expected to

be athletic and competitive, and his involvement in an all-male fraternity has taught him

to compartmentalize his close friends and all others to

whom he may have to put up a front:

"And with some of my fraternity brothers who have become my close friends, it becomes easier to treat them as friends instead of, you know, *other men.* So I would say that getting to know someone more breaks down the norms that aren't really conducive to friendship, whereas in more acquaintance relationships you see another person – another man – you have that [snaps fingers to indicate a quick change] competitiveness and that strength to uphold and maintain."

Data collected from participant's pre-survey:
Current views on spiritual/religious beliefs: Doubting/Seeking, Presbyterian

Spirituality in College Factors (derived from HERI, 2004)
Spiritual Quest Composite: Essential------------------x----oVI----2.8---------------SI-----------------------NI
Spiritual Commitment: Essential----------------------3VI-----------------------SI-----------------------NI
Ethic of Care: Essential-------------o---x-----3VI-----------------------SI----------------------NI
Citizenship Composite: Essential----------------------VI--------x-----2.5---------oSI----------------------NI
 (Essential=4   VI=Very Important=3   SI=Somewhat Important=2   NI=Not Important=1)
            Highlighted number indicates participant's score, 'x' indicates group mean,
              'o' indicates participant's adjusted score during debriefing interview.

Gender Role Conflict Factors (O'Neil, 1986)
Restrictive Emotionality: SA------------------A-------------------------D---x----2.2---------------SD
Need for Success & Achievement: SA------------------A------------x------------D-2.6-----------------------SD
Restrictive Affection Behavior btw Men: SA-------------------A--------------3.2--------D---x----------------------SD
Conflict btw Work, School, & Family   SA------------------A------------------x-------D-2.6----------------------SD
  (SA=Strongly Agree=6, Mostly A=5, Somewhat A=4, Somewhat Disagree=3, Mostly D=2, Strongly D=1)

Jeff – Personal Credo:

1: I strive to spend each day exploring and enjoying the gifts of creation.

2: Especially, I try to treat every other person with the dignity they deserve,

3: and to act humbly and honestly in all my endeavors.

4: I try to treat every moment as an opportunity for learning or bettering the world,

5: be it skimming a random news article,

6: … or kind words to a friend when we meet on Grounds.

What is Ultimate for you & how do you seek access to it?

Ultimate = God & His goodness

Seeks access through: prayer, thought, discussion

Jeff – "This I Believe" Statement:

I remember beginning to realize that I am blessed when I went on service trips with my youth group in high school. Seeing the simple and sometimes meager lifestyle of residents of a Nebraska reservation made my routines seem luxurious and possibly wasteful. When I went to Peru the contrast was even more striking. My basic needs are always satisfied. I have lots of time to think about God, time to surf random Wikipedia articles, time to read about Harry Potter, time to play Magic: the Gathering with friends, time to play basketball and lacrosse and time to follow the Redskins.

My relatively affluent upbringing is just the beginning. In elementary and middle school I was a good student. I made good grades and had good behavior. In high school I was successful. I continued to excel academically. I had my first girlfriend and learned a lot from that relationship. I became president of my high school's student body, and a valedictory speaker at my graduation.

All of these things didn't just happen to me. I was led; I was guided. Some of these things were meant to happen just the way they did. I was given loving parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers, coaches, and friends. I was given a good brain and a good body and a good environment. I was given talent and also an extraordinary amount of luck.

Now that I'm figuring out how to live my life as an adult, I want to share this blessing. I want to be a vessel for the guidance that I benefitted from. I want to be a good teacher because students need good teachers, and when I was a student I had good teachers. I want to teach biology because I am fascinated by the intricacies of living things and I want others to appreciate and be fascinated as I am.

On the everyday scale, I try to reach a certain standard in how I act, though I often fall short. I try to remember what people tell me, so that when I see them again, I can ask them about their lives and show them that I value them as friends and fellow students and

fellow human beings. I try to be totally honest in all aspects of my life, because honesty is the root of genuine emotion and communication, and the basis of strong relationships.

To do all these things is meaningful on a higher level.

Participant Profile: Prasham

An outgoing, analytical, dualistic thinker, deeply committed to Hindu philosophy

As a 19-year-old South Asian student studying Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering, Prasham did not disappoint with his exceedingly analytical and systems perspectives on *everything*. The spiritual and masculine journey map that he drew captures this perspective well. He labeled one line 'faith as an *f* of time' with an x-axis for every one of the 19 years of his life. Six trips to India at ages 3, 7, 9, 12, 15, and 19 were prominently featured as important times when he returned to his parents' home country to visit family. He also added 'masculinity mile markers' of being born, sitting through his first anatomy lesson in school, losing apprehensions in interacting with females, watching 'Love Actually', and his first hook-up with a girl. Prasham has a dry sense of humor and he takes pride in 'being the engineer' in the group by envisioning a structure and order in a response to a question or group conversation. Prasham was the youngest student in the group, though perhaps one of the most outspoken and opinionated during dialogue sessions. His thinking was most often dualistic, presenting options as either right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable – except when he began writing the This I Believe statement, which he struggle with quite visibly. I asked Prasham about this struggle at the end of our debriefing interview, and his response showed movement

into a more pluralistic space when he really thought carefully about his core beliefs,

despite the discomfort this clearly caused him. He replied:

"When you think about different faith traditions, there are a lot of similarities among their core beliefs, but there are also areas without any overlap to distinguish them from each other. There are areas where you have to be on one side or the other, right? So obviously, if you're making a switch, you usually say that you no longer believe in that group's unique set of beliefs, but you believe more in this other unique set. For me, the problem is that I DO believe in those beliefs *[points left]*. But I also kinda believe in this *[as if holding other beliefs in his two hands]*.
So it's a huge muddled mess of grey area and inconsistencies *[spoken almost disgustedly]*.

CWE: Do you think any of that is related to that dominant masculine form that trumpets certainty – that it doesn't even matter what you believe as long as you believe that you're right? Do you feel that pressure to have certainty about your beliefs too?

Prasham: No, I don't think I feel that pressure that I should have more certainty. Umm, I do feel like it is traditionally said that masculine men are *[snaps fingers],* seize control, make quick decisions, game, set, match, take responsibility for the outcome. I do think that that's very true, and I feel like that is a masculine tendency. I do try to do that, but with something as deep as personal beliefs, it's harder than a project where you can go in and say 'you do this work, you do this, etc.' When you go into something like beliefs, it's hard to be decisive about them, and if you're too decisive, that means that the beliefs are fickle, in my opinion."

Data collected from participant's pre-survey:
Current views on spiritual/religious beliefs: Secure, Hindu

Spirituality in College Factors (derived from HERI, 2004)
Spiritual Quest Composite: Essential-------------------x----VI----2.8----------------SI-------- ----------------NI
Spiritual Commitment: Essential-----------------------VI------x--------2.3-----SI-------------------------NI
Ethic of Care: Essential-----------------x-----VI----------------------2SI-----------------------NI
Citizenship Composite: Essential-----------------------VI--------x--------------SI-------1.7-------------NI
 (Essential=4   VI=Very Important=3   SI=Somewhat Important=2   NI=Not Important=1)
              Highlighted number indicates participant's score, 'x' indicates group mean,
                 'o' indicates participant's adjusted score during debriefing interview.

Gender Role Conflict Factors (O'Neil, 1986)
Restrictive Emotionality: SA------------------A-----------------------D---x--2.2------------------SD
Need for Success & Achievement: SA------------4.4--A------------x-----------D---------------------------SD
Restrictive Affection Behavior btw Men: SA------------------A------------------2.8--D---x----------------------SD
Conflict btw Work, School, & Family   SA------------------A-----------------x-------D-----2.2------------------SD
 (SA=Strongly Agree=6, Mostly A=5, Somewhat A=4, Somewhat Disagree=3, Mostly D=2, Strongly D=1)

Prasham - Personal Credo:

1: Be a productive and participatory member of society.

2: Work in harmony with society and the environment.

3: Establish a set of principles or adopt a code you can rationalize.

4: Stick to your principles.

5: Be logical, but not mechanical, in actions.

What is Ultimate for you & how do you seek access to it?

Ultimate = higher powers, all emanating from Ohm (cosmic vibration)

Seeks access through: incantations, rituals

Prasham's "This I Believe" Statement:

I believe the power of love and its potency as a driving force for action. However, I also believe that hatred is an equally potent driving force, although opposite in its very nature. I believe that the truth is essential and should be held with sacred reverence. But I believe that sometimes the truth is not appropriate, and that easing pain and reducing suffering should take precedent over the truth. I believe in the importance of individuality and establishing an identity within society. At the same time, I believe in the importance of assimilating oneself into society and working as part of a larger network to further the species. I believe in god, not as a singular fathomable entity, but

as a higher power beyond human comprehension. I also believe in religion as a powerful source of strength and faith, as well as a means by which humans can explore their relationship with this higher power.

When starting to formulate a 'this I believe' statement, I ran into numerous such paradoxes and seeming logical contradictions. As an engineer, this bothered me since logical inconsistencies in mathematical disciplines typically are indicative of a mistake. But, when I stepped back for a second and let go of my preconceived notions, I came to the conclusion that it wasn't a mistake or an error in my system of principles, but rather a truth I had come to terms with; beliefs are rarely mutually exclusive. Therefore, I went back to the drawing board and began to think about what is the one unifying belief that I hold above all others, which resonates through my actions rather than my words, which serves as the broad umbrella under which all others can be placed.

I believe in Humanity. I believe in the power of connections with other human beings, in the tendency of human nature to balance out both sides of an equation, in the potency of human emotions. I believe in the human races' ability to find compassion in times of need, to aide one another and put aside cast and creed, to come together when the circumstances deem it necessary. I believe that for every bad thing we hear one human doing, two good things are done that we will never hear about; not because we don't want to know, but because the humans doing the good things are just doing what comes naturally to them and therefore do not recognize their actions as standing out. I believe in both the positive and negative forces that humans apply to nature, and I believe that anything we do is just as much a part of nature as the flora and fauna around us. I believe in us, as in the human race, and our very nature; our Humanity.

Participant Profile: Salim

A reverent and deliberate philosopher, very secure in his religious faith, with occasional social apprehensions

Salim is a non-traditional student as a 22-year-old fifth semester, white Iranian student. He took some time away from school to work closer to home. He still drives home (~2-hours) every weekend to attend services with his Shi'a Muslim family. He is very secure in his faith tradition, is studying philosophy and religious studies, and maintains very close relationships with his brother, parents and close friends. Salim strikes me as an introverted student who thinks deeply and cares just as deeply for his close friends and family. He is comfortable operating in grey space, which clearly is advantageous for him as a philosopher. During my first conversation with Salim, he recalled that his parents always tried to reinforce messages of responsibility and accountability to him and his brother and sister. The gender messaging was muddled at an early age, but he clearly remembers his father as the provider of food, money, and security. His sense of humor is quirky-nerdy-smart, and from what I noticed in the group, often under-noticed given its nuance. When I asked Salim to describe how he envisions spirituality and religion being related, he said

"maybe if someone says they are spiritual, that is a step beyond religious *[makes fist to represent religious, then the other hand 4 inches above the fist, as if covering it like an umbrella]*… Maybe if you're going through your hard drive, the C: drive would be spiritual, but the Program Files would be religious.

CWE: Oh, interesting, any particular reason why Program Files? *[somewhat jokingly, though still probing]* Is religion the place where software – or those things which animate the computer – are stored?

Salim: Well, let's not read too far into the analogy, but I like where that is going…*[laughs]*"

Data collected from participant's pre-survey:

Current views on spiritual/religious beliefs: Secure, Muslim-Shi'a

Spirituality in College Factors

Spiritual Quest Composite: Essential-----------------x----3VI----------------------SI------- ----------------NI

Spiritual Commitment: Essential--------------------3VI------x--------------SI------------------------NI

Ethic of Care: Essential-------------3.3-x----VI----------------------SI------------------------NI

Citizenship Composite: Essential----------------------VI----2.8--x-------------SI------------------------NI

(Essential=4   VI=Very Important=3   SI=Somewhat Important=2   NI=Not Important=1)

Highlighted number indicates participant's score, 'x' indicates group mean,

'o' indicates participant's adjusted score during debriefing interview.

Gender Role Conflict Factors

Restrictive Emotionality: SA-----------------A-----------------------D---x----2.2----------------SD

Need for Success & Achievement: SA-----------------A--------3.6---x------D-------------------------SD

Restrictive Affection Behavior btw Men: SA-----------------A-----------------------D---x------1.9--------------SD

Conflict btw Work, School, & Family   SA-----------------A-----------------x------D------------1.7------------SD

(SA=Strongly Agree=6, Mostly A=5, Somewhat A=4, Somewhat Disagree=3, Mostly D=2, Strongly D=1)

Salim - Personal Credo

1: I believe there is no god but God, and this universal principle is what first gives meaning and purpose to my life.

2:   I believe that a life worth living needs balance. Balance between thought and action. Balance between self and others.

3: I believe a life worth living is one that is honest, humble, contemplative, and rarely in a state of regret.

4: I believe the biggest mistake we make as humans is teetering between selling ourselves too short and thinking too highly of ourselves.

5: I believe excessive pride and jealousy are at the heart of moral wrongs.

What is Ultimate for you & how do you seek access to it?

Ultimate = God

Seeks access through: thought & action which supports a particular belief

Salim – "This I Believe" Statement:

[I thought that I was more religious three years ago, and especially eight years ago. Then, I had a different passion about being there [religiously], but now I'm a lot more consciously open, although I don't see there to be a conflict between fully believing in something and room for skepticism. So if you asked me eight years ago if I were born to a different set of parents, would I be Muslim? I'd say then "oh, of course.' But if you asked me now, I'd say in all honesty that if I were born to Christian of Jewish parents, I'd probably be Christian or Jewish. So I thought the only one immutable thing that came to me that is not subject to change in my opinion is the belief in God.]

I believe there is no god but God, and equal unto him are none. He is One – neither oneness nor numerically countable. One that is not bound by anything we can conceive or perceive, and One that is wholly inconceivable but by signs that might direct us vaguely. He has created space and time, and cannot be confined by neither them, nor anything else. He has created what we consider "cause," "effect," "how," "what," "where," and the like – it is haughty for us to limit him to these modes of thinking.

I believe that this affirmation is among the highest ends realizable by humans, and one that gives our lives the most purpose. This affirmation is a necessary but oft forgotten part of every moment, every instant of life – whether past, present, or future.

I believe if we contemplate on this particular matter, we become minutely aware of the most basic things around us. A sign of His mercy is our free will – our capacity to even deny that He exists. A sign of His benevolence is what we are given. A sign of His justice is what is held from us. A sign of His power is the limitedness of our own.

Our human condition is most indicative of his presence, and we only need reflect within ourselves to become aware of this. I believe the relationship between us and this higher power is the most important, though we are often neglectful. I believe this relationship is deeply ingrained in us as humans, and is a primordial need – one that we substitute with false idols.

I think we all ultimately believe in Him, whether we call it by one name or another. Clearly, many may disagree and object to this; I know I have no place to judge another, for I will never be aware of their thoughts as I am of my own.

Plotting Personal Credos on Centricity Maps

As mentioned above, each participant wrote a short (under 150-word) personal credo for the second dialogue session that they all turned in to me. These credos are all listed above in each of their profiles. During the third dialogue session, all participants revisited the personal credos they had written the week prior. I offered the following description to set up the activity:

"So thinking about your personal credo statements that you wrote for last time, I gave you a copy of the ones that you wrote, and printed them out sentence by sentence, with each sentence numbered. I've also given you this map of loci of centricity. By "loci of centricity." I'm referring to where we focus our attention – in ourselves, in close friends, in communities, or big ideas, etc. What I'd like for each of you to do is to place your sentences from your credo onto the map based on which locus or loci you think most appropriately situates that statement. Feel free to be creative about your placement, as some phrases may not fit perfectly in one circle. As you can see, the loci begin in the center with you and your inner self, then moves out to family and friends, then communities, humanity, and ultimately with a higher power that may mean a number of different things to each of us. So here [outside locus], I describe that as a higher power, G-d, the environment, or the cosmos. I'd like for each of you to please think about what you call that outer ring. And when you are done, please tape your sentences all to the large whiteboard in the front."

These centricity maps tell us more interesting stories when they identify gaps (highlighted in blue) for certain participants. For example, Jeff's and Salim's maps (below in fig. 6) indicate a gap in the Communities circle (the third concentric circle in). This is reinforced by their responses to the survey that scored lower on the citizenship factor, and during interviews when they both said that they are not particularly involved in service organizations at college. They see relationships with individual people (Salim focused on close friends and family, and Jeff also including more acquaintances in that group as a more outgoing/engaged student) to be much more important than focusing on communities at this point in their lives.

(outermost circle) Higher Power, Environment, or Cosmos
(2nd to outermost) Humanity
(3rd circle in) Communities
(2nd smallest circle) Family/Friends
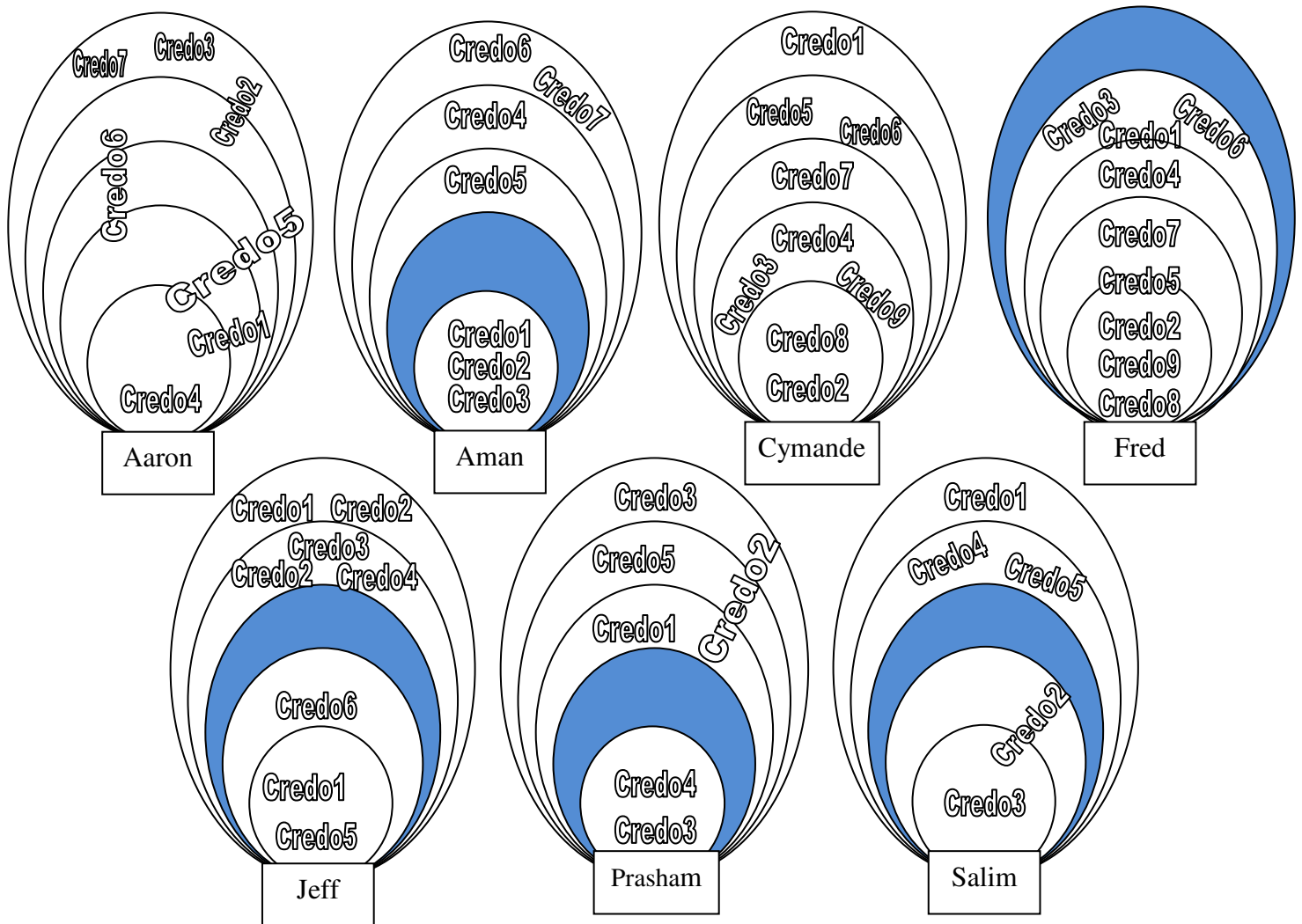(Innermost circle) Inner Self

Figure 6: Participants' Personal Credos on Centricity Maps (see profiles above for numbered credo texts)

Aman's family/friends gap presents an interesting case also. As previously mentioned, Aman is a caring young man who invests quite a lot in his relationships with friends. He has also spent a great deal of time away from his family at boarding school

and now at college. Since these personal credos prompted the young men to write a few sentences about their core beliefs about the world, it is interesting to see how Aman's beliefs may be more directly situated outside of his family since he learned the more detailed tenets of his faith from other teachers in India. Prasham also spoke very little about his family and close friends, preferring often to treat questions intellectually rather than relationally. And the other noteworthy gap is Fred's absence of any credo phrases in the outermost circle. Fred does not identify with or worship any religious deities, though I would argue that he still does very much have Ultimate beliefs that guide his decisions and motivate his actions. I will spend more time discussing this phenomenon in the next Findings chapter when I explain how the men in this study approach that which they consider to be Ultimate.

After each participant completed their own centricity maps, each then taped their color-coded credo phrases to a whiteboard with an identical diagram (pictured in fig. 7). This activity generated good discussion about the credo statements. I asked the guys what the process of figuring out where phrases belonged was like for them. Cymande said "I found it a little difficult, cause I felt for a lot of these that our inner selves are
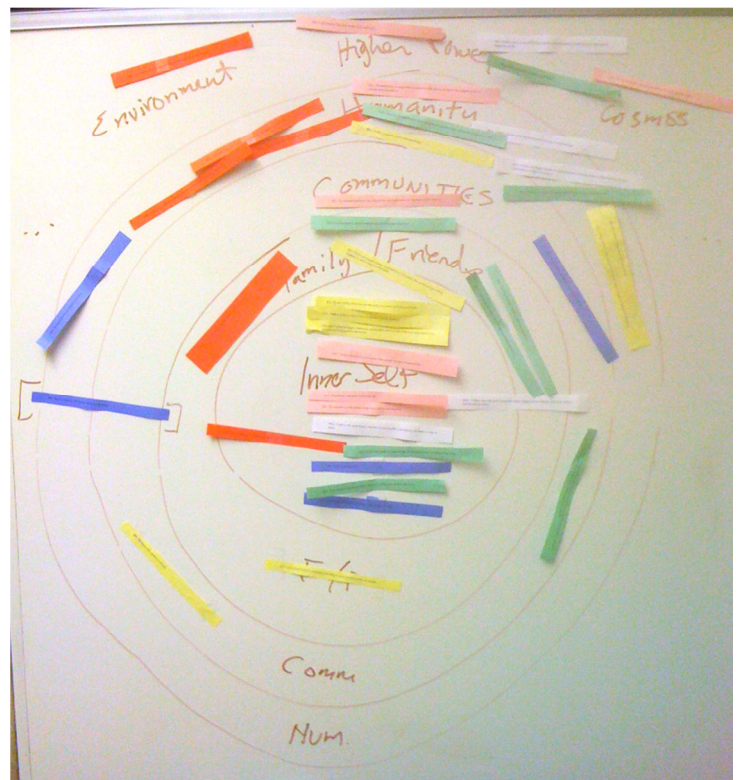

Figure 7: Credo Statements placed in loci of centricity
(dialogue group #3)

somehow connected to a higher power. So likewise, I didn't see these things as exclusive categories, I thought they were all more interconnected, so categorizing them was kindof difficult." This was an important misperceived distinction that the loci are arranged mutually exclusively. Rather, this diagram shows the loci as concentric circles, nested inside one another, with the Inner Self at the center and whatever participants considered to be Ultimate on the outside. They were given a chance to describe what exactly that 'Ultimate' is for them. The value of constructing this model as a nested ecological sytem is that we can make the assumption that the inner self is inextricably related to (physically or figuratively enclosed within) all other levels of the ecology. This positions the individual participant at the center as the unit of analysis in this activity.

Jeff explained his rationale for placing his notably pragmatic phrases: "a lot of my sentences were about actions, and so I thought about who was the beneficiary of each of those actions; why do I do that, for whose benefit, and for what reason… the one at the top says 'Exploring and enjoying the gifts of creation,' which I thought was going to go either on the outer circle or at the inner self, cause I'm the beneficiary of the enjoyment. But I ultimately decided to put it out there because of the creation aspect. And some of the other ones also had multiple beneficiaries, so I had to pick a primary one, or one that best represented it." Jeff was among the five guys who placed any items at all in the outermost circle. This locus reads "Higher Power, Environment, Cosmos," but I reiterated that this outer ring is subject to whatever they consider to be Ultimate. Aman, Salim, Cymande, and Prasham were the other four men to place phrases in this outer Ultimate circle. Three out of these five also responded that they consider God to make up that outermost Ultimate space. Four out of five also identified they are secure in their

beliefs. This is among the most compelling pieces of data, which indicates that all participants who identified that they are secure in their beliefs also identify with a clear depiction of what is Ultiamte for them – be that God, higher powers, or an essence. This seems to be a space that is reserved for the more religiously-affiliated of the participants.

Fred clarified his phrase positions, " I don't claim to be a very spiritual person, so it doesn't surprise me to not have anything in this higher power realm. These are *my* beliefs, so it makes sense to me that most would be at the inner self. I also think that I am a humanitarian, so it makes sense to me that I would have a decent number either in humanity or closely bordering humanity. Yeah, I mean, this totally makes sense to me. Family comes first for me, so I have the rest in family. And that's my whole makeup." Again, Fred began both his credo and This I Believe statements with "I believe in people, stories, and relationships," therefore it is not at all surprising to see most of Fred's phrases centered around family, friends, and communities. During his debriefing interview, Fred added that he considers Happenstance, Fate, and more Relationships to be Ultimate for him. So while he did not place any of his credo phrases into this outer space, he still does have a sense of what values or forces are ultimately important in his life.

Cymande noticed that there were few phrases in that higher power circle, stressing that it is only one sentence like the thesis of a paper. "My relationship with a higher power is extremely simple. It doesn't take much explaining. But how I act on that relationship is kindof complicated." Cymande is making the point that the phrases on the outside circle are straightforward because they are direct statements of faith, whereas phrases in other loci describe the myriad ways in which one chooses to live out his faith.

For those men who identified themselves as secure in their faith, or with a higher power consistent with their faith tradition referenced in the Ultimate space, there appears to be a strong influence from the outermost circle on the other circles. Cymande continued, "my statements focused much more on friendships and building relationships. And I think that is very much informed by my faith, and a personal relationship with God. Because I honestly feel like if I didn't have those things, I would be so self-interested and self-motivated that my relationships with people would become too superficial." This distinction is valuable to note that Cymande and Fred both focus a great deal of attention on their friendships in this activity and other interviews. For Fred, those relationships *are* the ultimate goal, whereas Cymande considers them to be part of a larger narrative that he connects directly to his faith.

Composite Factors – Spiritual Identity

The data profiles above offer snapshots of each individual, and personal credos and This I Believe statements add great depth to these quick profiles. Composite factors collected from participant surveys allow us to review patterns that may begin to emerge across participants. After coding all interviews and dialogue groups and compiling all survey data, it became clear that the composite factors could actually offer a reasonable structure through which I can continue to narrate participants' stories. These composite factors are divided into the four which address elements of spiritual identity, followed by the four pertaining to (masculine) gender role conflict. While separately constructed and described in the following sections, these factors – which, again, were all collected and compiled from participants' responses to the pre-survey – do not exist in isolation from

one another. Toward the end of this chapter, and certainly into the next chapter, I will begin to synthesize how these spiritual and masculine identity elements realistically overlap and intersect in college men. The four factors for Spirituality in College listed below are all derived from the UCLA Spirituality in Higher Education Study (HERI). These four composite factors related to spiritual identity are: Spiritual Commitment, Spiritual Quest, Ethic of Care, and Citizenship.

Spiritual Commitment

Spiritual Commitment is a factor that describes the extent to and method by which participants connect and commit to their beliefs. I intended this factor to include both broad spiritual and specific religious elements since there is a range of commitment levels in the group to religious traditions and spiritual practices. First, I asked participants in the survey to identify a spiritual or religious affiliation or denomination, then to circle their current views about spiritual or religious matters from 'not interested, conflicted, seeking, doubting, or secure' (circle all that apply). Then, four additional questions contributed to this factor, where participants identified how important the following are to them personally: Integrating spirituality into my life, Feeling a sense of connection to a higher power, Seeking opportunities to help me grow spiritually, and Seeking to follow religious/spiritual teachings in my everyday life.

Three out of the seven participants identified their beliefs as secure alone. Prasham identified himself as a secure Hindu, Salim as a secure Shi'a Muslim, and Cymande as a secure Evangelical Christian. Interestingly, these three men scored in the center of the Spiritual Commitment factor. Aman placed atop the Commitment factor

scores while identifying himself as a Sikh who is both secure in his views and also seeking. When asked to elaborate on this secure and seeking designation, Aman mentioned that he is confident in his commitment to Skihism, but that he also chooses to attend services with friends from other faith backgrounds. He is spiritually curious and interested in discussing and learning more about people's beliefs and his own. Aman identified the strongest opinions in the spiritual commitment section, where he claims that integrating spirituality into his life, connecting to a higher power, and seeking out growth opportunities were essential to his spirituality. Aman moved to India to attend boarding school in Amritsar, the Sikh holy city, so he has likely had the most formal religious training in his faith tradition of any of the participants in our group. Yet still, he mentioned that following religious teachings in his everyday life was only somewhat important to him. Aman considers himself to be a very spiritual person, but only religious to a certain degree. "I see religion as a vehicle for spirituality, I guess. And that's what is important about religion – the spiritual values that it instills, and the spiritual experience that one can have in a religious setting. I might even go as far as to say that without spiritual experience, I feel like religious ritual is empty and dogmatic." Aman elaborated on spiritual experiences as one of the most basic types of experiences of oneself, without "emotional rollercoasters or transient biases" – as a stand-still experience, or a genuine experience of yourself.

Participants responded on the pre-survey to one Likert-scale question with six sub-questions pertaining to spiritual and religious beliefs. ("My Spiritual/Religious Beliefs: (a) have helped to develop my identity, (b) are among the most important things in my life, (c) give meaning or purpose to my life, (d) help define goals I set for myself,

(e) provide me with strength, support, or guidance, and (f) have been formed through much personal reflection and searching. I added these six sub-questions, which I initially thought would be mere contextual demographic details, to the four questions already loaded in the Spiritual Commitment factor to strengthen this factor for Commitment. Results stayed fairly consistent, with the one exception of Salim, who responded that he strongly agreed with all six of these phrases. As a self-identified secure Shi'a Muslim, Salim is also among the more strict adherers to his religious faith in the group. He is a religious studies major, and a careful philosopher. During our debriefing interview, Salim asked what Spiritual Quest and Commitment were, and how they were comprised of which questions. After hearing this, he said that he would move all three of the first factors (Spiritual Quest, Commitment, and Ethic of Care) all the way up to Essential instead of where they scored at 'very important'. This is more consistent with Salim's responses to the first six spiritual & religious beliefs questions, where he alone strongly agreed that his beliefs are among the most important part of his life, they help to give him meaning and purpose, and they provide him with strength, support, and guidance. Of particular interest is Salim's This I Believe statement that he composed for the final group dialogue session. He framed the entire statement around what he considers to be the one element of his beliefs that are not influenced by cultural or environmental forces – his belief in God. "I can't imagine myself subscribing to anything different… I thought it would be a better idea for me to talk about that one thing that I just cannot eliminate, that God Exists… but then again, who am I to say what God is. It would have to be the other way around." As indicated in this part of the survey, it is clear that Salim has put a great deal of academic thought and personal reflection into his faith, though he still

maintains a remarkably refreshing degree of humility about how much he knows and what it all means. "Honestly, I think that's part of what grounds us… I think the fact that we never really know that it's certain should make us a little humble about where we're going."

Fred stands squarely on the other end of the spectrum for the Spiritual Commitment factor. Mentioning repeatedly that "I'm not that religious," Fred also claimed that "I don't think I'm at a spiritual high point in my life right now… But I definitely have been more spiritual in the past, when I was a first and second year." Fred goes on to describe the apex of his self-identified spiritual high point in his life. This time during his second year in college was characterized by interfaith friendships that challenged him to think about other faith traditions and his own culturally Jewish upbringing. He went so far as to co-create an interfaith dialogue group on the campus during this time. But now, Fred draws a more substantial connection between emotionality and spirituality. "I think people go to service, to church, to mosque to feel something different that they don't get to feel in the rest of their life. That's just a different kind of emotion, and I think when I am my most spiritual is when I am really emotional."

Fred very much identifies his spirituality as an emotional and relational connection to others. He is proud of the way that he is able to stay in touch with old friends, to care for people, and commit to other organizations and causes in which he strongly believes. This commitment rings true for Fred's sense of masculine identity as well. He clearly connects his ideas about being a man to caring for and taking care of people – more pointedly, women, including his current family members (sisters) and

future wife and kids, which I will discuss again later in this chapter. Fred identified the other three spiritual identity factors (spiritual quest, ethic of care, and citizenship) as either extremely important or essential on his survey responses, while spiritual commitment was nearly unimportant. I asked all participants during their debriefing interviews to review and reconsider where on the continua they might place all of the factors if they had to choose themselves. Fred agreed to this placement of Spiritual Commitment during his final interview, and claimed that it was the combination of his not being religious and this time in his life as a fourth year in college when spirituality alone is not a priority for him. He chooses instead to invest himself much more fully in his friends, his advocacy work around race relations at the University and in the local community, and his efforts to secure a job. It was notable to hear Fred discuss his perception of his college career and the spiritual high point, and I would argue that some of the Gender Role Conflict factors (specifically, Need for Success & Achievement and Conflict between Work, School, & Family that will be discussed in the following section) also contribute to Fred's turn away from a deliberate focus on prioritizing his spiritual development in recent years. I will return to this example later in this chapter when discussing the Gender Role Conflict factors in more detail.

As Fred and others clearly show us, of all the questions that make up composite factors in these Spirituality in College survey items, respondents felt the least connected to 'following religious teachings in their everyday life.' When asked about this directly, many of the men indicated that spirituality is an everyday thing, something that makes up who we are, but religion offers a community of people and the tools to continue to develop one's spirituality. UCLA's Spirituality in Higher Education Study highlights a

distinction between the internal measure of Religious Commitment and its external counterpart Religious Engagement. Commitment is an internal indication of a student following religious teachings, finding religion to be personally helpful, and gaining personal strength from a higher power. Religious engagement (attending services, praying, or reading sacred texts) has been found to decline rather sharply over the course of an average student's college career, while students' religious commitment tends to remain fairly stable over this time (Astin, Astin & Lindholm, 2010). My Spiritual Commitment factor includes one small piece of that religious commitment (following religious teachings), but otherwise asks participants to identify the more broadly spiritual components of their beliefs and commitments. This factor demonstrates that in general, it is very important for these students to integrate spirituality into their lives, they all feel an important sense of connection to a higher power, most try to seek opportunities to grow spiritually, and only some follow religious teachings as a part of their spiritual practice.

Spiritual Quest

Spiritual Quest is a factor that explains the extent to which students believe that spirituality is a journey. Part and parcel of that journey is actively searching for meaning and purpose in one's life, to become more self-aware, to search and discover answers to big questions and mysteries in life (HERI, 2010). College is a proving ground that is filled with opportunities to engage in this type of a quest. In this study, the Spiritual Quest factor is composed of five other questions, where participants identified how important it is for them personally to seek answers to mysteries in life, attain wisdom, develop meaningful philosophies of life, strive toward inner harmony, or seek beauty. As

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you can see, these questions are active with verbs to connote the movement that is inherent in the Quest. All participants thought this idea of a spiritual quest was quite important to them, with six out of seven indicating that it is at least very important if not essential. When shown his data profile, the one student, Prasham, who identified this factor with less importance indicated that "I feel like it's somewhere between somewhat and very important for me to continue to grow spiritually. I want to step away from the implication that it requires *active pursuit*, because I think spiritual development *happens* to us. I don't think it's something that can be pursued, so I agree with this, yes, but I do want to shy away from that implication." Most students made the same extension Prasham does in this quote by connecting spiritual *quest* with spiritual *growth.* This is interesting because it suggests, rather optimistically, that students attribute all journeys as periods of positive growth. Aman reiterated this optimistic idea of movement and growth as well, "I think movement and change in general in all aspects of life is generally a good thing… I think that movement in general gives you different angles and perspectives which will always help you to develop a stronger position. And also, it might give you angles where you can see faults in the way you've been doing things." So we can see that participants see spiritual quests as periods of movement and change that lead to altered perspectives and personal growth.

This raises a number of additional questions for me. Do spiritual quests have beginning and endpoints? Who decides when and where they begin and end? Can one decide to set out on a quest, or is Prasham's suggestion that our development is something that merely *happens* to us more accurate? This would mean that we can find ourselves on spiritual quests, but cannot actively pursue them. This calls into question

whether other people could be involved in designing spiritual quest-inducing experiences if a student cannot actively pursue one's own development. Can a staff of professionals (clergy, educators, higher ed administrators) design learning experiences to initiate these types of pursuits? Absolutely. And a recent surge of interest in this topic has been captured in literature that calls college administrators to not only pay attention students' inner lives, but to actively engage students in listening to, recognizing, pursuing, and making meaning out of their own spiritual development (Nash & Murray, 2010; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Astin, et al., 2011). We do not expect that students will casually stumble into learning about organic chemistry, or that it will be revealed to them in due time. And colleges across the country take an active interest in helping students to understand racial or gendered identities as a part of their co-curricular learning experiences. Therefore, college student administrators should also be just as deliberate about designing experiences that help students to pursue spiritual identity as a critical aspect of their college learning. Of course, I will return to this idea in the final chapter to discuss implications from this study.

A closer look at the questions comprising this Spiritual Quest factor reveals some interesting consistencies among the outliers. Jeff and Prasham both scored slightly lower composites on the survey for Spiritual Quest, though even their 'lower' scores were only slightly below 'very important'. But two of the responses stand out in this composite factor: 'Attaining Inner Harmony' and 'Seeking Beauty in my Life'. I would describe both Jeff and Prasham as two of the more pragmatic participants among the seven. Jeff focused consistently on the actions that directly result from his beliefs as the more important measures of his spirituality, and in our discussions Prasham prized clear yes/no

arguments, dualistic solutions, and tangible cognitive or behavioral outcomes over the more intangible grey space, pluralism, and harmony/balance/beauty values. So it seems that for students who value dualism and tangible outcomes, it may be more challenging to internalize spirituality as a quest or journey unless that journey has more rigid start and endpoints and more clear tangible benefits for the traveler aside from equanimous ones focusing on harmony, balance, or beauty.

Another interesting discovery about spiritual quest is how participants view their role in that quest. I touched on this point above with Prasham's rejection of 'active pursuit,' but a number of other participants struggled to see themselves as authors of their own spiritual quests. While they wanted to be actively writing their own adventure, they instead recognized that to listen and watching intently and remove themselves from the active pursuit would oftentimes reveal their stories with their compelling twists and turns. For example, when I asked Aaron how he seeks access to those things which he considers to be Ultimate, Aaron suggests:

"One idea I've been thinking about lately is that a lot of spiritual practices seek it through a form of renunciation of the self, that allows you to get in contact with something beyond the self. Like, trying to break down the constructs of the ego, whether that be through chastity or self-imposed limitations that try to get you to transcend the self. So that might be one strategy. And then maybe a counterpoint to that would be 'paying attention,' I think, which is kindof observing things to the point where you stop trying to exert your force on them as much. And I think that's a more passive way of getting beyond the self. And then I suppose an even more passive form of that would be the concept of grace, which is to say that you don't really ever *seek* access to the Ultimate, rather you might be accessed by it."

This idea was also reiterated by Aman when asked the same question. He suggested that in order to access the Essence or the current of the Universe (as his Ultimate), it is important for us to be able to remove our personality and experience just

being. This idea of a passive revelation to initiate one's self-transcending quest perhaps

acts as a refreshing counterstory to the active pursuit that characterizes most aspects of

contemporary masculinities. Specifically, in one of the upcoming sections, I will discuss

the external pursuit of success, power, and competition as a social factor, captured in

literature, which creates tension for one's masculine sense of self. But Aaron and Aman

are not necessarily suggesting a completely passive approach to self-discovery. They are

instead suggesting a shift in one's gaze away from the self. So in order to connect to

whatever we consider to be a higher power, it is important that we shift our gaze beyond

meeting our own needs. Hence, a Spiritual Quest is not the pursuit of self, but rather the

pursuit of something far beyond the self, which may very well involve the removal or

denial of self. This may also have something to do with the next factors of care and

citizenship. As it stands, the Spiritual Quest factor is among the most important across

all participants. This is clearly an important way that participants perceive and discuss

their spiritual identity.

Ethic of Care & Citizenship

As described in my literature review chapter, Carol Gilligan's Ethic of Care

presents a compelling argument for students' moral development, which was also

adopted by the Spirituality in Higher Education Study at UCLA. This concept was used

by Gilligan to develop her original theory of moral development to include the voices of

women in the theory. However, I believe that her insights have broad applicability for

college men as well. This is particularly interesting given research that shows that

college men engage in more service than they do heavy drinking, and their significant

engagement in student organizations often involves engaging in communities for civic or service purposes (Pryor, et al, 2006). As such, it was important for me to include Ethic of Care as the third factor in my spirituality survey. The data indicate that this factor was clearly linked to the fourth one, Citizenship, a linkage that presented itself in interesting ways during debriefing interviews with participants. Ethic of Care is constructed by participants as an individual trait, while Citizenship was often viewed on an institutional or structural level.

An ethic of care reflects our internal sense of concern about the welfare of others. This ethic is expressed in wanting to help those who are experiencing difficulty and to alleviate pain or suffering in one's world. Citizenship has a wide range of definitions, but for the purposes of this study, I am using it as a factor describing the behavioral commitment to engage in one's community, to develop understanding of one's own and other cultures, and to promote peace and reconciliation across conflict. Perhaps more commonly named 'Responsible Community Involvement,' this Citizenship component may include a commitment to social justice issues like racial understanding or poverty alleviation, an interest in the welfare of one's community and the environment, or a commitment to social and political activism.

It is clear from the distribution of scores that these two factors are linked since the highest, middle, and lowest scores distributed participants in exactly the same positions from the Caring factor to the Citizenship factor. For example, Fred and Aman scored the highest in both factors, while Prasham was an outlier on the bottom for both factors. Prasham explained his rationale for both cases, highlighting that he agrees with the position that his score indicates. "the citizenship and ethic of care are interesting, and

also very accurate. I don't feel like humanitarian work is very spiritual – at least not in the humanity locus. It's more of an 'I feel good, karma coming around' kind of thing. So it's more inner self, in my opinion. I definitely don't see spirituality and religion influencing ethic of care." While Prasham may have interpreted this exercise mistakenly as a request to compare spirituality and one's charitable involvement rather than just a description of one's ideas about caring and citizenship, he also completed this survey five weeks prior and his responses are consistent from pre- to post-interviews. He does not appear to be involved in community, charitable or humanitarian work at college, while others seem to be heavily interested in this type of activity. Fred, for example, mentioned again that he is not as involved as he was in his second year in college. As a youth soccer coach, a youth mentor, a service trip leader to New Orleans, a Teach For America recruiter, and a racial dialogue facilitator, I asked Fred how he decides what kinds of activities to which he wants to commit. "I determine my interest in a service activity by the biggest impact I'll make, and how good I'll feel about it, and what will make me happy doing." So in some ways, Fred and Prasham, though they occupy opposite ends of the scores for ethic of care and citizenship, they have similar opinions as to why people choose to do service – oftentimes to ultimately benefit oneself. Prasham seems to choose not to be involved because it seems too self-indulgent while Fred claims two of his three reasons for doing service (namely, pride and pleasure) are of direct benefit to himself.

Fred elaborated during our debriefing interview about the gap he noticed between ethic of care and citizenship scores. "Wow, you know this is so accurate. This is everything I say all the time, and actually do in my everyday life. I'm glad this [Citizenship component] isn't over here [points to far right side of scale – Not Important],

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but this is really about my hatred of institutional frameworks, and wanting to avoid the bureaucracy and hierarchy of the school. That's exactly what that little space is [between Ethic of Care and Citizenship scores]." This gap phenomenon was repeated in *every* participant's survey scores. *Everyone* indicated through the survey that an ethic of care is generally more important to them than joining organizations and being involved in community-based programs. One striking example of this came from Jeff. During his pre-interview, I also asked him how he chooses what kinds of service he gets involved with. He replied:

"… I guess I prefer to do things that are active service as opposed to just raising money – not to diminish the impact of that kind of work too. And I think I shy away from organizations that are strictly dedicated to service because I assume – probably falsely – that people are getting involved with that organization because they want to put it on their resume or that they want other people to see that they're in XYZ service organization. So for my church group, service is *part* of what we do, but we're not telling everyone 'we're doing service.'"

Then in Jeff's debriefing interview, he looked at his data profile, with scores for Ethic of Care and Citizenship that were only a half-step apart. After explaining the results and asking for any perceived revisions, he asked to move Ethic of Care closer up to Essential and Citizenship further down to only Somewhat Important, spacing them out even further and tripling the size of the gap in between. When asked to elaborate, he indicated that he sees people and relationships as more central to his spirituality, while citizenship and engaging in social issues are more separate from spirituality, not nearly as important to one's spiritual identity.

Aaron also reacted to this tension around caring for others.

"One other thing that I've been thinking about recently, in Tibetan Buddhism there's this archetype or figure of the Bodhisatva. That's a spiritual person who has reached enlightenment, but instead of going on to the holy lands, they try to stay behind and work for the enlightenment of all beings, supposedly at some expense to their self. It's hard for me to think why they would renounce the next step in the journey if they were on a spiritual quest. Why would they not continue to transcend? I do think there is this degree of interconnectedness between beings, that renouncing the spiritual journey to care for others is somehow part of the quest itself.

CWE: Would you say that some of that is about being in the present too? Because if they are always looking to the next transcendent step, they are not being fully present?

Aaron: Hmm, I think that's a good point. Yeah, it becomes too much about advancement and that's not really the type of awareness they're seeking."

It is important for the participants in my study to distinguish between being men who care about people and being men who join groups or causes that may benefit people and draw attention to themselves. This may be an important cautionary tale for religious and service organizations, and an opportunity for further research.

The one question that emerged as an outlier in the Citizenship factor is "Improving my understanding of other countries and cultures." This question garnered more favorable responses than the others in the Citizenship cluster, indicating that this is at least a very important aspect to respondents. This can perhaps be a reinforcing feedback loop, as the UCLA Spirituality Study found that students' ethic for caring is enhanced when professors place a high priority on having a diverse, multicultural campus (Astin, et al., 2010). So perhaps the reinforcing loop can be created when students like these in my study recognize that improving one's understanding of other cultures is important to their own growth and identity, and many faculty and staff work hard to introduce and showcase diverse people and cultures, therefore enhancing students' ethic

for caring and capacity to understand and appreciate difference, which positively reinforces the efforts of those faculty and staff. It is heartening to see these results, where even the two students with the lowest overall scores for Citizenship (claiming somewhat important or less) indicated that it is either very important or essential to improve their understanding of other cultures.

One final striking feature among the Spiritual Identity measures is a general observation between two individuals in the study, Prasham and Fred. Fred self-identified as the least spiritual member of the group, though he scored at the very top of three out of four measures for spirituality, and at the very bottom of the fourth (Commitment). When I asked Prasham if he considers himself to be a spiritual person, he said "I consider myself to be a *very* spiritual person, meaning I do believe in a higher power, and I do allow certain perceptions of this higher power to guide my actions on a day-to-day basis." Despite this self-identification, Prasham scored at the very bottom of the same three spiritual identity factors where Fred scored the highest: Spiritual Quest, Ethic of Care, and Citizenship. This is not to suggest an inverse relationship between Spiritual Commitment and the other three factors, but it is interesting to note that Prasham is the youngest student in this sample while Fred is the oldest. Could there be a relationship between something as simple as a student's age and his development along some of these dimensions?

Composite Factors – Masculine Identity

The four Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS) factors used in this study are all derived from 25 years of research using these survey items (O'Neil, 2008).   The GRCS

is scored using a reverse-coded six-point likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Higher numerical scores in the GRCS indicates that the respondents experience more psychological conflict as a result of that particular factor.

Restrictive Emotionality (RE)

The Restrictive Emotionality factor describes difficulty and fears college men may have about expressing one's feelings and difficulty finding words to express basic emotions. Aaron is responsible for the most fascinating result of this factor analysis. While I tried not to typecast him too much, I have to admit that I was surprised to see the results that as a fourth-year English and Poetry major, Aaron identified the highest degree of conflict with Restrictive Emotionality among the seven participants. We discussed this result during his debriefing interview:

CWE: "The first factor is Restrictive Emotionality. You were right around the midpoint on the scale for that one, with 3.6 out of 6 possible points. I also added the 'x' on each of your scales to indicate the composite average from the rest of the group.

Aaron: So does this mean that I am more comfortable expressing emotions than the group?

CWE: Well, actually, it means the opposite. But the scale isn't just addressing your behaviors, it's more about the internal conflict that you may experience as a result of that hegemonic masculine norm that we were talking about during the box activity. This scale would indicate that you do experience some struggle with how you interpret the masculine norm of restrictive emotionality for yourself. What do you think?

Aaron: I certainly think there is some struggle. There was a moment today in the yoga class at the beginning when we were relaxing our breath and muscles. The instructor said, 'okay, now you want to feel like your bones are even melting.' And there was this moment that I was thinking how vulnerable it would be to really let your entire body relax like that, which I guess is indicative of some worry about showing that kind of

vulnerability. But then, I did it, and enjoyed it at the same time. So [pauses] I don't know.

CWE: But you did feel that tension there initially?

Aaron: yeah, or at least that flash of thought that probably most people didn't have. Hmm, it's hard for me to say. *[This is an interesting moment. Aaron continues to look at the scale on the page. I can tell that he is struggling with where his score is in comparison to his peers. He considers himself to be a very self-aware person, and I think it bothers him slightly that he is more susceptible to this force than he perhaps thought.]* I think it often depends on the context I'm in. Sometimes I'm very expressive with both men and women, but perhaps if it's like a less familiar or comfortable setting, I might hold back more.

CWE: I can tell that you are struggling with this one – can I show you the responses that you offered in the survey [hands him survey], and I'll tell you which questions contributed to this factor: # 19, 21, 29, 31, and 37.

Aaron: Hmm, yeah, so maybe this was a big one that led me toward this end [Q21: I often have trouble finding words to describe how I am feeling]. And that one, that's interesting, because when I was thinking about this, I was thinking more about the inadequacy of words to convey such profound emotions, and not as much about being uncomfortable expressing them, you know? Like, sometimes I think when I'm feeling really strongly – well, maybe that's tied to being very introverted too. If I'm feeling something very strongly, I might not feel like I can find the words to express it to somebody, which I think is what makes me also interested in poetry. I think that's a kind of tension that's played with in trying to write a poem. And 'strong emotions' [Q19], hmm. That is true, I do think that strong emotions are difficult to understand. I think I often don't, like, feel comfortable enough to break down and cry. That seems dangerous unless I'm in a very comfortable setting with people who are stable enough to support me. Whereas, I feel like people, especially like my girlfriend, for example, feels much more comfortable crying. So maybe because I don't express strong emotions, it's much more difficult for me to understand them when other people do."

From this exchange, we should highlight a number of interesting insights

pertaining to Aaron. He is a remarkably thoughtful young man with an uncommon

linguistic deliberateness and a willingness to suspend judgment while self-reflecting. He

may have taken more time than most respondents to think carefully about what these

questions are really asking. His comment about having trouble finding words to express how he is feeling shows that he is careful about how he expresses himself. In this way, the GRCS survey measured exactly what it was intended to measure – the psychological conflict present in men as they attempt to live their lives authentically under an ever-present shadow of hegemonic masculinity. This factor is not measuring how little one expresses himself, but rather how much difficulty or conflict one experiences when trying to do so. For someone like Aaron who is perhaps more careful about choosing his words delicately, there will inevitably be more internal conflict created as a result of the expression-crafting process. This is perhaps also compounded by Aaron's self-identified introversion, where much of his processing happens inside, as opposed to the external group processors who work out their emotional states with other people. But to lend some perspective to this discussion on Restrictive Emotionality, Aaron scored the highest amount of conflict in the group, which was still only halfway between agree and disagree on the factor scale, indicating a small amount of conflict in general, while all others disagree that they experience this conflict. Cymande was the outlier on the other side of Restrictive Emotionality, strongly disagreeing that he experiences this conflict. Again, his debriefing interview offered some interesting insights into this score:

CWE: "And now Restrictive Emotionality. [points to data profile] This means that you experience very very little identification with that restrictive emotionality norm. Would you say that this is accurate?

Cymande: [laughs] RE…1.4. Oh yeah, I say what's on my mind, I don't really care.

CWE: And what do you think about this difference *[points to gap between Cymande and the group average of 2.43]* I'd probably call that a statistical outlier, so how does that make you feel?

Cymande: Umm, I dunno. Actually, a week after the program started, my girlfriend and I broke up. I was talking to one of my friends, and he was telling me – and I think this sums up my mentality perfectly – he goes 'you know, my dad told me that no one ever has to suffer alone. And it's much better to express what you're feeling and what you're experiencing than to keep it inside. I guess I'd never articulated that before, but I really related to that idea, and I thought that's how I conducted myself. Obviously, when I first meet someone I don't tell them my life story of problems, but definitely I never saw it as very healthy to not talk about your feelings or emotions. That's just the way it should be. I see people get destroyed inside. They just won't say why, and I think it's part of that ego to think that you can really solve everything by yourself. I've been really trying to restrict the ego away in my personal life at least."

Cymande responds quickly to my initial question above with "I say what's on my mind, I don't really care [what other people think]." But that quick response may have missed the point of my question, unintentionally uncovering some subtle insights about Restrictive Emotionality. The factor is built on a foundation of self-reflection. All respondents agreed that they at least occasionally explore their own emotions to determine how they are feeling. Building on that self-reflection, we then move to both understanding and expressing two different types of emotion – strong emotions and more tender ones. The group mostly disagrees that strong emotions (other than anger) are difficult for them to understand, but they only somewhat disagree that they have difficulty expressing more tender feelings. Hence, a point that is rather obvious but worth mentioning, blatant emotionality through strong feelings are easier for this group to identify and express than more subtle, tender emotions. Of course, the very nature of emotions or feelings (strong ones like joy, happiness, deep sadness, envy, jealousy, rage, anger, surprise or more tender ones like compassion, remorse, sorrow, humility, contentment) are that they are non-localized states of self, distinct from localized physiological sensations, and disconnected from the will. For young men who may see themselves as almost always in control, it can be difficult and frustrating to understand or

even admit that they feel emotions that are disconnected from the will. Of course, being

enveloped in a strong emotional state can lead or compel one to act on those feelings, and

we can never really disconnect ourselves from the emotional valence that accompanies

our contexts and decisions. The men in this study seem fairly tuned into the idea that

emotional expression is an important part of being a healthy functioning human being.

During our second dialogue group, we discussed social expectations that men

experience as a result of pressure from media, peers, families, and other contexts. Jeff

mentioned that there is still a pressure for men to "not really talk about emotion –

expressing more intimate emotions and the acceptability of expressing emotions other

than anger." Jeff is the only participant in the study who is involved in a mostly white

social fraternity on campus, so this is interesting to hear from him, who likely

experiences more of this social pressure from this homo-social environment than others.

Jeff and I discussed his patterns of emotional restriction even in this dialogue group

during his debriefing interview. Jeff says:

"I noticed a difference when I was first coming into this group, meeting everyone for the
first time, I would say that I was more restricted than this [score on data profile] might
imply. So maybe this is sortof not indicative on how I acted when we were in dialogue
and meeting new people for the first few times. You know, you're trying to make a first
impression. Then maybe I feel more pressure and act more stoic. But then when I get to
know people, it becomes less important and less restrictive. I do feel that restriction more
in groups. I think I was more restricted than the average guy in this group. And then as
the group went on, and I started to get to know the guys, I started to gravitate to the right
[less restriction]."

I think that Jeff's account here is more of a norm than this study may lead one to

believe. This is one factor that impacts men over time more significantly in terms of

mental health challenges than any others, because when the feelings of restriction are

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strong or lengthy in duration, it means that one develops a kind of long-term repressive

stoicism that he is not able to really express himself or even understand his own

emotional states when they arise. Kilmartin (2007) suggests that "emotion never lies, and

emotion never lies still," meaning that our affective experiences of the world are central

to our human experience. And when that experience does not find expression, it will not

merely sit still below the surface waiting quietly. "Feelings that are not expressed

directly often find indirect forms of expression. Many men deal with emotions by

placing feelings outside of themselves, through externalized defenses, by 'acting out'

emotional conflicts, and/or through physical symptoms" (p. 155). Habitual emotional

inexpressiveness, called alexithymia, combined with a social expectation of

independence, makes one resistant to engage in help-seeking behaviors and talk to other

people or solicit the help of professionals when needed. David & Brannon (1976) called

this force Being a Sturdy Oak – to choose stoicism and self-reliance over emotional

expression and interdependence. That psychological conflict builds up over time, and

causes many more problems for men that are usually unidentified until they reach critical

breaking points. Cymande's quote from his father ("no one ever has to suffer alone")

suggests a turn in this social pressure that has been developing for a generation or two.

Cymande also acknowledged this shift during our dialogue group:

"I think this whole phenomenon of the 90's man – I don't know why this came about, but
it's like it's okay for men to cry and sometimes show emotions. There's the whole rise of
the metrosexual, even though it's sometimes frowned upon, where it's okay to be
flamboyant in a sense. That's not like a pop star flamboyant, but one that is more okay
for everyday people. I think that translates to us now, where you can be more
comfortable with expressing emotions of being sad and feeling guilty. I think one of
those pieces may be about your [Prasham's] idea of being really connected across
cultures, but I think another reason is that society as a whole has started to break down
these gender divisions a lot more."

Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men (RABM)

A number of the participants also introduced this idea of cross-cultural influence

when discussing the next related factor, Restrictive Affectionate Behavior Between Men.

This factor describes conflict experienced as a result of having limited ways to express

one's feelings and thoughts with other men and having difficulty showing affection

toward other men. Particularly in the U.S., there is a pervasive unwritten code that

dictates to college-age men that their interactions with one another should be through

sports or over a beer, with discussion focused superficially on these activities or their

material obsession with women (Kimmel, 2008). This socially-reinforced, ridiculous

code also suggests that men should not express their appreciation of one another, and

their physical touching should be limited to the competitive sports playing field. I asked

Cymande about his score on this factor, indicating that he experiences an average amount

of this conflict relative to the group, which translates to just some psychological conflict

in general around telling and showing men that he values their friendship.

"Yeah, I mean definitely. Also, just the fact that I spent a lot of time over in the middle
east where it's very common and open to be affectionate with other men. So dudes
would come up and kiss you on the cheek and hold hands all the time. Sure, the first
week was a little weird, and maybe it's still a little weird, but I'm not averse to it now.
I'm not afraid to hug another man. Maybe that's also that I'm comfortable with my
sexuality as well, but yeah, it's no big deal. I mean, I don't want to make out with a guy,
but… [laughs loudly, as if to break with humor for slight discomfort]. That's a little too
far, but yeah, I don't see a problem with telling a guy I love you in a friendship-type
manner, or maybe even hugging it out. Everyone can always use hugs, so…"

Cymande's comment indicates an appreciation of the cultural nuances in the

Middle East where men could feel more free to show their appreciation of their friendship

in public. Yet still, Cymande expresses discomfort when asked if he could also

personally adopt these customs. Cymande also grew up in a Taiwanese-American family going to Chinese Christian Churches with very traditional roles for women and men in the church and family. So his discomfort is a manifestation of incongruencies between his relatively new experiences with gender role transgressions that he saw in the Middle East and his formative youth experiences with relatively traditional roles. Aman and Cymande both grew up in the U.S. and spent considerable amounts of time in the Middle East and South Asia. They both acknowledge that while this was present in their experiences of other cultures, they still hold them to be 'other' and different from their primary experience of culture. By contrast, Salim is culturally Iranian though he moved to the U.S. at the age of one. He claims that:

Salim: "Iranian culture is very different from American culture, so generally speaking even when it's someone you're just meeting, you'll do the french cultural norm of kissing them on each cheek. So, yeah, we do that for the most part even with strangers. But in particular with him [Salim's brother], we don't hold hands, but I'm perfectly comfortable hugging him or, you know, whatever. I guess it also helps that he's my brother. I've met a lot of people and see this on TV a lot where the father is skeptical about hugging his son. That's always been a little weird for me. But it's weird that I think that holding hands between men is also weird, so I guess I don't have any proper justification about where I draw the line. I guess it's just how I've been raised with cultural norms and unconsc- or subconscious whatever. I hug my roommates too. *[spoken matter-of-factly, with a deeper resonating voice]* Just the other day, we had a group hug and it was pretty nice. *[laughs]* And for the most part, I also do the hand-shake, half-hug hand shake with my friends, with the two pats on the back. I actually appreciate hugs, I think they're awesome, it's nice. So anyway…

CWE: The extension of that too is, how do you communicate those affections toward other guys, especially in the U.S.?

Salim: I'm really close with my roommates. I see them as an extension of my family. I consider them like brothers of mine. One of them is the brother of my brother's best friend. Just the other day, I asked one of my roommates to come watch me play IM basketball. He was sorta skeptical, he told me that he doesn't like to watch other people play because he said some other people on the team are rude. I asked him if I was like

that, because I get really into the game too when I'm on the court. I asked if I neglected someone or whatever. He said, no not you. But I felt like he wasn't really being up front with me, so I said, 'listen man, say anything you want, I won't get offended. And that's not because you can't say anything offensive, it's because I know who you are – you're my buddy, so just say what's on your mind.' Similarly, another roommate and I are also close. I tell both of my roommates as much as I would tell anyone. Then again, I think I am an arrogant person with plenty of egotistical thoughts. It's awful, it's hereditary. That's the best I can do to deflate it by calling it hereditary *[laughs at self mockingly]*. But really, I'll talk with this guy about anything, whether it's something as little as 'I'm dealing with this problem, can you help me out?' or something big.

CWE: Do you ever talk about that relationship? Is it ever spoken or is it usually just shown?

Salim: Hmm, I think it's spoken much less than shown. But when it is spoken, it's when they need help from me or I need help from them. The response after helping is like 'of course, man, anytime, I'm there for you.' With my brother or those other friends, I have told them a number of times in that meaningful way that I love them, but not so much with these guys [roommates]. Maybe the dynamic of the relationship is such that you just show it, and saying it is just not necessary. I don't want to say that they're uncomfortable with that or anything, cause these are very mature guys, but… maybe I'm misperceiving it. Maybe I'll tell them today that I love them too."

So to return to our three examples or Aman, Cymande, and Salim, it seems there is a difference between spending enough time in a region with different cultural norms, and actually identifying oneself as being a part of that culture – claiming it as a part of your identity. Aman and Cymande claim that they are comfortable seeing other men hold hands, but they are more emphatically uncomfortable holding other men's hands even than the other participants who have not spent time in the Middle East or South Asia. This may suggest that exposure alone to other cultures can often have the unintended consequence of solidifying one's own cultural mores in one's behavioral repertoire.

Jeff indicated the highest level of conflict on the survey around this affectionate behavior between men. Again, Jeff is an outgoing mainstream white male Presbyterian with a peer group that stretches widely from his campus ministry to his social fraternity.

When reviewing his data profile, Jeff suggested again that there may be some

discrepancies based on contexts in which he finds himself.

CWE: "This says that you experience a little bit more of that conflict, certainly in relation to some of the other factors. Would you say that's generally true?

Jeff: Oh, I guess that's what the answers say, but I dunno. I sorta disagree with that. I mean, I can't really speak too much for the average because I only interacted with everyone else so much, but I guess this surprises me that I'm more restricted over here. I think of myself as more affectionate than average – than most of my friends.

CWE: To be more specific, the questions that led to this factor are: 23, 28, 33, 35, 36. Do those specific questions make you think about this any differently?

Jeff: Okay, [pauses] umm. Yeah, I guess I did answer them mostly with 3s and 4s. [long pause] I guess maybe it's more of a thing about me thinking that I'm not as restrictive, but when it comes down to actual situations and questions, then it does come out more.

CWE: So when you think about this question of Restrictive Affectionate Behavior between Men, where would you put yourself on this scale?

Jeff: Umm, I mean, I guess it depends a lot on who I'm comparing myself with. Like, if I'm comparing myself with the group, then I guess this is more accurate. If I'm comparing myself with my friends and peer group, I'd probably lower it. If I'm comparing myself with everyone, I'd also probably lower it.

CWE: What types of things would you identify as behaviors that make it lower?

Jeff: I guess just like more affectionate greetings, using hugging as a greeting instead of just verbal stuff or a handshake. But instead, it's more like 'hey, man, haven't seen you in a while, it's good to see you.' That kind of thing. I guess even putting my arm around someone, which sometimes makes someone uncomfortable."

Jeff invited me to attend a dinner and discussion event at his church group. Jeff is

the student leader for the Presbyterian Student Fellowship on campus, and this was the

place that Jeff identified as one that he considers to be particularly spiritual for him. I

joined the group of about 15 students just as dinner was being served. Jeff sat at the head

of the table with another fourth-year female student. The conversations at the table were

casual and light-hearted, and Jeff seemed to try to engage most other students at the table.

There was only one other young man in this group, and Jeff did not seem to be nearly as friendly with him as some of the other young women in the group. After dinner, the group broke for a discussion in another room. Jeff took on a slightly more serious role in this discussion, asking questions of the campus minister who was leading the discussion, but still bantering playfully with his female counterpart to keep the mood light as needed. The questions Jeff asked were about how she chose to enter into ministry, and he expressed a fair degree of vulnerability by asking some good questions about working through doubt about one's faith. Of course, it is not surprising that Jeff was much more outgoing in this setting, as he is in a position of leadership and is clearly more comfortable with this group of students. But this made me recognize the contrast between this setting and what he describes as the setting with his fraternity brothers. Jeff's survey responses indicated a notable degree of conflict with being hesitant to express his affection to other men, and that expressing his emotions to other men is risky. By contrast, he showed some vulnerability (not to mention the playful – [sic] flirty – banter) with the ministry group that I would surmise he would not have done with his fraternity brothers. Instead, he indicates that expressing this kind of vulnerability may even be a risky enterprise in the context of all-male groups.

It became quite clear throughout most of the interviews that these college men consider groups of friends differently by their gender composition. There are groups of 'the guys' and all other groups. With the introduction of one female friend, ranging to groups comprised entirely of females, the nature and function of the peer group changes for young men. For those participants who have considerable contact with homosocial all-male groups, they noted that they value those peer groups with at least some females

because they are less risky outlets to share more openly about delicate or personal topics. A number of participants, however, also mentioned that the small circles of their closest friends are other men with whom they would share anything. Cymande mentioned that "on the peripheral level of friendship, I'm probably friends with more women than men, but when it goes deep down to the core of who I really identify with the most, it's definitely men. There's definitely a depth with my guy friends. Yeah, I might complain about stuff on the surface, but the deep-down issues like those deep existential ideas that threaten my life, or that pose to threaten me or the way I think – I do have a much easier time talking about those with my male friends than with the lady friends." I am fascinated with Cymande's use of "threaten" here. Was he trying to say 'those things that impact me or are meaningful to me' instead? No, he uses threaten, which carries with it a more profound sense of gravity. It is as if he is recruiting his male compatriots to fight with him against those ideological or experiential foes which intrude on his way of being or believing. Cymande's imagery of spiritual warfare is palpable, and his band of brothers certainly appears to have his back.

Prasham picks up on considerable differences across his male and female friends also. "I'd hope [my closest group of guy friends] would consider me to be pretty loyal. I do believe in putting humans first over materials, grades and all that. If someone needs my help and I have a test the next day, they're gong to get it – that's a no-brainer for me. So I'd hope they see me as dependable, loyal, pretty caring – if my friends go through some pain, I do definitely feel a portion of it. And these are my close male friends I'm speaking of… I do think there is a difference between my male and female friends, because the same interactions with female friends are just judged differently. I'm really

not sure how my closer female friends perceive me." Prasham seems to attribute different value to his group of male friends. He sees this as the currency of loyalty, but also seems unwilling or unable to attribute the same kind of value to his group of female friends. Prasham also asked to revise his response to one question on the survey – "I am more comfortable expressing my appreciation of relationships with women as opposed to men." He says "Now that I look at that question again, I'd probably change my response to 3 (somewhat disagree) or 2 (mostly disagree) – no, definitely a 2. I was thinking about romantic relationships, not relationships broadly. I've had plenty of chances to tell guys that I'm really glad they're a friend."

In these last two sections, I have mostly highlighted the upper and lower outliers in factors for Restrictive Emotionality and Restrictive Affectionate Behavior between Men. The reality, however, is that the college men in this study experience relatively little psychological conflict in these two areas. These two are typically cited as the most blatant sources of gender role conflict – the psychological scapegoats by which hegemonic masculinity applies its vice grips on the hearts and minds of young men. The social messages are consistent using their own words: "Be hard, be tough, don't cry boys, you can half-hug each other – but only with a grunt and two slaps on the back, no sissy stuff, and save that I Love You business for Valentine's Day." Though these messages are likely the most pervasive, data from both this study and normative studies on Gender Role Conflict, however, do not support these two (RE & RABM) as the *most influential* sources of conflict for men of all ages.

Success, Power & Competition (SPC)

Overwhelmingly, the factor which most dramatically contributes to men's gender role conflict is their drive for Success, Power, & Competition (O'Neil, 2010). I would argue that most college students find themselves constantly in the cross-hairs of this factor. The college application process rewards those who achieve, and a culture of competitive application for awards, scholarships, leadership roles, and other types of recognition at many colleges across the country continues to breed the expectations that our value as individuals is substantiated based on our success, how much power we can garner, and how much we win. The college men in this study support my assertion that the SPC factor is one that they experience on average most substantially than all the other gender role conflict factors.

Fred carries the banner for this SPC factor most clearly through the survey, 'mostly agreeing' with the majority of the five questions. Fred experiences this factor mostly through an expectation that he needs to be financially stable as quickly as possible in order to support and provide for himself and his future family. He returned often to this "Be the Big Wheel" position throughout his interviews and the dialogue groups. During our first conversation, he told me that "I was engrained with this 'You're the *man* of the family'-type thing when I was much younger. I was engrained with it, but it very quickly became something self-imposed that and now I equate my masculinity with needing to provide for my family, like my future family and my sisters and my parents. I come from a world of privilege so it's not like anyone is necessarily telling me this and my sisters both support themselves and have great jobs… I know it's not true, but I still think this type of stuff and they don't think that at all, they're like 'you're the little

brother, who cares!' But it does mean something to me… I'm applying for these

fellowships that don't really make any money next year, and my parents are fine with

that, but I'm not so fine with that. I just don't want to ever have to ask them for money

again, and I equate that with these embedded views of what masculinity should be… I

equate masculinity with security, with providing, with finances. It's just like being in

your own shoes."

For as much as Fred is motivated to succeed and achieve (financial) stability and

independence, he is not a status-seeker in the same way. He is less concerned about how

others judge his performance, using his own measures of quality and success instead, and

he does not seem to be motivated to pursue traditional leadership roles that his peers

seem to value. "I can say that I lead from any chair. I lead as a follower, or whatever

these b.s. terms are. But I don't need to be President necessarily, which doesn't bode

well in job interviews, but it bodes well in life." Fred emphatically agreed with his score

on this SPC factor:

CWE: "Your score on this Success, Power & Competition factor is 4.6, meaning that you
mostly agree that you experience this conflict. This highlights your need for success and
achievement, and the Be a Big wheel phenomenon we discussed in the dialogue group.
Do you think this is accurate?

Fred: So this is saying that I need that more than the average of the rest of the group?
Yeah, that's true.

CWE: Almost, this is saying that you do feel that pressure to succeed and achieve, and
that you experience some psychological conflict as a result of that.

Fred: Yeah, I used to lie about it, but I don't anymore, so that's good. But then the group
says it's not as much of a priority.

CWE: Yeah, the group is pretty much dead-center on this one.

Fred: So the group is saying, 'yeah, I'm going to provide, but it's not going to pervade my mind all day. But I'm like 'Yeah, it does pervade my mind all day?' *[I respond affirmatively]* Cool! Yeah, for sure. WOW."

Prasham also had a higher score on the SPC factor. It was interesting to see the two upper outliers in this factor own their scores so completely.

CWE: "So I'd like to point you first to this Need for Success & Achievement [SPC] score of yours. At 4.4 out of 6 points, this would indicate that you do experience some psychological conflict around that drive to achieve. Would you say that is accurate?

Prasham: Definitely, 100% sure. I completely, completely agree with that line. Need of success and achievement definitely drives me, as it does a lot of people. But me more so than others judging from this? Yeah, I can agree with that."

Prasham is a second-year student while Fred is a fourth-year student. These age differences became noticeable through some of the ways that they talked about success and achievement. Fred was perpetually focused on doing well so he could get that good job and earn a stable income post-graduation. At the time of his first interview with me, he was still travelling with job interviews. He received his first job offer just prior to our first dialogue group, which he shared during our first meeting, and he accepted that position just prior to the final dialogue group meeting. So career aspirations and the job search were at the forefront for Fred throughout our time together, perhaps lending him to more clearly connect success and achievement in general directly to career and finances. On the other hand, when Prasham discussed success and achievement, it was mostly related to academic performance and achieving good grades on exams. And Prasham's responses on the survey indicated that he agreed with all SPC questions except for the one about connecting his personal value by his career aspirations or success. By contrast, Fred felt more strongly on this question that career aspirations or success are contributors to his personal value.

On the other side, Aaron presented the lowest score among participants for this SPC factor. Aaron was the only upper division (third- or fourth-year) student to not connect his personal value to career aspirations or success.

CWE: "The next factor is about a Need for Success and Achievement. This is the Be the Big Wheel force around the man box. It's about being the provider, status-seeking, etc. In this one, you disagreed with this one slightly. Would you say that this [points to score] is generally true for you?

Aaron: Umm-huh. I do have some sortof – I do think that the most that this comes out is in the spiritual sense. Like, I find myself comparing myself to others in that way, which I don't necessarily think is healthy. But yeah, I don't have very lofty material goals at this point.

CWE: hmm, so you see people who are spiritually successful, or more devoted, or more what?

Aaron: yeah, I do. Maybe more devoted or almost that their life is more focused than mine is. And I think 'why can't I do that?' and what enables them to do that that I cannot seem to do? Then I do this comparison kind of thing.

CWE: is that *focused* in terms of a sense of purpose, or…?

Aaron: yeah, sense of purpose, or like able to… I have a friend who is doing a master's program in religious studies. He seems to be able to have chosen a small number of vocations in life, and he orients himself entirely around those. Whereas I find myself, like, often drifting, much more subject to the whims of my circumstance. In some cases, I think that's a valuable trait, but in some senses I'm trying to work on it. And so that might be an example."

Aaron was accepted into the Teach For America program, which is taking him to New Mexico to teach on a reservation. He expressed a strong desire not to climb the traditional career ladder, and he does not connect money to his ideas about being a successful man. However, he does have a competitive inkling as described above. He admires people who achieve clarity of purpose, and who commit themselves wholeheartedly to those purposes. Authenticity and discernment are much clearer

priorities for Aaron. "This will be a good couple of years of discernment to figure out what I really want to do, and actually like doing." Aaron had some of the highest scores for Spiritual Quest and Spiritual Commitment, and he clearly makes the connections between being successful and following or committing to one's spiritual journey. He is electing to do that by following a desire to serve out to a classroom in New Mexico, and by making himself open to discernment as to his next steps beyond that.

Conflict between Work, School, Leisure & Family (CWSF)

The final factor, Conflict between Work, School, Leisure & Family, demonstrates the difficulties a young man faces balancing work-school and family relationships, resulting in potential health problems, overwork, stress, and a lack of leisure and relaxation. This factor presented an interesting pattern of conflict across a student's tenure at the University. The three fourth-year students exhibited the highest levels of conflict, which Aaron describes well during his debriefing interview:

CWE: "These data [for CWSF = 4.8 out of 6.0] say that you may feel psychological conflict around balancing your time and priorities related to work and school and family/friends.

Fred: So did the second-years present over here [points to 'less conflict' side of scale] and fourth-years were over here [high conflict]? I've always been on this left [high conflict] side with this one. Hmm, no, maybe not. Actually, that's a complete lie. I totally remember being a second year and the idea of supporting myself was just not real. I thought, Oh, of course that'll happen, that's what happens after college. But it wasn't concrete, even though I saw my sisters do that. It just didn't register… and the relaxing one, I get that crap from my friends all the time. They ask Why can't you just not do anything, why can't you just sit there and watch the football game? I mean, I've done that before, but it's like I'm so obsessed with efficiency of time. Granted, I'm not good

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at efficiency, but I'm just obsessed with it. I definitely waste time, but as long as I'm *thinking* that I'm being productive, that's good."

So Fred recalls that he experienced much less of this CWSF conflict when he was a second-year student in college. My observations in this study, and in working with college students over the last ten years, has been that this type of conflict over using and balancing one's time follows somewhat of a sine wave over the course of a student's college career. Most students begin as college freshmen with recognizable conflict around balancing work, leisure, and family/friend relationships. This conflict subsides around second or third year when they settle into patterns and active community roles. Then the conflict peaks again toward the end of the college career, often with more intensity, as students begin job searches and decide on their future as college seniors. This can be fairly intuitive given the circumstances of most students at the beginning and end of their time at school. First-year students have the fastest learning curve, and they are constantly barraged by the pull of new and interesting activities or peer groups, so their free time is often spent exploring these new things with less structured understanding of how they enjoy leisure time at college. They often are away from home for the first extended period of time, creating some conflict in their family relational lives. Then, of course, they have to develop patterns of 'work' in classes, which can also be exacerbated in their second year when they begin to choose a major.

So this conflict between work, leisure, and family begins at a high level in college. Then, we can see that the conflict presents at the end of college even higher, as most students are forced to make difficult life decisions about where to go and how to live for themselves. Aaron (another fourth-year) describes this in his debriefing

interview. "I feel like I've made some very close connections here, and all these people I'm sortof leaving to go to NM. In some ways, I feel like [moving west] is a more inner self pursuit at the moment… and I think some people that I am closer with here may be disappointed in me for doing this, but my family especially is mostly excited for me." Aaron described his decision to move west and teach on the Navajo reservation as a more self-focused pursuit at this point in his life. He struggles with the idea that he is leaving all of his friends behind, and though his family seems very supportive, he also mentioned that he will want to talk to them more regularly to maintain a better connection than what he has had recently.

The midpoint of one's college career tends to show relatively stable conflict around this CWSF factor. Salim scored the lowest on this factor by far with a score of 1.7 out of 6 (group mean=3.2), indicating that he feels strongly that this is not a source of conflict for him. You may recall that Salim is in the middle of this group in terms of number of semesters completed. Salim seems to have found a good balance of leisure – which for him is playing basketball at the gym – and work. He also sees his family quite a bit for religious services at home, so he chooses to spend time with his family quite regularly. One question in this CWSF factor elicited the most noteworthy group response to any question on the survey. The group mostly agreed that they "feel torn between my hectic work schedule and caring for my health." This CWSF factor overall measures compromises for how college men spend their time, and this question indicates that the men are much more likely to sacrifice their own health if it means they can accomplish a goal at work or school. This premise is likely conflated with the Success, Power, and Competition (SPC) factor, which shows a similar sine wave trend pattern across the

college career. For example, a student would clearly be more likely to sacrifice his health to achieve a goal if he is driven to success or competitive by nature (or nurture, rather?).

Digesting Dialogical Narrative Data

This chapter presents data collected across surveys, pre- and post-interviews, observations, and dialogue groups. Surveys were compiled and analyzed for trends across composite factors, which were integrated into a rich and detailed set of qualitative data to offer narrative snapshots of each participant. I have introduced each of these participants to you individually, and in aggregate across themes related to both their spiritual and masculine identities, attempting to bridge these two aspects of identity into a more cohesive whole. Moving forward, I will build on this narrative foundation by continuing to tell participants' stories and to weave that back into the identity literature to produce an integrated, and hopefully useful, theoretical model.

Chapter 5 : Findings & Emerging Theory – Transcendence Model of Identity Construction

In the literature review chapter, I presented two distinct fields of literature for masculine and spiritual identity development, and began to outline where the two fields diverge. I noted three areas of disconnection in particular as self-authorship, connectedness, and ethic of care or centricity. The previous chapter presented quantitative and qualitative data collected and sorted according to their relevance to composite factors pertaining to both spiritual and masculine identity, keeping these disconnections from literature in mind. I found that these disconnections in literature did not necessarily align with the data collected. In fact, the men consistently identified that they were familiar with the hegemonic masculine norms, but they do not feel compelled to emanate them entirely, recognizing that they are not realistic. Instead, they identify masculine archetypes (role models – mostly known but some historical) who they choose to identify with and aspire toward along certain admirable qualities which they then attribute to be masculine ideals. Their sense of spiritual selves often also hinges on trusted others who welcome them into communities of belief or faith practice. This chapter presents a model which integrates both aspects of identity, recognizing that we can never fully isolate one from the other. Instead, we develop as whole people along multiple dimensions of the self that expand beyond meeting one's own immediate needs.

Revisit Five Propositions for Spiritual Development

The five propositions for spiritual development proposed by Love & Talbot (1999) offer an excellent starting point to discuss my developing theory. In general,

participants in this study supported most of the five propositions, and contributed some

valuable insights into their nuances. Again, the five include:

1. Spiritual Development involves deriving meaning, purpose, and direction in

one's life.

2. Spiritual Development involves an internal process of seeking personal

authenticity, genuineness, and wholeness as an aspect of identity development.

3. Spiritual Development involves a greater connectedness to self and others

through relationships and connection with communities.

4. Spiritual Development involves the process of continually transcending one's

locus of centricity.

5. Spiritual Development involves an openness to exploring a relationship with an

intangible and pervasive power or essence that exists beyond human existence

and rational human knowing.

I re-structured these five elements into this order deliberately, as they build with

an increasingly wider focus, moving from the distinctly inner work of meaning-making to

transcending the self. This is not to say that these

five elements are experienced chronologically, but

rather that they are experienced with variations of

relative proximity. As such, in order to build a

model, I will borrow heavily from developmental

psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological

Systems Theory (1979). In this theory,

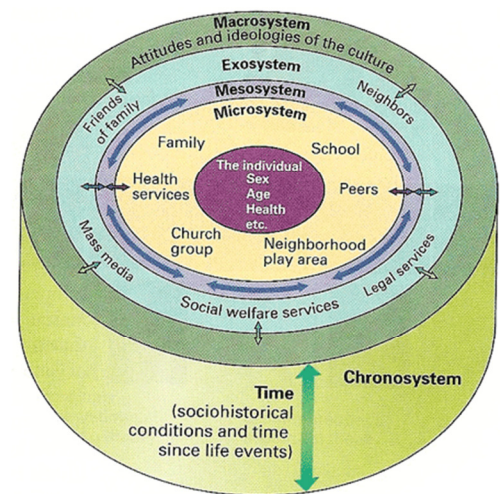Bronfenbrenner claimed that a person's

**Figure 8: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological
Systems Theory**

development reflects the influence of several environmental systems, and he identified five of these systems, as illustrated in this graphic, working outward in concentric circles from the individual at the center.

Similarly, my emerging theory for identity construction below positions adaptations of Love & Talbot's five considerations in concentric circles that I call dimensions, which function similarly to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model, to demonstrate their social proximity to and influence on the individual. I asked each participant in this study about their thoughts on this developing theory during debriefing interviews, which served to further refine the theory. The resulting diagram and detailed
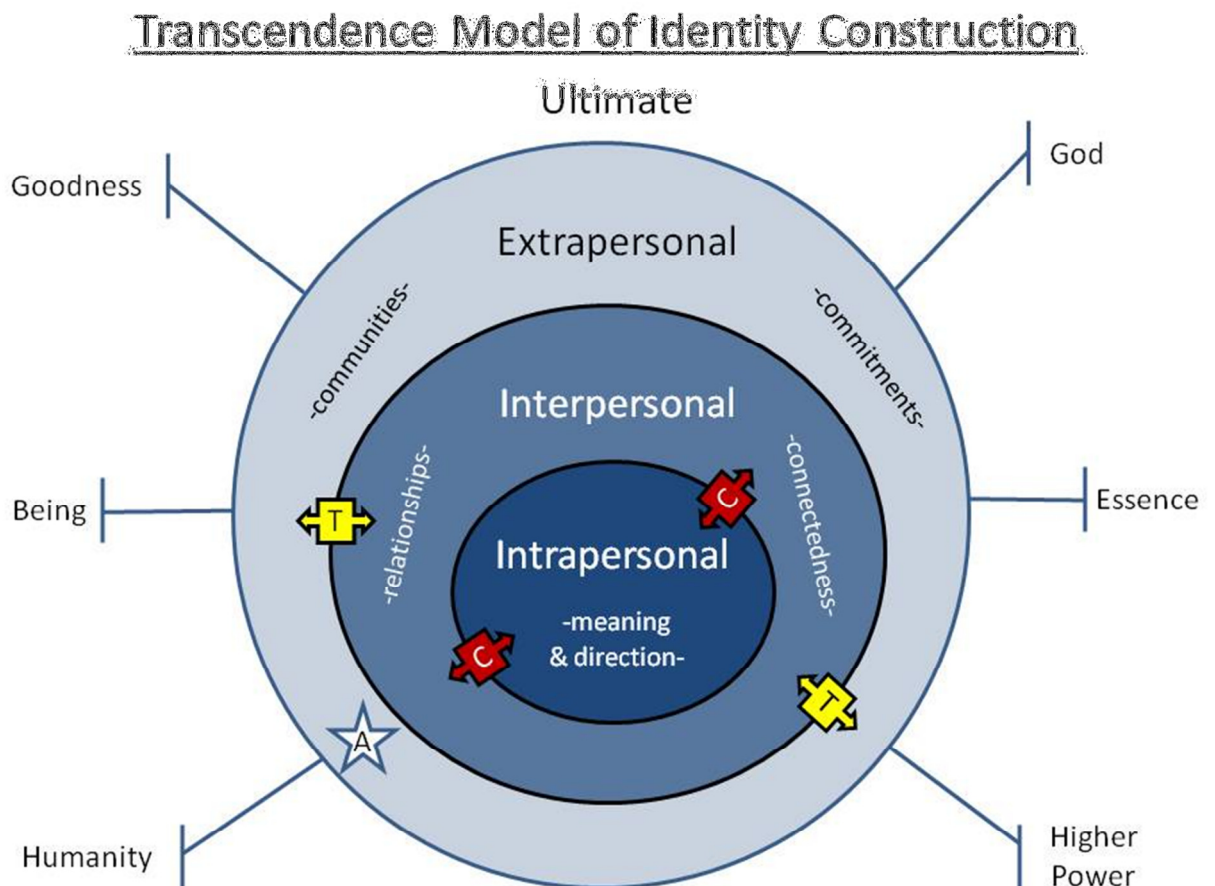

Figure 9: Emerging Theory: Transcendence Model of Identity Construction

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explanation of each dimension is presented with supporting data from study participants.

Dimensions are not intended to be stages or hierarchies, but they are symbolic spaces representing one's centricity or center of focus. For example, if I turn my gaze outside of myself and prioritize spending time with my family and working on those relationships, my center of focus is in the interpersonal dimension. However, one cannot operate solely in any single dimension, and that family time also impacts me personally as I internalize it as meaningful and attribute it to my externalized projection of being a good son, partner, father, etc. So this one simple example touches on all personal dimensions in the model. In addition to the four dimensions (Intra-, Inter-, Extra-personal, and the Dimension of the Ultimate), I will explain two interesting transition points (Congruency and Transcendence, labeled 'C' and 'T' in the model above), which I call 'channels', that emerged from the data and supporting literature. For each dimension and channel described below, I will include data points from the young men's narratives in the study as well as some questions that emerge as a result of one's centeredness in that particular dimension.

Intrapersonal Dimension (Inner Self): Meaning-Making and Directionality

"It is purpose that created us, Purpose that connects us, Purpose that pulls us, That guides us, That drives us, It is purpose that defines, Purpose that binds us." ~Agent Smith in 'The Matrix'

The innermost dimension in this model is called the Intrapersonal Dimension. This dimension presents a classical, though narrow, definition for spirituality as a very

personal search for meaning, purpose, and direction in one's life. My example of the clipper ships comes into play in this dimension, where we ask ourselves meaningful and directional questions like 'Who am I, What am I, Whence did I come, What is my destination?' These questions were all spoken by Mary Shelley's Frankenstein character, but his cries for meaning are not at all unfamiliar to college students who endure some of the most formative years of their lives working in the direction of seemingly suitable solutions. This dimension is entirely focused on the interior, on our process of attributing things, events, people, and interactions as meaningful or purposive. Why did it have to happen that way? What does that tell me about myself or my situation? Fred agreed that:

> "These all seem to be the questions that I'm asking. Yeah, all this meaning, purpose stuff makes sense to me, sure. I guess I see purpose and meaning as very similar. My purpose here is to – I have two purposes, which I think change all the time. But they are to create as best a life as possible, whatever that means for me and my descendents, but also to improve the lives of as many people as I can out there. That's purpose, but I guess it's pretty much the same as my meaning too, my existence."

But there *is* a difference between meaning and purpose that is important to clarify. Nash & Murray (2010) draw the distinction nicely:

"*Meaning* is all about those interpretations, narrative frameworks, philosophical rationales and perspectives, and faith or belief systems that each of us brings to the various worlds in which we live, love, learn, work, and worship. *Purpose* has to do with pursuing certain goals, reaching resolutions, seeking results, and realizing particular objectives and ends in those worlds."

So perhaps simply, meanings are what we believe and purposes what we pursue. Both are internally-centered because they are attributed as either meaningful or purposive individually. Of course, there are always people, organizations, or advertisements that try to tell (or sell) us what is meaningful or necessary, but ultimately, we have the ability to choose our own attribution of meaning. Nash & Murray agree with social psychologist

Roy Baumeister (1991), who claims that every one of us strives toward "an existential shopping list" to satisfy our need for meaning and make sense of the world and our lives in four basic ways: purpose, value, efficacy, and self-worth.

I asked the college men in this study to identify what means for them to be men, and how they came to believe these ideas. Every one of them mentioned their fathers or an older male figure that taught them – by example or adage – that to be a man means something. Half of the young men indicated that their mothers were also instrumental in teaching this gendered messaging, and most cited points of comparison with messages their sisters were told about being a woman. Interestingly, these messages they cited for their sisters were not at all the stereotypically traditional gender roles for young women (find a good husband, be polite, learn to nurture, etc.), but more modern examples of not getting caught up in material beauty, standing on your own two feet, and being anything that you want to be. The messages for the young men on the other hand, were about being courageous, solid, secure, responsible, working hard and providing for the family, yet also being moral, loving, accountable for your words and actions, emotionally stable, and 'courageously compassionate.'

Figure 10: Sources of Meaning during Childhood

Another aspect of personal meaning is recognizing, feeling, and expressing one's emotional experiences, despite the extent to which they could make a young man feel vulnerable. In order to understand what an experience means – in this case, what it means to identify as a man – it is important for
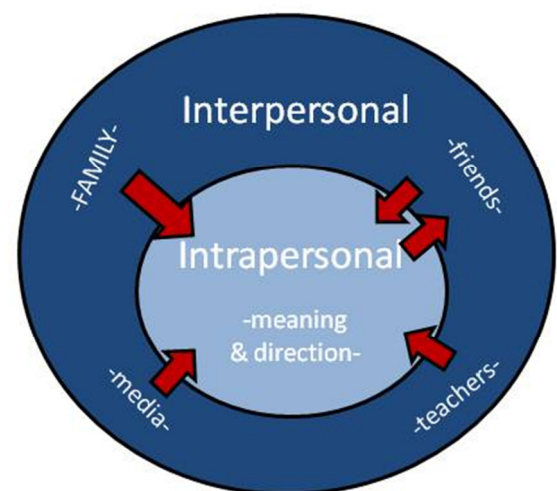
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young men to acknowledge the feelings of pleasure, pain, fear, pride, apprehension, contentment, etc. that accompany this aspect of one's identity. This emotional exploration can be tricky for young men, and the environment in which it is done can make a great deal of difference in the comfort they feel in doing this often challenging work. I will return to how this environment matters in the final chapter.

When asked about turning points in their development as boys and men, a consistent part of the masculine messaging for the college men in this study was a turn from solely receiving those messages to beginning to internalize them. As discussed in the literature review about self-authorship, Kegan (1994) suggests that students often enter college viewing knowledge as externally-validated and possessed by authorities. They gradually shift from viewing themselves as mere receivers to constructors of knowledge, followed by intrapersonal meaning-making based on self-knowledge, and finally connecting those meanings to interpersonal relationships and contexts. This framework in literature reiterates the necessity to view identity using this multi-dimensional lens. As this figure indicates, young people experience this messaging gradient primarily as recipients, though they certainly do their share of relaying these received messages to one another as peers. So the Interpersonal Dimension plays a critical role, especially in one's early development, as the surrounding world contributes all of her secrets to a young person. Almost all meaning is provided for young people externally, until adolescence emerges with its identity formation and role confusion. For young adolescent males, as discussed by the men in this study, they receive these messages about what it means for them to eventually be men almost entirely from trusted older men in their lives, some also from their mothers and sisters, and a relatively small

amount from media and other sources which often lack credibility even for young boys. This was an interesting finding given how much society implicates media in the problematic constructions of anti-social patterns of behavior.

As an adolescent boy develops into an emerging adult, that locus of meaning shifts from external sources to an internalized ability for the adolescent or young adult to process various sources of information and value them independently as credible or meaningful. This also becomes more possible as a young person becomes more independent with his time and choices – choosing what to watch on television, with whom he'd like to spend his time (online or otherwise), and then what to study in college and how to be involved on the campus. Identity begins to develop when young people internalize messages from this variety of sources and begin to critically consume them as meaningful or purposive.

In addition to meaning and purpose, another feature of the Intrapersonal Dimension is directionality. Though I will explain the outermost Dimension of the Ultimate later, it is important to note that this Ultimate Dimension impacts the Intrapersonal Dimension as well by providing an overarching direction for one's pursuit. Prasham says that "the spiritual aspects of my religion have definitely helped me focus my efforts toward a goal and given me a general feeling of belonging and purpose and a reason to do what I do." And Jeff adds that "I would try to explain it and nuance [the idea of direction] by saying that it is not necessarily one direction or a single path that is right for me. It's more of like, I guess a sort of guide and drive – like a guiding, driving force. I would call it God more than just thinking that there's a direction or a destiny for me." As shown in the overall model, there are a number of these directions listed in the

Dimension of the Ultimate – Goodness, God, Higher Power, Being, etc.). Some of the men in this study were very clear about there being one Ultimate (God or Ohm) while others indicated multiple directions.

So what we see here is that those forces, beings, or ideas which participants identified as Ultimate have an impact in all dimensions. As such, the model is designed as a nested one where all dimensions exist inside the framework of what the participant considers to be Ultimate. Directionality suggests that there is guidance in one's effort, behavior, or thought. That guidance, as Jeff mentions above, can come from one's understanding of God, or from one's enduring beliefs in human goodness or communities in which one partakes. Directionality is another way of saying that the intrapersonal is often linked or pointing in the direction of one externality or another. For example, Fred begins his This I Believe statement with "I believe in people, stories, and relationships." He generates a tremendous amount of internalized meaning around time spent with people, reconnecting with old friends, and time spent with his family. This is Fred's default, to which he consistently returns to find meaning and which points him outward toward the next Interpersonal dimension to validate the innermost one.

Congruency Channels: Transition between Inner and Social Self

"Knowing others is wisdom; knowing the self is enlightenment" ~Tao Te Ching

The intersection between one's inner self and one's social self is the clearest transition between dimensions in this model. At first glance, my skin is a physical barrier that separates my body from the outside world, keeping out dangerous inputs and keeping in necessary parts. Similarly, one's sense of self can be envisioned as an inner self, that

which is strictly interior, and a social self, that which is projected into the world, with a barrier in our consciousness that filters from one to the other.

Just like a cell membrane has channel proteins to transport and regulate the exchange of substances across the membrane (see fig. 11), Congruency channels function as gatekeepers between the inner and social self. This represents a process of seeking personal authenticity,

Figure 11: Channel Proteins spanning across a cell membrane

a unitary sense of self that is aligned between one's beliefs and actions. This exists as a channel, and not a separate dimension through which one passes, in this model because it is a *process* that one engages. This process requires that an individual develop the cognitive ability to recognize how he is projecting himself to other people, and to simultaneously be self-aware enough to see how that projected, social self aligns with his own beliefs about himself.

Figure 12: Congruency Channels align beliefs and actions

For example, if a young man believes that he is a caring and compassionate friend, that may begin as an untested belief about himself. Over time, he will have the opportunities to demonstrate that care for his friends. This Congruency channel becomes an active part of one's identity development
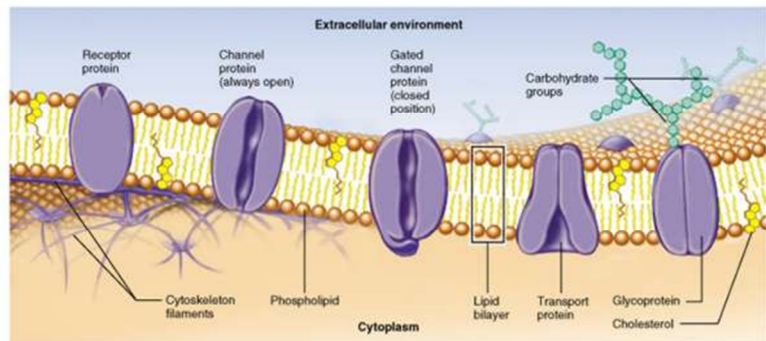
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when an individual aligns his espoused values and engendered beliefs. This could work

in any number of directions, but comes into play most dramatically in a college setting.

The transition to college is a remarkable one because a freshman begins their first college

class with an opportunity to forge their own meaning, sometimes for the first time apart

from their family's direct influence. Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) suggest in their

conceptual model of multiple identities that individuals filter contextual influences such

that not all features of one's many contexts pass through immediately to influence one's

identity. Instead, one develops a more sophisticated filter over time to filter (and make

meaning of) more complex influences in one's life. This filter of Abes, Jones, and

McEwen functions similarly to my Congruency Channels in this model.

Along with that meaning-making, through filters or channels, come choices about

peer groups and how one would like to prioritize or spend his interpersonal time. All of

those choices create channels from the Intra- to the Interpersonal dimensions. As a point

of comparison, figure 10 above described a mostly uni-directional influx of meaning

messaging from external sources to the Intrapersonal Dimension. However, figure 12

shows how an emerging adult or college student can create bidirectional channels where

the inner self is impacted by personal relationships, and the social self is informed by

deeply held meanings and beliefs. Even these bidirectional channels may have different

strength in one direction or another, as in figure 12 also where two of the three

congruency channels are evenly directional, but the third (bottom-right) has a larger

arrow pointing outward than the one pointing inward. This would suggest that the young

man focuses more of his attention in one of his relationships on the social interaction with

less of a focus on what it means to him personally. His centricity is more socially-oriented than it is centered in his own inner thoughts and feelings.

These channels can function just like carrier proteins in a cell membrane to regulate the congruency between one's beliefs and actions, depending on the social settings in which one finds himself. For example, a number of the college men talked about differences between their relationships with other men and their relationships with women. As figure 12 indicates, these different social settings may cause the young men to create two different congruency channels to account for the different ways that they demonstrate care toward their groups of friends. In fact, they may actually create congruency channels that function differently for each of their friendships, but to streamline this example, we can rely on the oversimplified (and frankly tired) distinction between gendered relationships. As Cymande mentioned during his interview in the previous chapter, he attributes a different value to his relationships with men. He likely has more female friends than male friends, but he *identifies* more with the men so he is able to go deeper in their substantive connections. So he sets up a wider congruency channel with these relationships so that he gives more of himself and purportedly internalizes more meaning as a result of the interaction with his buddies. This is not to say that all participants feel more connected to their male friends, but most suggested that is often the case. And strikingly, this group of seven college men expressed relatively little gendered conflict around restrictive affectionate behavior between men. This would lead me to believe that the group has a somewhat uncommon comfort with expressing themselves in all-male homo-social company, or minimally between individual men. Most indicated that they were comfortable hugging their guy friends and finding ways to

let them know that they are appreciated and valued (though rarely actually using those words). All participants indicated that their best friends are almost always other men. This datum also suggests that participants in this study have constructed fairly wide channels of bilateral exchange across Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Dimensions when those channels connect them to other men.

On the other hand, a number of the participants described their filial relationships with women. Some described these friendships as somewhat more superficial, and most agreed that they did not carry the same gravitas as their guy friendships. Even when my interview questions intentionally had nothing to do with a comparison across genders, participants frequently made those connections on their own. The gender binary is a pervasive message that is surely a challenging one to ignore. Those participants who identified as straight men, however, described intimate relationships with women very differently. These relationships seem to establish more substantive congruency channels because they seem to more directly impact one's deeply-held beliefs about being a good partner. Of course, there were differences between those who have just started dating and those who were in long-term committed relationships, so the efficacy of the channel to align one's espoused and engendered beliefs seemed to be directly proportional to the seriousness of commitment he felt toward the relationship. Aaron in particular shared a good deal about his girlfriend and the type of relationship they had, which he seemed to value above all others, frequently on the same level as his familial relationships. Hence, it was clear that partner relationships tend to operate through their own congruency channel. "Certainly, my girlfriend is a different kind of relationship entirely... I think [emotional expression] is a really important part of affirming [our] relationship. Like, my

girlfriend is expressive, she needs this affirmation more consistently. Whereas my roommate, he's never told me he doesn't need it, but I know it, so we'll say we love each other sometimes, but it won't be every day – maybe once a month."

It is important to note that the separation between intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions does not describe the separation between an individual and his social contexts. Rather, this model as an identity construction model pertains entirely to the centricity within which one operates. So the individual's own identity has both inner and social aspects, but they are all part of that same narrative of self. Again, traditionally, spirituality was considered to be just the interior beliefs, meanings, and purposes to which an individual commits. But a more modern perspective on spirituality views those beliefs, meanings and purposes as inextricably nested in relationships, communities, and historical narratives over time. The congruency channel described above sets up a feedback loop across the inner-social self gradient, highlighting inconsistencies if they exist between the private and the public self. If I have a completely open relationship and tell my friend everything that is on my mind, the channel would be completely open – though I doubt this could ever really be true. Sometimes I may be a much better listener than sharer with friends, who do not necessarily see me in the whole, but instead as a fragmented amalgamation of brief stories and opinions. In this case, the congruency channel filters a great deal of the inner self before it passes outward into the dimensions of the social self. With other friends, I may regularly contribute more than I listen and internalize, so my congruency channel gradient in the opposite direction serves as a very light filter. An individual might find that his friendships are often built one way or another just because his personality lends itself to a certain type of exchange among his

friends. Though I risk extending the metaphor too far, I would also suggest that in order

to compel a relationship to operate in an opposite direction than how the congruency

gradient is naturally set up will require an expenditure of energy (ATP moves particles

against a concentration gradient) on the part of one or both parties in the relationship.

Interpersonal Dimension (Social Self): Relationships & Connectedness

"Man can no longer live for himself alone. We must realize that all life is valuable and

that we are united to all life. From this knowledge comes our spiritual relationship with

the universe." ~Albert Schweitzer

The Interpersonal Dimension is the relational epicenter of identity construction.

This dimension is also the center of some of the most interesting intersections between

spiritual and masculine identities, as they emerged in my study. And Fred is

unquestionably the poster child for college men who attribute great value to

connectedness and relationships.

Fred: *[reads]* "…greater connectedness to self and others… This one's great, yeah. So I
think I told you that I had a job interview in Colorado and they asked me 'what motivates
you'? People and relationships. And I think it's true. I go to a University big enough
that I actively try to meet someone new everyday, and how do you meet people, how do
you relate? Through stories. What did I say? People and stories? Relationships, yeah, I
guess that too. People, relationships, and stories matter to me. So yeah, this one hits
close to home. I think it's a combination of these two *[points to first and third
considerations – meaning/purpose and connectedness]*. Because this is the self and this
is the community. I guess this [third] one also mentions the self, but I'm more interested
in the relationships and communities part. *[continues reading]* …yet rooted deeply in
relationships and communities… Yeah, this is spot on."

This commitment for Fred shone through clearly on his survey results as well,

where he responded that every one of the questions for Ethic of Care was (Essentially)

important to him personally. Fred also illuminated a valuable distinction about this

dimension. As we discussed the discrepancies between his score for Ethic of Care and

Citizenship components, Fred acknowledged that the difference between the two is his

own resistance toward (he called it a 'hatred of') institutional frameworks, hierarchies,

and bureaucracy. Others reiterated this resistance and internal conflict between

relationships and connections with communities. I presented Love & Talbot's third

consideration for spiritual development '… involves a greater connectedness to self and

others through relationships and connections with communities.' Jeff struggled to

identify with this one in its entirety, so we broke it into its pieces and found his points of

dissonance.

Jeff: "Ummm, mmm, I guess [this proposition resonates] less so than the first two, but I
guess it's more personal and intimate. But you do have connectedness to self here. I do
think spiritual development can really affect relationships with other people, and
relationships with the community. I dunno, I sorta saw it as community is a very abstract
thing as far as a person's place or role in the community. Those things seem very
abstract to me. I can see how you can have a role in your family or a role among friends,
but community can just, I dunno, it doesn't really fit in."

So it seemed that the men in this study made some clear distinctions in both

proximity and meaning between immediate relationships with family and friends and

others, and the connections they may have or feel with communities. So I separated these

two into Interpersonal and Extrapersonal Dimensions, with a Transcendence Channel

bridging the two, which I will discuss shortly. But to return to Jeff, I mentioned in the

previous chapter that when given the opportunity to readjust his composite scores for

Ethic of Care and Citizenship, Jeff moved them even further apart, tripling the amount of

space between the two. When asked to elaborate, Jeff indicated that he sees people and

relationships as more central to his spirituality, while citizenship and engaging in social

issues are more separate from spirituality, not nearly as important to one's identity. Prasham agreed that the relational aspects of his faith are also critical. "Yes, definitely. I feel like when I make friends or interact with somebody for the first time, I try to take the spiritual aspects of my religion and apply it to them – you know, treat them with kindness, treat them with respect, keep an open mind, etc." These seem to me more like expectations of human decency than they do interactional adages prescribed from a faith tradition, but then again, I suppose the two can be – and often are – related.

In the literature review, I introduced Abraham Maslow and his connection to spiritual identity through the top of his Hierarchy of Needs (Self-Transcendence). That will actually come into play in the next section, but we also find resonance with this Interpersonal Dimension at lower levels of Maslow's Hierarchy, namely with his Love & Belonging needs. Humans need to feel a sense of acceptance and belonging, whether it comes from family, friends, mentors, or other close social relationships or intimate partnerships. One can also find this acceptance and belonging through larger social groups with whom they have immediate contact, such as clubs, religious groups, sports teams, or fraternities – which will be a part of the next Extrapersonal Dimension. But all people need to love and be loved by others. In the absence of these elements, many people become susceptible to anxieties, depression, loneliness, lethargy, or disengagement.

This desire to be loved and valued can be a tremendous motivator, sometimes leading to patterns of inauthenticity among college men. We have already discussed the Congruency Channel that serves as a checkpoint to regulate between the private inner self and the public social self. But relationships, and our desire to maintain them, can make it

easier for men to succumb to hiding truths about themselves or others that would

otherwise threaten love's survival. Take a college man's dating relationship. The two

begin casually seeing one another, enjoying the time spent together, when the relationship

takes a turn and they get more serious. The young man divulges some very personal

information, leaving him feeling vulnerable and uncomfortable, and causing him to

retreat when that vulnerability is not acknowledged nor reciprocated.

We want to love and be loved for who we really are, illustrating the premium

value we place on living an authentic life. Julian Baggini (2004) acknowledges that:

"we hold dear a cluster of values which can be summed up under the heading of
'Authenticity.' This is a very slippery concept, but it involves wanting to live life
truthfully, seeing the world as it is and not under some deception, being the authors of our
own lives, wanting our achievements to be the result of genuine effort and ability on our
own parts, interacting with people who are really like us and not just simulacra."

We cannot live an authentic life without simultaneously occupying both inner and

social dimensions. Authenticity is pursued socially, but achieved privately. It is about

respecting ourselves enough to be truthful in our own packaging. To borrow and adapt

an excerpt from A.W. Griswold, Self respect cannot be hunted. It cannot be purchased. It

is never for sale, nor can it be crafted through skillful public relations. It comes to us

when we are alone, in quiet moments, in quiet places, when we realize that, knowing the

good, we have done it; knowing the beautiful, we have served it; knowing the truth, we

have spoken it; and knowing ourselves, we have been faithful.

But self-knowledge is rarely just revealed to us, and goodness is not always self-

evident. We often rely on the measured guidance of mentors and role models to help us

along the way. As mentioned previously, all of the college men in this study referenced

older men and women as exemplars and teachers for their developing ideas of how to be

men in the world. I also asked them if they had spiritual role models, and what qualities or characteristic they glean from those role models. Aaron referenced his roommate, who "just often has, like, a more self-possessed centeredness than I do, which I admired, and I think it often gives him a certain spiritual strength and certitude that I want to cultivate myself." And Aman clearly identified Yogi Bhajan, the spiritual leader who introduced Kundalini yoga and Sikhism to the United States, as his most significant spiritual role model. Aman had the opportunity to meet him numerous times, and he admired his ability to be present with people, to uplift them, and fulfill them simultaneously. "I don't think I'm at that level yet, but that's definitely something that I aspire to…I don't see any way to have a better impact than giving someone tools to make themselves happy. It's like you're giving them an opportunity, and showing… or helping them to find permanent or long-term fulfillment." Role models offer critical relationships for young people as they develop into adults. They can be gatekeepers into communities, and they often serve as valuable guides for young people to explore what lies beyond their immediate grasp.

Transcendence Channels: To Reach Beyond One's Grasp

"Ah, but one's reach should exceed their grasp, Or what's a heaven for?" ~Robert Browning

These role models can serve as transcendence channels by connecting an individual to a community of practice or a body of beliefs and commitments. The Hindu guru, Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj said that you cannot transcend what you do not know. To go beyond yourself, you must know yourself. Love & Talbot listed their fourth

consideration for spiritual development as involving the process of continually

transcending one's locus of centricity. When Maslow (1971) first wrote about Self-

Transcendence as the pinnacle of his Hierarchy, beyond self-actualization, he said that

"transcendence refers to the very highest and most inclusive or holistic levels of human

consciousness" (p. 269). As I explained in the literature review, I think Maslow may

have aggrandized the notion of transcendence too much by making it nearly inaccessible

to all but the spiritual ascetic or martyr.

In fact, anyone has the ability to transcend their locus of centricity, and we all

have practice doing this by our mere
interactions with other people.   The first
congruency channels (red bidirectional
channels in the diagram) were a sort of
preview to transcendence channels.
Through the congruency channels, an
individual experiences moving out of the
strictly egocentric focus into an other-
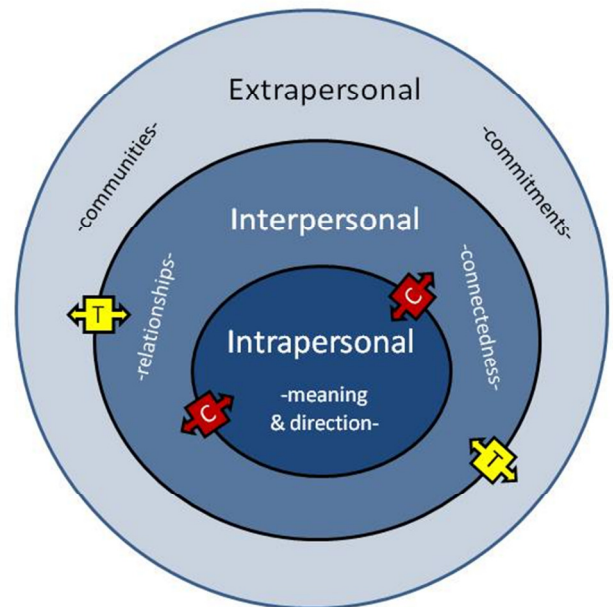
Figure 13: Transcendence Channels into Extrapersonal Dimension

orientation manifested in relationships.

While this is indeed a form of transcendence,

the congruency channels still connect the self to those relationships in direct proximity to

the self. These relationships meet some of our basic human needs. Moving outward, the

Transcendence Channels are intended to represent a connection to purposes,

communities, or commitments beyond the immediate self.

This idea of transcendence is very much related to Spiritual Quest as described in the previous chapter. A quest is a pursuit, something which we seek or which is revealed to us, which has directionality and purpose. A spiritual quest, as described in chapter four, is about searching for meaning and purpose, and finding answers to difficult questions and life mysteries. This pursuit is rarely a solitary one, if ever. In fact, teachers and administrators who work with college students become a part of students' quests for answers on a very regular basis. A recent book by Robert Nash & Michelle Murray entitled *Helping College Students Find Purpose: The Campus Guide to Meaning-Making* captures this spirit of college student administrators and faculty who become partners in college students' pursuits to make meaning, their spiritual quests.

Do I make decisions to improve myself? My community? My world? How will my choices influence my peers, my school, my neighbors? These are all questions that a student asks when he is transcending his own centricity. Love & Talbot borrowed the idea of a locus of centricity from Chandler et al. (1992), who describe Transcendence as:

"a 'moving beyond' in a direction of higher or broader scope, for example, someone whose current functioning is characterized by unhealthy egocentricity (self-centered or narcissistic) experiencing healthy egocentricity (enlightened self-interest in which one gleans personal satisfaction through contribution to the greater good), humanicentricity (centered in humanity), geocentricity (centered in the planet), and cosmicentricity (centered in the cosmos). The concept of subsequent levels of transcendence is meant to imply that spirituality is a process to be conceptualized on a continuum, not conceptualized as an either-or proposition."

This idea also borrows from Assagioli's (1965) work, called psychosynthesis, which proposed the construct of a "higher unconscious" or "superconscious" in all humans. This superconsciousness is a region of the mind from which we "receive our higher intuitions and aspirations — artistic, philosophical, or scientific, ethical

'imperatives' and urges to humanitarian and heroic action … the source of higher feelings, such as altruistic love, of genius and of the states of contemplation, illumination, and ecstasy" (p. 17). Assagioli elaborated that "'spiritual' refers not only to experiences traditionally considered 'religious' but to all the states of awareness, all the human functions and activities which have as their common denominator the possession of values higher than average" (1989,p. 30). He was convinced that all human beings have spiritual urges and drives that are basic and fundamental to our common human experiences, and it is in our nature to seek transcendence by pursuing those higher values and spiritual urges.

Aman tells us that transcendence is about removing yourself and just being: "I know, it seems kinda paradoxical because in order to experience the self, you've gotta take away the self, but I think that's accurate. I guess it's using self in two different ways, with two different definitions. You're kinda taking away your personality as an individual and [also] having an experience of the essence of existence, which is two different ways of experiencing the self."

This 'loss of self' phenomenon is an interesting one that Aman also mentioned about masculine identity as men expand their focus beyond immediate family relationships:

Aman: "Yeah, of course a man in a family setting is going to be much more secure, more open in expressing and experiencing emotions. But a man in society, in the world? I actually feel like gender isn't really as important of a distinction outside the family context. In terms of potential for leadership or impact in the world, I don't think there is much of a distinction for the role of men in comparison to women. I feel like that's just the generation I grew up in – that maybe gender isn't as big of a deal for us – in comparison to maybe our parents."

This is a fresh perspective on identity, as Aman suggests that the developed individual may be one who most adeptly removes what he calls 'transient biases' in order to have a genuine experience of yourself. Aman would identify these transient biases as emotional fluctuations or material distractions that prevent one from finding their true selves. This is an interesting treatment of emotion as an inhibitor to experiencing the true self and developing spiritually, undistracted by fits of passion. As one of the most spiritually committed participants in this study (at least according to the survey), it then comes as no surprise that Aman also experienced some of the most conflict around restrictive emotionality. We should be careful to highlight, however, that Aman calls these *transient* biases and fluctuations, while he also acknowledged that the ideal man in his family is one who is emotionally *solid*. By this, he means that "it's definitely not an unwillingness to show emotion or experience emotion. It's more of being very comfortable and secure in one's emotional experiences. And I guess that also leads back to one's beliefs and convictions – you know, being very secure and solid in those."

This description is indicative of a much larger pattern among participants of placing a tremendous value on CONFIDENCE, not just for Aman but for most of the college men in this study. This was the single common factor across all role models mentioned by the young men. These role models all served as transcendence channels for
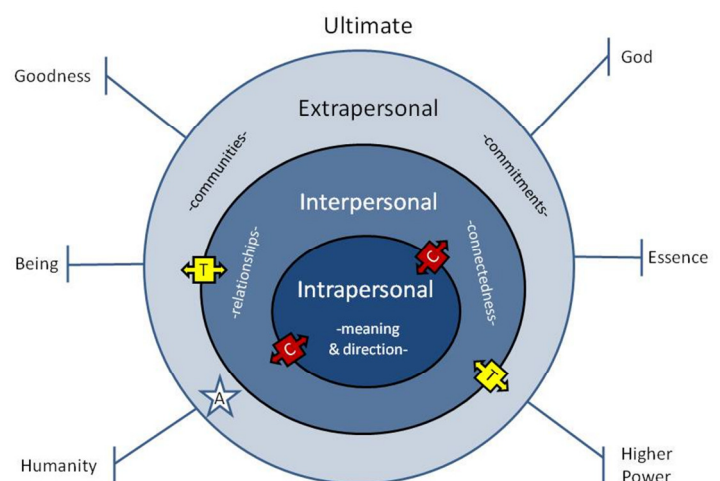

Figure 14: Transcendence Model of Identity Construction

the college men, pulling them out of focusing solely on individual relationships or on themselves and into connections with broader communities of thought and practice. These channels are also positioned in the model as directional ones. Mentors who guide men into communities of practice are identified as mentors or role models oftentimes because they embody the aspirational qualities of the young men who find them compelling. In the model, the yellow transcendence channels connect one's focus on relationships to a wider focus on communities in which those relationships exist. But the channels are also positioned to point outward into the Dimension of the Ultimate. In this example, the young man has two notable mentors who point him toward either a Higher Power or the experience of just Being. The directionality of transcendence channels matters, because it ultimately may point in the direction of trusted archetypes of one's identities, or what (one or many things) the young man values most, how he makes meaning, finds direction, connects with other people, and engages in broader communities.

Our relationships impact us on a personal level if they are anything beyond shallow. Cymande would call these Friends with a capital 'F.' This is not just a drinking buddy, but someone you care about substantially. These are the kinds of people for whom we set up congruency channels so that we share deeply with them and they impact us just as significantly. These Friends also often introduce us to other friends or communities, also creating transcendence channels that align with the congruency channels, directing one's center into the extrapersonal dimension toward larger communities.

Extrapersonal Dimension (Engaged Self): Communities & Commitments

"Commitment is to set our gaze beyond our own feet and to task both our hands and our heart to work toward that distant goal."

Those broader communities make up what I refer to as the Extrapersonal Dimension. This is the outermost dimension in which an individual can operate and center oneself. This is the dimension of commitment to one's overarching beliefs and enduring values. Most of that commitment manifests as engagement in communities of practice, though commitments can be entirely intrapsychic if they are overarching, enduring, and animating for the individual. Again, all three of these dimensions are loci of centricity or centeredness, where an individual focuses his gaze. The extrapersonal dimension is a differentiated extension of Love & Talbot's (1999) third consideration for spiritual development "…involves a greater connectedness to self and others through relationships *and connections to communities*."

Communities can be peer groups, professional organizations, student clubs, identity-based affinity groups, neighborhoods, communities of scholars, work environments, or cohorts, just to name a few, with local, virtual, regional, national, or international focus. They are organized around shared beliefs and commitments. The idea of association for young men can be a tricky one because communities, by their own nature, have limiting effects. Most communities find common interests among their constituents and attract like-minded individuals to build the strength of those communities. We revel in diverse communities when we encounter them because most communities are not organized to attract difference. The religious communities in which the college men in this study find themselves are no different. Most participate in

religious communities of faith practice – the Muslim Student Association, Christian Church, Hindu Student Council, Presbyterian Student Ministry, Sikh Student Association, etc. Two of the most religiously committed individuals, both of whom happen to be transfer students also, had not connected substantively to communities of their faith practice on the campus. They chose instead to drive home, up to four hours every weekend, to attend services with family members, citing that they had difficulty finding communities and spaces to satisfy their religious and spiritual yearnings.

Spiritual Spaces and Settings in College

I asked each young man if there is a place (physical setting, group, or event) at or around the University that he considers to be particularly spiritual where I might join him. Only three of the seven could identify such a place. I joined Prasham at a Puja (worship service) with the Hindu Student Council where we sang and read incantations, Jeff invited me to a dinner and discussion with the Presbyterian Student Fellowship, and Aaron invited me to an opening picnic for the community garden where he'd been working. In all of these gatherings, there were very few other men, but the groups were led – in song or structure – by other male students. For Jeff and Aaron, these were organizations or initiatives that they themselves were leading so they were very clearly engaged in the purposes of the group. Prasham introduced me to a number of the other students at the Hindu Student Council, and I was honored to be able to attend with him, but he had to leave early, and he seemed like more of a spectator in the group. It did not appear as if this was a significant peer community for him at the University, though he does seem to feel ideologically connected to the group for its religious like-mindedness.

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This loose connection to the community may be the combination of Prasham not having a mentor (a transcendence channel) in this group, combined with the fact that he is not actively engaged in the leadership group of HSC. You may recall that Prasham scored among the highest in the SPC (Success, Power, and Competition) factor, so ongoing engagement in any community may be a challenge for him if he does not rise to take on more active leadership roles. These three examples are certainly indicative of the interesting phenomenon that college men tend to disengage from college religious groups if they cannot be involved somehow in their leadership.

It was fascinating to note that most men significantly struggled to identify places, settings, groups, or events that they would consider to be spiritual. Aman mentioned, "I haven't found one yet. That's actually something that I've been searching for… A spiritual place for me is someplace I can go – a peaceful place that facilitates my dialogue with myself. It's drowning out the daily chaos and having a more calm environment where I can have that personal interaction just in myself. That's something that I'd like to have." Salim agreed, "Wow, I wish I had a place like that… I just don't have any place like that now." And Fred found some of this need satisfied in either quiet secluded places by himself, or crowded cafes while talking with close friends, or even the central green space on the campus. The point here is that there is no one method by which a college student attributes any given setting as a spiritual one. But themes that emerged from men in this group are peaceful, calm, green, or artistic. This may offer insights for Colleges and Universities to consider how they design, use, and attribute value to public spaces around a college campus. I will revisit this idea again in the next chapter with implications for this study.

Service & the Extrapersonal Dimension

While it was clear in the surveys and follow-up discussions that the relational (Ethic of Care) piece is more of a priority for these young men than the Citizenship component, the group on average still identified 'citizenship' as rather important to them. And they offered a tremendous number of examples of service projects in which they have been engaged. Again, with this factor, I am referring to one's commitments to larger communities or causes that serve to benefit civil, social justice, or environmental aspects of society. The consistent pattern emerged here as well. Jeff is involved in service programs through his campus ministry (which he leads). Fred was involved in Sustained Dialogue groups on campus that build dialogue around racial and other social identity issues, but he has not been involved since he stepped out of leading a dialogue group. Aaron worked with a local church to organize and launch a community garden in a neighborhood close to campus. All of these examples involved one of the college men *leading* the activity. While this seems initially megalomaniacal, it is also important to note that the participants in my study were all nominated to participate, meaning that the group was already predisposed to have more outgoing achievers who would tend to stand out among their peers.

Another consistency among the young men with regards to service, as reported in the previous chapter, is that they tend to prefer opportunities for direct service. This would be projects bringing them into direct contact with people or communities who they claim to be serving or helping, as opposed to the more abstract causes and philanthropic functions contributing money to large nonprofit organizations. One explanation of this from the previous chapter was that these types of direct service may also provide more

direct benefits to the one offering his time and talents. Aman is involved in a service

fraternity, which he chose to join because another Sikh student who was the president at

the time encouraged him to join [note: transcendence channel]. So the pattern emerges

that most young men persistently engage in service a) if they are actively engaged in

leading an activity, b) if they receive the direct benefits of working with the recipients of

their service, or c) if they are welcomed into a project, group, or commitment by a trusted

friend or mentor. For those who did not report any involvement in service projects, none

of them had any connection with organizations on campus that 'do service', nor were

they involved at all in any religious organizations on the campus. Again, these two

students are also transfer students, though both had been on campus for at least three

semesters at the time of these interviews.

You may recall the difference between Ethic of Care and Citizenship factors from

the previous chapter, where all participants indicated that developing an ethic of care is

more important than developing one's organizational involvement. This again highlights

the high value placed on interpersonal relationships, and that when given the choice, the

young men will uniformly choose to invest time in people and peers rather than groups

and affiliations. They develop a group identity through the individuals in that group with

whom they are able to form substantive relationships. This is further evidence that

people, friends, mentors, etc. are critically important for young men to guide them toward

connections with larger communities and organizations. The mere idea of doing good

can be motivating, but the idea will not animate nearly as effectively unless it is carried

by a trusted other person. Aaron introduced a fascinating revelation about this trusted

other person. He suggested that it is perhaps a significant part of one's quest to renounce

your own journey at times in order to assist others on theirs. Aman agreed by his description of his own spiritual role model, Yogi Bhajan, who was uniquely gifted at reading people and knowing how to assist them in their own spiritual journeys. So it seems that in spiritual identity, much more so than masculine, it is a requisite part of one's development that once an individual transcends their own immediate needs, they are somehow expected to tend to others as they pursue the same transcendence. It is reasonable, if not expected, that we accept the help of others as we work to develop ourselves spiritually. On the other hand, the participants in this study repeatedly referenced that independence and "standing on your own feet" is an important part of becoming a man in society, so accepting the help of others does not carry the same favorable connotation. This can be a conflicted message, especially since we already discussed how important role models are to welcome young men into communities and commitments, but young men are socialized to reject forms of dependency. This makes the role of mentors exceedingly critical, which I will discuss further in the next chapter.

Establishing Archetypes in the Extrapersonal Dimension

Masculine identity has directionality in that it points toward archetypes or exemplars of traits, roles, or behaviors that are endorsed by individuals and/or communities as more preferable. Instead of moving in the direction of an abstract Ultimate (like God or Goodness, as will be described in the next section), masculine congruency and transcendence channels align with directionality pointing toward trusted models or archetypes (see white stars in fig. 15 below) – either known individuals or those masculine archetypes endorsed by communities. This is not necessarily

communities entirely comprised of men, but it is communities that teach men how to be men and who tend to elevate exemplars of ideal masculinity. This could be athletic men, promiscuous men, successful men, gay men, family men, pious men, selfless men, etc. – or any combination of these traits. Though he is difficult to forget, we might recall Erving Goffman's (1963) traditional, hegemonic male archetype – the unblushing white, athletic, straight, young, married, skinny, successful Protestant man. The point is that all communities have their exemplars that others strive to emanate.

Of course religious communities can also have these types of exemplars, but most of them rise to prominence in the community because they merely approximate some characteristics of the Ultimate(s) beyond, toward which they more frequently direct followers. Aman spoke admirably about Yogi Bhajan as a spiritual role model. He also claimed that one of his Ultimates is Essence or the current of the Universe. He admired Yogi Bhajan in part because he could read people and astutely help them to identify and satisfy their unique needs so as to allow them to have more powerful spiritual experiences. He founded American Sikhism, but did not aggrandize himself in doing so. He aligned people with Sikh teachings in the community of Sikh followers so they could pursue their own Being or Essence.

Take the hypothetical example in figure 15, and let's call this guy Matt. Matt is a first-year student who considers himself a Lutheran. He has a good friend in his residence hall with whom he goes to church on Sundays, and often engages in deep conversations about his spirituality. The figure illustrates this as a congruency channel because Matt's relationship with this friend is meaningful for him, and helps him to clarify his beliefs. And this friend introduced Matt to the Lutheran church closest to

campus, so he connected Matt to a community of faith practice, establishing a transcendence channel through which Matt can express his Lutheran faith. The pastor at that church is exceptionally engaging, and Matt looks up to him as an exemplar of the kind of faith he would like to have. He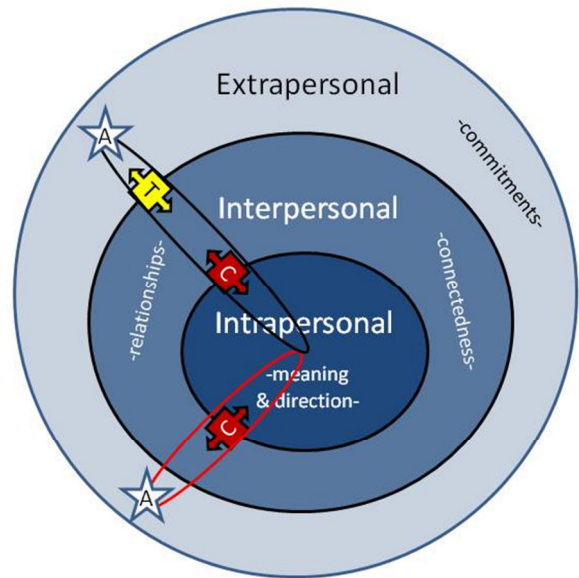 could be considered an archetype for Matt's spirituality, so in the figure, this is designated with a white star labeled

Figure 15: Establishing Archetypes in the Extrapersonal Dimension, with Spiritual (black) and Masculine (red) Identity pathways

with an 'A'. Because this is a series of channels and an archetype that is important for Matt's spirituality in particular, note the black oval in the figure that indicates that this pathway is important to his spiritual identity. Additionally, let's say that Matt identifies as a gay man. He is not yet out in his community, but he did just recently tell another one of his close friends. He has been reading voraciously online about how he might do this, and has found some good websites to help him think through what it would be like to be out to his friends and his residence hall peers. His friend that he recently came out to was supportive, but she didn't really know how to help him envision what it would be like to be a gay men in college. So in the figure above, his friend has helped him to process his masculine identity (see red oval), but he is missing a transcendence channel to connect him to a community where he can be out and comfortable with himself. However, since he has been reading, he has found examples of what this might look like. Matt has a gay

masculine archetype in mind, but he has yet to contextualize that archetype in a real community for himself.

The point is that an archetype can be a real or imaginary person, and it could also be a composite of a number of real or imaginary people. In my study, Fred discussed his father and uncle as both people whom he admires for very different reasons, but both are very much connected to his ideas of being a man. Sympathetic to Jungian psychology, Kelsey (1983) suggests that "the archetype must be honored for what it is, an image outside of the self that calls us to growth, change and awareness. In its negative form it can equally call us to evil and destruction."

The interplay of spiritual and masculine identities in the extrapersonal dimension created some interesting tensions. This is the dimension in which we occupy public spaces and interact with strangers as well as other members of our more trusted communities. As soon as any of our identities find larger public stages, they risk making us vulnerable if they do not align with the most dominant forms in a community, or the hegemonic archetypes. In terms of masculine archetypes, participants all referenced specific people in their lives, or historical figures about whom they have heard or read, as these archetypes. They were all familiar with the general masculine script – the hegemonic masculine archetype of being strong and tough, stoic and emotionally disengaged, with a competitive warrior mentality. But frankly, this singular archetype did not hold a great deal of influence over their decisions and motivations as a group, though some of those traits did manifest in specific men or women in their lives who may have themselves become archetypical.

Cymande mentioned the example of men who enjoy cooking. Ridiculously, according to Cymande, this is still not considered a 'masculine' trait, though there are far too many men who enjoy cooking to make this rational. So men are ridiculed when they pursue interests in cooking. Cymande mentioned, however, that when men pursue careers cooking, they pursue being professional chefs, and almost all 3-Michelin star chefs are men. So even a socially gendered (traditionally feminine) role like cooking is gender stratified with men seeking the positions of power and occupying the upper status strata. I would argue, on the other hand, that men have a great deal more flexibility in this career choice than this account describes, especially if there is a significant prevalence of other men in positions of power in that industry. The point here, however, is that even (or especially?) when men step into the extrapersonal dimension and exhibit role behaviors that do not purportedly align with the perceived hegemonic archetype of their expressed gender, they often experience resistance, judgment, and/or social consequences. This automatically triggers an active congruency channel to either modify that role behavior or solidify it as authentic and reinforce its persistence. This open congruency channel may also serve to change one's beliefs and intrapersonal meaning over time, as it is a two-way interaction.

In addition to thinking about this extrapersonal dimension as someone centering themselves in communities of faith practice or service organization, we can also consider it a locus of commitment beyond the immediate self. This could be a commitment to a religious faith (without being directly involved in a community of its practice), or to a cause or initiative, to a sport or lifestyle, or even an enduring belief to which one feels particularly committed. This is the outermost dimension in which an individual can be

centside, beyond which is a dimension that is abstract, and therefore outside of human selfhood.

Dimension of the Ultimate

"Each of us uses the word Story *as a synonym for* god, *with a small g… god is the name of a great narrative, one that has sufficient credibility, complexity, and symbolic power to organize our lives around it." (Postman, 1997)*

In the extrapersonal dimension, where the social self centers itself in communities and commitments, archetypes have an orienting effect on young men's masculine and spiritual identities. Similarly, participants all identified something that they considered to be Ultimate, which also has an orienting effect, though more abstract than a trait-based archetype. The outermost dimension in this model is the Dimension of the Ultimate, though for many people, it could just as easily be the plural form 'Ultimates.' This dimension is entirely abstract, and cannot therefore be seen, felt, heard, or even imagined without relying on the human construction of that abstraction. If God and Justice are both recognized as Ultimates for an individual, there is not a way for that individual to be centered in God, or centered in Justice. However, they can very much be centered in contemplating, worshipping, and seeking God or committing themselves wholeheartedly to the pursuit of gender, racial, or socioeconomic justice. But all of these are commitments that are directed toward abstract Ultimates. Those commitments live in the outermost dimension of selfhood, the extrapersonal dimension as described above. The Ultimate is reserved for the ineffable, as described by Aaron in his personal credo, which creates a substantial challenge in calling it a dimension at all, let alone speaking its name.

Love & Talbot say that their fifth consideration for spiritual development "involves an openness to exploring a relationship with an intangible and pervasive power or essence that exists beyond human existence and rational human knowing." Initially for me, this was the "G-d clause," and the relationship seemed obvious as a commitment to one's higher power. But after a much more thorough review, and a careful analysis of how the men in this study conceptualize that relationship with what they acknowledge as Ultimate, I realized that the relationship is much more aspirational and orienting than it is interactive and relational. Again, one cannot be centered in this outermost dimension, which intentionally does not have an outer limit or boundary in the model. Salim frames this idea of the Ultimate very well in his This I Believe statement, where he explained his concepts of God:

"I believe there is no god but God, and equal unto him are none. He is One – neither oneness nor numerically countable. One that is not bound by anything we can conceive or perceive, and One that is wholly inconceivable but by signs that might direct us vaguely. He has created space and time, and cannot be confined by neither of them, nor anything else. He has created 'cause,' 'effect,' 'how,' 'what,' 'where,' and the like – it is haughty for us to limit him to these modes of thinking."

Salim mentioned that God alone occupies the Ultimate dimension for him, and he clearly acknowledges from this quote above that God is beyond our description of his nature. Aaron chose two lines in his poetic credo statement that approaches this idea as well: "Try to describe the ineffable. Try to understand the incomprehensible." When asked what he considers to be Ultimate, Aaron listed "Higher Power, Cosmos, Being, Eternal Present, Spirit or Life Force, and Nondual Awareness." He is quite intellectually curious, just like Salim. One interesting part about Aaron's curiosity (and lengthy list of Ultimates) is that it has taken him in many different directions to understand a wide range

of religious faith traditions, and incorporate a number of them into him own beliefs. The

work (or deliberate absence of work) that an individual does to encounter or pursue their

Ultimate(s) all takes place while an individual is centered in Intrapersonal, Interpersonal,

or Extrapersonal dimensions. Though they are not centered in the Ultimate itself, they

definitely align themselves, often at multiple levels, in the direction of that Ultimate.

This identity construction model is designed with directionality as an important feature of every dimension and especially every channel. Consider, hypothetically, the example of a Navajo student named Ronald who maintains a connection to his tribe's religious

Figure 16: Aligning Channels with Directionality Toward Ultimates

traditions and values. In this figure, notice the directionality of the congruency and

transcendence channels. This would suggest that Ronald spends some time thinking

about and discussing [congruency channel] with close friends how his beliefs in both

Balance and Beauty are actualized through his interactions with other people. He also

likely has people in his life [transcendence channels] who connect him to communities

which value Balance and others (or the same people) who commit to explore their

connectedness to the Great Spirit. Similarly, Fred identified 'more relationships,

happenstance, and fate' as his Ultimates. These are all consistent with the stories he tells

about chance encounters with people in the library, with friends of friends who he meets
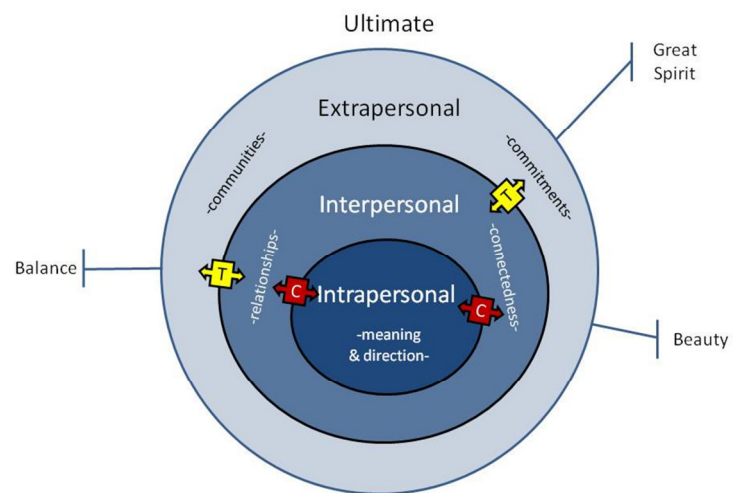
while traveling, and how he describes coincidentally running into people who end up connecting him to exciting job prospects. These fated interactions are ascribed as meaningful because they lead to functional ends or interesting connections for Fred, but also just because they are relationships, which Fred considers to be an Ultimate end unto itself.

Fred met Najib (a Palestinian Muslim student) at a camp when he was a teenager. They became good friends and stayed in touch, and when Fred learned that Najib could not afford to go to college, he established a scholarship fund to help support Najib in school. This fund actually supported *all* of Najib's four-year undergraduate education. For Fred, the friendship with Najib that they forged at the camp meant a great deal to him. Fred's conscience set up a congruency channel with that relationship that made it a meaningful connection, which was only reinforced since Najib is Palestinian Arab and Fred is Jewish. That relationship led Fred through a transcendence channel to a larger commitment to set up the scholarship fund for Najib. Following Fred's claim of Ultimates, is it the Fate or Relationship that drives Fred? I would suggest that based on this example and his inter-racial dialogue commitments and other similar service commitments, Fred also elevates Justice as an aspirational Ultimate. Parenthetically, Fred accepted a position as a paralegal assistant as his first professional position after graduation, and he continues to be interested in educational access issues.

These would certainly not be the only channels that Fred or Ronald establish, as we all typically operate in multiple communities simultaneously and have a range of relationships, all of which serve slightly different purposes for us. But the important feature here is the directionality of these channels as they point both outward in the

direction of an Ultimate and inward toward oneself at the center. This means that we find

congruency in our lives between our beliefs and actions with a conscious or unconscious

alignment with the one or multiple abstractions which we consider to be Ultimate.

Intersections of Masculine and Spiritual Elements

To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts. Every man is tasked to make his

life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour.

> *~Henry David Thoreau*
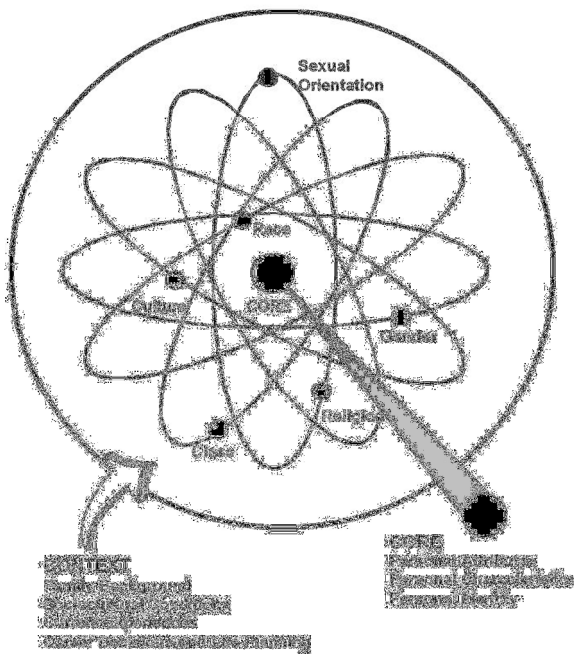
Figure 17: Jones & McEwen's (2000) Multiple Identities Model

Theories on multiple identities are not entirely new to the field of higher education. Jones & McEwen (2000) developed a conceptual model for multiple identities that featured a core of personal characteristics, attributes and identity, with that core surrounded by an orbiting cloud of social identities, like electrons around an atomic nucleus (see fig. 17). This conceptual model is a very good starting point, and my emerging theoretical

Transcendence Model offers additional nuance and functionality so that social identities

are realized or expressed over more specific dimensions of inner work, social

interactions, or community involvement.

With Jones & McEwen's model in mind, it is also possible to envision a similar

kind of orbiting identity

concept in my

Transcendence Model, with

some slight modifications.

Instead of these identities

revolving around a

seemingly impenetrable

core, it is important to

recognize that all of our social

identities do affect our interior

Figure 18: Transcendence Model with Spiritual (black) and Masculine (red) Identities

selves. Figure 18 illustrates what the Transcendence Model may look like with channels

aligned toward both archetypes and Ultimates and important pathways established for

both spiritual (black ovals) and masculine (red ovals) identities. Notice how the two

different colored ovals point to different archetypes and Ultimates, and sometimes

overlap (see Contentment in fig. 18). This full landscape can be complex, as the same

people in our lives can be important to us for different reasons. For example, Aaron

suggested that his girlfriend helped him to think differently about himself as a man for a

number of reasons (congruency channel), but she also connected him (transcendence

channel) to a local church community that has been meaningful for him and his

spirituality. So the same person may help us to establish multiple congruency or

transcendence channels, which may even align with different archetypes or Ultimates in
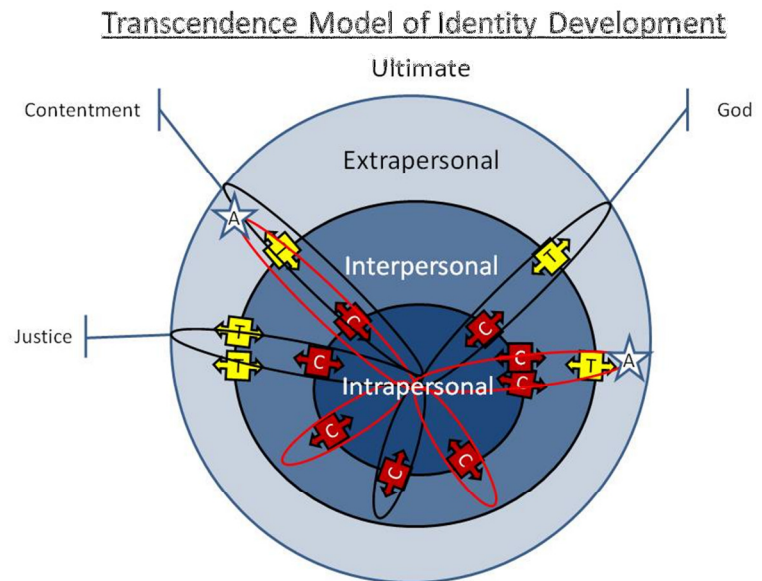
our lives.

This is a descriptive model that highlights the dimensionality of identity construction in general. Both spiritual and masculine elements are included in each dimension, but these elements seem to function somewhat differently at each level. In the intrapersonal dimension, they are very much intertwined as young men struggle to make meaning and find direction in their lives and connect that to their ideas of developing as men. Most of these college men identified with the need for success and achievement as both a motivator and a source of gender role conflict, which is clearly connected to how one determines a vocational direction and ultimately one's purpose. The congruency channel connects one's actions and beliefs, which is similar to Salim's childhood message of "a man says his word once." By this, he means that his father told him when he was much younger that an important part of being a man is that when you say you will do something, you should always make sure that it is done and take responsibility for that. There should be no gap between what one says and what one does. This message of congruency between words and actions is similar with its authenticity theme, but slightly different from congruency between beliefs and actions. We should note that the former includes two externalized behaviors ('what we say' and 'what we do') while the latter is one internalized ('what we believe') and one externalized ('what we do'). This is interesting because the former is an older man (father) telling his son that congruency in his exterior life is what matters most. With this message, we could draw some good conclusions that young men are frequently socially encouraged to live fully in their exterior lives, perhaps with masculine congruency channels that drive one's centricity more toward the social or exterior self. Other congruency channels that may focus more on one's spiritual identity would likely

maintain a stronger balance across inter- and intrapersonal dimensions, or even drive centricity more regularly to one's interior to ascertain meaning.

In the interpersonal dimension, research and popular opinion suggests that college men struggle with expressing themselves emotionally and affectionately, which would certainly hinder their ability to form and maintain strong relationships and connections with others in this dimension of the social self. But the young men in this study very much disagreed, attributing high value to both spiritual and masculine aspects of the social interpersonal self. But this high value may manifest somewhat differently. As mentioned above, the masculine congruency channels often serve to drive men outward, focusing one's attention on relationships and connections and beyond rather than on one's own internal meaning-making and emotional well-being. However, the spiritual aspects of this interpersonal dimension drive meaning both inward through congruency channels and outward through transcendence channels, as almost all men identified that their relationships both mean a great deal to them and connect them to larger spiritual commitments or communities of faith practice.

Transcendence channels function similarly across both masculine and spiritual aspects with women or other men mentoring and guiding young men from a focus on relationships and into commitments and/or communities. This channel is prevalent across all participants, which is consistent with Sharon Daloz Park's description of her stage 2: Young Adult Faith. The young adult relies on mentoring forms of community to model or prod them toward exploring larger ideas and beliefs beyond the combined inner and relational self.

And finally, the extrapersonal dimension is the locus of communities and commitments. For the spiritual self, this dimension is fairly straightforward as the center of one's commitment to beliefs or communities with spiritual/religious practices (worship, service, collective prayer, support, etc). However, the function of the spiritual self in the extrapersonal dimension may offer the clearest distinction between spiritual and masculine identities. The spiritual aspects of this dimension always direct one's attention toward the Dimension of the Ultimate. It is a requisite of this dimension for spiritual aspects, as spiritual communities and spiritual commitments all point in the direction of any given Ultimate. The masculine aspects of the extrapersonal dimension, however, do not necessarily point toward a greater masculine Ultimate. In fact, none of the Ultimates referenced by young men in this study had any gendered aspects, so I would argue that masculine identity is entirely occupied within intra-, inter-, and extrapersonal dimensions. I even asked some who referenced God as 'He' to clarify how that gendered deity matters to them. Cymande said, "I mean, I don't know. I don't know Hebrew, so I don't know what third person they refer to God as. I'd say that God is more of an It. He's transcendent of gender, and I think it's easier to contextualize God as a man, but yeah, I would probably characterize God as an It."

Why a *Transcendence* Model of Identity Construction?

This Transcendence Model of Identity Construction is not a linear one, nor does it follow a progression of stages. The model is intended to recognize the dynamic, multidimensional, and creative ways in which identities are iteratively constructed. It is a general landscape that describes the context in which a complex self with multiple social

identities develops. I call it a *transcendence* model because positive or healthy identity development requires that one satisfies, then transcends one's basic needs (Maslow, 1971) in order to engage more authentically in relationships and communities. A fully narcissistic individual will consistently struggle to establish trusting relationships and connect with a community. Again, Maslow's early hierarchy (1943) included five basic needs, including four deficiency (physiological, safety, love & belonging, and esteem) needs and one growth (self-actualizing) need. Built into Maslow's theory are dimensions of the self that involve meeting one's own basic needs (food, drink, shelter, safety, etc), then interacting and belonging with people and groups, and finally to transcend oneself as a peak need experience. As a need even higher than self-actualization, Maslow placed self-transcendence fairly out of reach for most of the general population. However, my use of transcendence indicates any shift of focus beyond meeting one's own immediate needs – toward interdependence or interpersonal relationships (Chickering, 1993), intimacy (Erikson, (1950), responsibility to others (Parks, 2000), or social systems (Kohlberg, 1981).

The theory is built as a descriptive conceptual model for identity construction, recognizing that one constructs identities while grounded in various social contexts. Weber (1998) suggests that a social constructionist perspective on identity plays an important role in challenging essentialist positions on identity that reduce their construction to mere biological binaries (male/female, White/Non-White, gay/straight, etc). Instead, contemporary research on student development is increasingly recognizing the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts which contribute to individual, collective, and institutional constructions of dynamic identity (Omi & Winant, 1994;

McEwen, 2003). Hence, this model pertains to the construction of these complex

contextualized identities. It is not a staged developmental theory indicating changes in

status from one time period to another.

This Transcendence Model of Identity Construction draws from this early Maslow

theory, combined with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecology of Human Development theory

that identifies layers of the self in nested contexts, and finally addresses some of the

complexity that accompanies transitions from one dimension to another, and interactions

between various social identities. The model was built to conceptualize intersections

between spiritual and masculine identities, but its use does not have to be limited to these

alone. The final chapter will address some of the possible programmatic applications of

this model and implications for both theory and practice.

Chapter 6 : Discussion

In an effort to carefully balance the lines between creativity, practicality, and hyperbole, the only remaining part of this story is a discussion of how this study and model can be useful in both theory and practice. This final chapter begins with commentary on the methodological approach of dialogical narrative, followed by a discussion on the emerging theory in relation to my original research questions, the existing literature, and implications for college men's development, student affairs practice in higher education, and future studies. The model presented in the previous chapter has a number of clear access points to be discussed for college students and the professionals, staff and faculty who work closely with them. This chapter will conclude with an examination of the limitations and contributing value of the study.

Dialogical Narrative as Research Methodology

I refer to my research method as a dialogical narrative approach. The college men in this study were actively involved in constructing their own histories, beliefs, and social contexts through interviews, dialogue sessions, drawing their life maps, and telling stories. I initially acknowledged that the aggressive pursuit of authenticity was both a desired outcome and a measure of successful data capture. These young men had quite a few opportunities to express themselves, to refine self-knowledge, and to gather feedback on their own narrated stories. During final interviews, I shared their compiled survey results with participants, and they had a chance to modify or clarify their positions on all

of the composite factors as we discussed how they perceive those changes and why they matter. We built participants' narratives in dialogue with one another and with the group.

This research methodology offers a unique approach that blends narrative inquiry, survey tools, action research, and dialogue to evoke deeply personal insights into participants' identity formation. It is a mixed-methods design with multiple points for quantitative and qualitative data collection and triangulation. As a Student Affairs administrator and co-curricular programming junkie, this method was just enjoyable to have the chance to talk with participants about things that matter most to them and design activities to elicit their life stories. The amount of data generated in these 24 contact hours was astounding, and artifacts alone (life maps, written personal credos and This I Believe statements, etc) could generate enough content for individual dissertations. I elected to tell the men's stories through snapshot profiles along with identified patterns on survey responses and their favorable or unfavorable responses with corroborating evidence from all of our points of contact. This could have also been done by narrating individuals' life stories and finding commonalities and inconsistencies across those stories. The point here is that a dialogical narrative research methodology offers a tremendous degree of flexibility for the researcher to analyze findings across multiple data collection points.

The process of coming to know more about ourselves changes us irrevocably. Not only did this methodology capture snapshots of young men's gendered and spiritual identity concepts, but it required that they refine those concepts and work through them in private while writing, alone with the researcher, in a small group setting, and even while spending time with one's community of faith practice. The method was reinforced

by the emerging theory, complete with intra-, inter-, and extrapersonal dimensions of data collection to showcase interactions of the self at all of these levels.

Discussion of Emerging Theory in Relation to Research Questions

This grounded theory study was designed to understand the spiritual and masculine identity intersections of college men. I used the following two primary research questions to guide this inquiry: 1.) How do college men understand intersections between their gendered (masculine) identities and their spirituality; and 2.) How are college men's commitments to spirituality and/or religious faith associated with centricity, citizenship, and an ethic of care or service? This grounded theory study was intended to evoke participants' voices in response to these questions to develop an emerging theory of spiritual and masculine identity intersections. These two primary research questions were subdivided into five and three additional questions respectively (see table 2 in research methods chapter), which created structure for the interview questions and group dialogue sessions. The research questions also generated qualitative data start codes and helped to organize and prioritize the data to include in participant profiles. And finally, these questions came together to make up the model explained in the previous chapter. The first question asked about participants' internal meaning and external expression, and the second question inquired into the relational and transcendent application of those meanings. Hence, the model built with inner, social, and engaged dimensions of the self all incorporate various data points in response to these research questions.

How Do College Men Understand Intersections Between Gendered and Spiritual

Identities?

This question presented some anticipated challenges. First, in order to answer this

question, men were expected to understand their spiritual identity as well as their gender

identity, let alone the intersections between the two. This is not simple Venn diagram

work with two discrete shapes overlapping one another. Identities are complicated,

multi-faceted, and not always on the surface of one's self-awareness. Hence, most of the

interviews, activities, and dialogue sessions had to be designed to elicit components of

each of these identities which could be compiled individually, then divided into factors

and reconstructed in aggregate.

That aggregate form in this study became a Transcendence Model of Identity

Construction that provided a framework to analyze intersectionality between masculine

and spiritual aspects of the college men's identities. The young men developed

meaningful concepts of self in all three personal dimensions (inner, social, and engaged

self) along both spiritual and gendered identities. They identified congruency channels

for the two identities which serve different functions. The socially-constructed masculine

congruency channels typically drive men to center their focus on their social self,

occasionally at the expense of the development of one's interior. The young men are

positively reinforced for outward-focused behaviors like service to others, providing for

one's family, or achieving status and success. Then they may experience negative social

reinforcement when they show evidence of inner work (self-discovery, authentic self-

expression, etc). This creates a congruency gradient, where men occupy more time

centered in the interpersonal and extrapersonal dimensions with less of a priority of

intrapersonal development. The spiritual congruency channels, however, tend to operate

either bilaterally or with an inward direction, as spirituality has traditionally been viewed

as an entirely internal process.

The most substantial difference between spiritual and masculine identities

pertains to the outermost dimensions in the model. While neither spiritual nor masculine

identities can be centered in the dimension of the Ultimates, this study revealed that

spiritual identity uses that outermost Ultimate dimension as an orienting consideration,

while one's masculine identity relies on extrapersonal or interpersonal archetypes to

orient beliefs and behaviors. In other words, most men are motivated to emulate other

men when it comes to their masculine ideals, but they are motivated toward abstract

ideals when striving toward something spiritual.

How are college men's commitments to spirituality and/or religious faith associated
with centricity, citizenship, and an ethic of care or service?

This study found very little relationship between the strength of one's spiritual or

religious commitment and his propensity to care for people, serve others, or engage in a

broader community. In fact, the student who scored the lowest in spiritual/religious

commitment had the strongest commitment to care and citizenship. The data suggest that

perhaps 'commitment' to a faith tradition is not the best measure to predict one's

propensity to invest in relationships or serve others. Instead, a factor called Spiritual

Quest actually became a more direct indication of one's commitment to service and

citizenship. This factor was intended to describe the extent to which an individual sees

spirituality as a journey or path to wisdom and self-discovery. Also, understanding what

an individual considers to be Ultimate, and how strongly and through what means that Ultimate is pursued would be a better indicator. For example, when congruency and transcendence channels are all aligned in the direction of an Ultimate for a young man, that will lead to a very strong association that allows the young man to quickly transcend oneself and pursue goals beyond meeting one's own needs. So if a young man aligns his beliefs and actions through a congruency channel toward Human Goodness, and his mentor introduces him (transcendence channel) to a faith tradition that holds Human Goodness in high esteem, he has aligned these channels in the direction of an Ultimate. This young man will undoubtedly be quite committed to pursue this Ultimate value across multiple dimensions of the self. Channels are set in place often by interactions with other people that force a young man to align his beliefs and actions (congruency) or by role models who introduce him to a broader community or system of beliefs (transcendence). It is these channels which allow young men to transcend their loci of centricity from the egocentric starting point. The existence of this developmental transition from egocentricity toward interdependence is prominent in literature (Gilligan, 1982; Chickering & Reisser, 1992; Parks, 2000), but this study contributes more detail on how congruency and transcendence channels function, and how trusted others are often critical to their positioning from one dimension to another.

The difference between these college men's associations with an ethic of care and citizenship offered some intriguing points of comparison. Developing a caring persona toward other people was notably more important to the group than participating in community programs or caring about broader social issues. So the interpersonal contact was a driving force for most of their decisions to engage in service of any kind, more so

than a motivation to be associated with communities or groups who do service. This is a group that would much rather mentor young kids or coach a soccer team than raise funds to benefit a national charity. The college men held these two ideas to be linked, though a caring orientation was always the more important of the two. In their final interviews, those who scored with Ethic of Care close to Citizenship deliberately mentioned that they would separate them even further. I attribute this to a generation that grew up with the requisite of community service on applications and the widespread phenomenon of the perceived resume-builder, whose motivations for service are merely to collect line items to pad the resume. This has become a notable demotivator such that young men want to space themselves away from being identified as such. So they recognize the distinction that an ethic of care must be a precursor to *authentic* engagement in service beyond the self, and they strive to align their service activities with people, ideas, or values that they hold in a higher esteem. In some cases, when that alignment is not quite as clean, they gauge a decision to participate on the ability to impact individual people's lives – a utilitarian decision valuing the greatest good for the greatest number.

Selznick's (1992) social participation theory distinguished between core participation (connected to one's identity or motivated by values) and segmental participation (connected to extrinsic factors or motivated by personal interests) in service activities. For college students, their motivations to engage in community service are often grouped into three categories: altruistic, egotistic, and obligatory (Jones & Hill, 2003; Berger & Milem, 2002; Marotta & Nashman, 1998). This literature is valuable to understand the commitment and motivation of students to engage in service opportunities, but there are very few studies which identify the role of a mentor or trusted

other in initiating that first connection of a student to a cause or project. I found that most of the young men had a role model of someone who introduced them to serving or who modeled what it looks like to live a life committed to an ideal or community larger than oneself. More often than not, this role model shared a similar faith background as that of the young men. These mentors or trusted elders were likely the most influential factor in a young man deciding to commit to work on a social issue or with a group of people that he then came to value substantially without the scaffolding of the trusted elder. I will return to this idea shortly when I discuss implications for service learning and academic engagement.

Contribution of Emerging Theory to Existing Literature

The literature review chapter of this dissertation was written in two parts – one highlighting masculine gender identity literature and the other detailing spiritual identity development literature in higher education. This study was intended to piece together those two seemingly disparate bases of literature. I fully expected to complete this study with a Venn diagram that illustrated overlaps, intersections, and incongruencies between the different identities (masculine, spiritual, and religious also) as if they were discrete entities, as in figure 19 below.
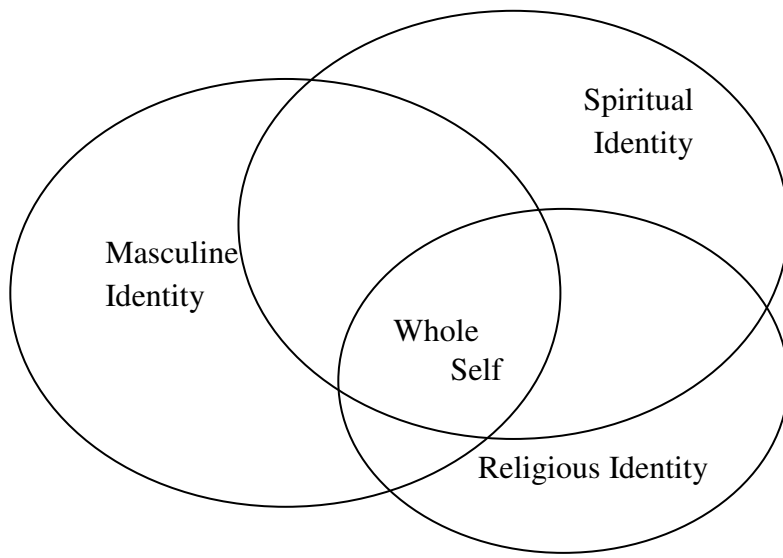
The reality, however, became something quite different when I began collecting data and carefully thinking through this model. Social identities just do not have boundaries decipherable enough to create a Venn diagram, and I would suggest that this is one feature that makes them so salient in our development. Our numerous social identities become us, and we become somewhat indecipherable without them. Yet it would be nearly impossible for a young man to say that he makes a decision that is influenced exclusively by his gender identity without also having that same decision be influenced by myriad other social identities (for example, as an able-bodied, upper-middle class, African-American Muslim man from Snow Hill, MD studying Foreign Affairs and Philosophy). Despite our best efforts to do so, some of which I also attempted in this study, we simply cannot decontextualize identities that easily. So instead of positioning the identities themselves as the objects of study, I chose to contextualize them in a nested interactional model that focused attention instead on the *self* for college men. In this case, the self is described as having three layers: the inner self, social self, and engaged self. Social identities play out across all three of these

dimensions, and their impact is evidenced in different ways depending on the types of interactions one faces.

The three disconnections between spiritual and masculine identity development in literature (self-authorship, connectedness, and expanding centricity) actually became integrated into the model as parts of the three dimensions of the self. Self-authorship is about narrating one's own script, which has much to do with creating meaning and charting direction as an intrapersonal pursuit. Developing an orientation toward self-authorship indicates a shift away from what Kegan (1994) describes as students viewing knowledge as externally-validated or authority-bound. Instead, a developing student gradually shifts to create their own meaning and narrate their own stories, which they then learn to connect to relationships and various social contexts. Connectedness is part and parcel of the interpersonal dimension, where students build relationships and co-construct meanings. They then engage with trusted peers and commit to beliefs, ideas, and communities beyond themselves (through the extrapersonal dimension). So, ironically, the three identified disconnections between the two fields of literature have proven to be useful in building the model that integrates these identities in reality.

This study of college men has a number of implications for cross-disciplinary theory development. First, as mentioned above, the methodology of dialogical narrative offers a rich interactive format to collect wide-ranging types of data to describe identities in great depth with multiple points of contact. Second, there have been very few studies which combine spirituality with other identities in higher education. Spiritual identity has proven to be a complex landscape of meaning-making across multiple dimensions of the self. As an identity construct, spirituality offers an excellent platform for comparison

across other social identities because of those far-reaching and deeply meaningful contact points. And finally, studies of men *as men* often do study separate aspects of men without a perspective on the entire person. Our conversations were wide-ranging, touching on masculine, spiritual, cultural, and religious topics, relationships, values, vocational interests, families, hopes, and aspirations. This dialogical narrative approach allowed me to listen and reconstruct pieces of spiritual or masculine identities into an integrated whole. Though these may be particularly salient ones for this group, young men have several different social identities (race, class, sexual orientation, political orientation, citizenship/nationality, etc.) which all interact along hierarchical social structures to create a contextualized whole person (Bell, 1997). It is a commonly held belief among most identity researchers that people have multiple group identities (Deaux, 1996; Stryker & Stratham, 1985), but still the majority of research in this area continues to be conducted along single ingroup-outgroup categorization (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). University programming also consistently focuses on one social identity, often at the expense of the integrated whole – a theme which I will return to shortly.

This model was built from mixed methods data pertaining to spiritual and masculine identities in an attempt to find intersections between these two identities. Literature and surveys on identity constructs tend to contrivedly separate these identities (among others) in an effort to simplify their study. I am just as guilty of this contrived simplification, as I have only chosen to study the intersection of two identities, yet even this simple combination of two social identities leads to a more inclusive model that can be extended. The resulting Transcendence Model of Identity Construction presents a framework by which we might analyze other identity intersections beyond spirituality

and gender. Along these lines, the identity intersections work presented in this dissertation is still a relatively new type of inquiry. We lack a general framework for identity Construction that casts a net wide enough to include space for multiple identities. This model is intended to cast that wide net by offering a framework to compare these identity intersections.

Implications

I began this dissertation by acknowledging that college men are at an impasse. Recent research has revealed a number of concerning trends in college men's engagement, attendance, success, well-being, and anti-social behaviors (Harris III & Edwards, 2010; Sax, 2008; Kellom, 2004). This study was positioned to understand a different kind of concerning trend – that college men struggle with problems of authenticity. They struggle to be the men they would like to be, perhaps either because of competing social pressures or lack of confidence or absence of role models. This study investigated how a group of college men talked about being men, being spiritual, and being authentic in various settings. The theory that emerged for a Transendence Model of Identity Construction, with multiple dimensions of the self and the mediating channels between those dimensions, has many implications for college students and those who work closely with them.

Implications for Student Affairs Practice

The college men in this study were all asked to identify a place, group, event, or setting that they consider to be spiritual. Only three out of seven were able to identify

one such setting, which raises the question of how colleges can design settings and spaces to support students' ability to step away and reflect in quiet or even to gather with a group who share similar beliefs. I joined Prasham for his meeting of the Hindu Student Council in a bright gathering space called the Center for Cultural Fluency with artwork on the walls. Students who I asked all seemed to appreciate that space in particular, as it was designed only for open meetings that anyone could join if they were merely walking by. They said they rarely get visitors, but seem to value the symbolically open space to worship collectively.

Practitioners in higher education may be particularly interested in the functionality of the congruency and transcendence channels in this model. As discussed in the model built in the previous chapter, congruency channels connect intrapersonal (inner self) and interpersonal (social self) dimensions. Abes, Jones & McEwen (2000, 2007) refer to these as the core self and the outer self, describing the core as one's personal attributes and identity, while the outer self is layered with orbiting social identities. While these are both similar to my description of inner (intrapersonal) and social (interpersonal) selves, literature only scarcely discusses mechanisms for movement from one dimension of the self to another. Congruency channels, likely the meaning-making filter of Abes, Jones & McEwen (2007), regulate that movement, determining consciously or unconsciously which parts of oneself are shared publicly, and which information and messages are internalized from outside the self. These channels are established when social connections are made with others, and the channels represent both the strength and directionality (who gives/receives more) in that connection. A solid channel is a bidirectional one where the individual connects his internal beliefs and

personal meanings with his social interactions with other people. In other words, he is internally consistent across his beliefs and interactions. Most Student Affairs practitioners would quickly recognize that strong social and support networks are necessary for healthy identity development in college. Congruency channels can signify that support network for individuals.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the college men in this study presented evidence that they feel a great deal of pressure to focus more time and energy in the social self, often at the cost of acknowledging and valuing one's interior self (e.g. emotional and psychological health). With this finding in mind, it is important for Student Affairs practitioners to find opportunities for college men to open congruency channels back toward the center. This should be done with the recognition that vulnerability is difficult for all students, but college men spend a great deal of energy avoiding vulnerable moments, especially in public settings. This could be residential staff asking deeper questions in private about emotional states when they notice that one of their residents appear to be struggling, or a Student Conduct professional probing into one's motivations or intentions underlying anti-social behaviors. The idea is that other people can play active roles in redirecting one's centricity back on the inner self to excavate emotions or motivations in productive ways that open healthy channels between the inner and social self.

Additionally, transcendence channels function to connect the social self with the engaged self. They move an individual from relationships with individuals to commitments and active participation in communities. This channel is perhaps the most valuable one to understand for Student Affairs professionals and administrators, as

Community has a particularly salient resonance in almost all of their work – from Student Activities to Residence Life to Orientation, Multicultural Affairs, or Academic Programs. Transcendence channels connect a student to purposes, communities, or commitments beyond the immediate self. These channels are often established by trusted peers or adults who introduce students to communities of practice. For some, this could be a peer group that develops destructive or unhealthy patterns of behavior. For others, this may be quite a supportive student organization introducing the student to prosocial activities – or any range of influence in between these two. The findings of this study consistently reference that these transcendence channels are influenced or established by trusted others, meaning that trusted peers or role models are often directly responsible for connecting a college student to larger commitments or communities of practice. This raises the stakes that Student Affairs professionals must make sure that a) they are trusted in their work with students, b) they create opportunities for students to interact with various types of communities to make sure that a student can connect with ones that fit him most authentically.

In addition to professionals filling those roles of trusted others, there is also tremendous value in creating mentoring communities, as suggested by Parks (2000). These mentoring forms of community are ones which position trusted older students (and professionals supporting them) to provide opportunities for transcendence of one's own immediate needs and connections to communities. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this role of a mentor can be particularly challenging for those working with young men. The dominant socialization dictates that the young men should be independent and not accept help to accomplish his goals. They reject forms of dependence, value

independence, and often blind themselves to interdependence. So the successful mentor must develop the unique skill set of guiding without helping, suggesting without instructing, and pushing while making him believe it was his idea.

As mentioned in the previous two chapters, the participants in this study differentiated their peer groups often with gender in mind. They acknowledged that while they appreciate friendships with women, and may actually tell the young women that they appreciate them more often, the homosocial all-male environments often offered them a less risky outlet to share more openly about personal issues. Most of these homosocial examples cited by participants were entirely student-facilitated environments – social fraternities, peer groups, non-Varsity sports teams, etc. These social settings are often loosely organized, governed by the loudest voices, and lack deliberate inclusion of divergent perspectives. The men who report these as supportive environments often have a smaller subgroup of close friends "who have my back" within them. After seeing how much the young men enjoyed the dialogue groups, and immediately opened up to the process and shared deeply about very personal issues, it is clear that this was a valuable and welcomed space for this group of college men. This presents a compelling argument for more co-curricular inclusion of gender-affirmative dialogues in the hands of Student Affairs professionals and trained, trusted older students. I make this recommendation with the caveat that well-facilitated all-male groups can be powerful experiences for men who have not participated in these conversations before, but they should always be used as a part of a larger curriculum that integrates the experiences of men, women, and transgender students in the campus community. We do men no favors when we

habitually decontextualize their experiences and ask them to construct their identity experiences under false pretenses of binary gender separation.

Whereas abstract ideals or Ultimates are motivating for one's spiritual identity, this study found that college men are particularly responsive to actual people as orienting models when it comes to their masculine roles. So it is particularly important that young men see examples of favorable role models in terms of emotional expression, conflict resolution, mutually beneficial relationships, healthy competition, or the balance of work and self-care. Some of these models can emerge from student staff members or older mentors, though professional staff and faculty also have a notable influence in modeling these types of role behaviors.

The directionality of these channels presents some challenges and opportunities for Student Affairs professionals. We will not often find students who enter college able to identify that Human Goodness or God or Justice are Ultimates with which he most clearly identifies. It can take a great deal of time to get to know someone that closely, but we can design learning experiences that help students to clarify those Ultimate values. These learning experiences can help students to recognize that they do find themselves on a journey, or a quest of self-discovery. This might be a physical journey like a study abroad experience, which almost always pushes a students' comfort zone and initiates some type of personal change or reflection, especially when cultural immersions are designed well by faculty or staff members. But it could also be a metaphorical journey like a dialogue group with different others that encourages students to thoroughly explore someone else's perspective. By understanding that students make choices about peers, commitments, and community involvements based on these Ultimate values, the stakes

are higher for students to clarify what those values are and how they might animate them in their choices. The sooner a student can clarify these values, the sooner he will be able to make more deliberate choices based on those esteemed values.

Most men in this study referenced the Student Activities Fair as one way that they recognize the University supports students' spiritual identity development, by providing a structure for religious and spiritual groups to host a table and recruit new members. These fairs can be overwhelming, especially at a school like this one where there are 850+ stucent organizations. Schools with much larger number of student groups may consider separating these fairs, and involving campus ministry student organizations to recruit new members at their own Faith Bazaar. This would be an especially poignant offering for students who are still seeking, and interested in spirituality but not committed to one particular sect. This also brings up the question of who and how to organize such a program.

Implications for Campus Ministry and Spiritual/Religious Organizations

While there is often trepidation at public or state institutions to be too involved with religious organizations, there is also a great deal of hidden value in working closely with umbrella organizations charged to coordinate across communities of faith. These groups can mobilize quickly to support wide-ranging populations in the wake of major catastrophic events (September 11th, shootings on campus, etc). Working in conjunction with mental health professionals on a campus, these faith organizations can help communities to heal and build dialogue when meaning may not easily be within reach. This interfaith work can also lead to excellent opportunities for education. As the student

President of one of these campus ministry organizations, Jeff mentioned that "people say 'I wish we did more things with other groups, I wish we had more interfaith stuff, I wish we got to know more people rather than just our close-knit [faith] group.' I do think some people care about that a lot, but I would say most people say that would be cool, but I don't want to call some [stranger] to make it happen." This is yet another argument to establish a strong Interfaith Network on college campuses so that this type of desire from students would not require a call to a stranger, but to another member of the network on campus. These collaborations are more often established across professionals working with campus ministries. However, a more engaging model that involves students on an Interfaith Council would send a strong message that a) involvement in faith organizations is recognized and important for students' identity development, b) a college is committed to giving students education in cooperation across communities of difference, c) dialogue across groups is both important and necessary in a plural society, and d) students are entrusted as agents of collaboration and leaders in these communities.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the college men in this study were unlikely to stay involved in an organization if they did not have a specific responsibility within it. For most, this was a leadership role, but that may also just be the most salient example referenced by the students. The theme emerged that without a clear role or project for which they were responsible in a group, the college men tended to disengage. So a recommendation for campus ministry organizations would be to further diffuse the layers of responsibility for individual projects or functions, with clearly designated roles that can be assigned, appointed, or elected within the organization. This is not to say that all men need to be the President, but instead that many do need to have that structure and

type of responsibility to feel engaged with an organization which hopes to retain him. Though many religious organizations try to avoid adding additional levels of hierarchy given that they already have professional staff or ministers running the ministry, it is still possible to build student project coordinator or outreach-related roles in flattened hierarchies for students to assume responsibility for certain aspects of the groups. Students are the best ambassadors of these ministries to the college itself, and their advocacy of interfaith work is more likely to garner institutional support when it emerges from grassroots student involvement and genuine interest in collaboration.

Implications for Community Service & Service Learning

As discussed above, the transcendence channel is a mediator between the social and the engaged self, with directionality toward an Ultimate. In other words, a college student has a trusted other person who models or encourages them to look beyond themselves and engage in a cause or project for which that the student comes to cares about deeply. The student moves from an interpersonal relationship to an extrapersonal commitment to service aligned with a personal interest. There is a sizable body of evidence supporting the positive effects of students participating in service, including improvements or growth in academic performance, values, self-efficacy, leadership, and an orientation to engage in more service (Astin, et al., 2000). Some studies have shown that most (up to 80% of) people engage in service because it gives them personal satisfaction – it makes them feel good (Serow, 1990, 1991). This finding is generally consistent with the participants in this study – that those who engage in service mostly do so either because it offers them some kind of satisfaction or fulfillment, or it aligns with

their worldview or spiritual commitments. And others have demonstrated that involvement in community service contributed to the process of developing greater knowledge of self through meaningful work with others (Rhoads, 1997), resulting in development at all three dimensions of self, but especially in the dimension of the engaged self. Findings from my study suggests that the college men had developed a keen awareness that a caring orientation should precede engagement in community service, and that a trusted other person serves most effectively as a transcendence channel to introduce the college men to service projects or commitments. These findings, therefore, would suggest that in order to encourage more involvement in community service among these college men, one would be most successful appealing to the helping and caring aspects of being involved.

The trusted other mentioned above can be another student, but also a faculty member who thoughtfully engages students in communities through an academic course. This becomes a distinguishing feature between community or volunteer service and service learning, as service learning is a deliberate and reflective engagement of students in communities through the medium of an academic course or curriculum. Service learning takes place at the nexus between course content, critical reflection, and meaningful service (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Astin, et al. (2000) suggest that these experiences are more powerful for students when they involve two key features: opportunities to process their experiences with other students, and experiencing more personalized support from faculty. So again, the findings of my study are consistent in reinforcing that trusted others offer students the best mediators (congruency and transcendence channels) for meaningful engagement with others and communities. The

key phrase here is *meaningful engagement*, which in my model would mean that transcendence and congruency channels are aligned. This allows for one's experience with a community partner to impact him deeply and (intra-)personally - to think about how that experience changes his view of himself and himself in the world. And the channels also align with something for the young man in the Dimension of the Ultimates. So he may be expected to enact some type of service as a required component of a class, but there is enough flexibility that he can choose to engage with a community partner project that aligns with a deeply-held belief in Social Justice, Human Goodness, God, etc.

Limitations & Implications for Future Research

Through the process of engaging in this dialogical narrative research study, themes continued to emerge that would have been equally fascinating to pursue in this study. Part of the challenge of this research methodology is to quiet the very interesting divergent voices, yet still be open to recognize them as areas for further research. The topic of relationships surfaced often among this group. I merely scratched that surface of this interpersonal topic in the model by briefly discussing differences between participants' (mostly filial) relationships with either men or women. This opened a large door for future study on the differences between young men's perceptions of their relationships between other men and women. Additionally, it is important with any study like this which focused exclusively on one segment of a social identity group that follow-up studies are conducted with the remaining segments. While Gilligan (1982) began this discussion of integrating our conversation of faith development with the experiences of women and girls, more qualitative research is warranted to continue that discussion. I

also did not elect to carefully analyze the men's amorous or romantic relationships with women or men, nor did I explicitly ask the men to identify a sexual orientation as a part of the research process. The topic of sexuality was a part of one of the dialogue group topics, but much more research is warranted on the impact of one's sexual identity as it relates to both gendered and spiritual identities. Additionally, we briefly discussed transgender and gender nonconformative issues in one of the dialogue groups, but since all of the participants in this study identified as both males and men with only some social role nonconformity, there was little additional time spent discussing non-binary constructions of gender, which certainly presents an opportunity for future research.

This study was designed to capture multifaceted narratives of college men as they co-construct gendered and spiritual identities in a dialogue setting. Selection of individuals was based on a nominated convenience method, which means that participants are not a representative group other than being a group of young men from various faith backgrounds with enough interest in the topic to want to commit to six weeks of discussing it. Clearly this presents a limitation in the sample of this study. The participant sample size is deliberately small and the description of each individual is thick and socially contextualized. This is a limitation of dialogical narrative as a methodology, because all data that is collected during group sessions requires that the setting of dialogue be taken into consideration. Some participants may not have disclosed something in the group that they would have in a one-on-one conversation with the researcher. Then again, this public-private distinction is also valuable as yet another data point since our identities are comprised of interactive as well as intrapersonal aspects.

Another limitation of this study related to the participant sample is the diversity of social identities represented. The study prioritized convergence in that all participants should identify as men, and divergence in that all participants should have a different general faith background that they bring to the group. This lent a valuable diversity of religious perspectives, and could be considered a limitation because the focus of the study was not able to address how gendered and spiritual identity elements interact with other racial, demographic, or social identifiers. While the study did touch briefly on cultural factors influencing gendered and spiritual identities, mostly the influence of Asian or Middle Eastern culture on the dominant masculine forms in the U.S., there is much more space for future research in this area. At the group identity level alone, further research should be done to investigate how normative group behaviors influence an individual's negotiation of self along the three dimensions and two channels discussed in this study.

The findings of this study are not intended to be generalized to entire populations, and any attempt to do so would not be in keeping with the intention of the study. As a qualitative researcher, I recognize the influence I had over the design, implementation, and analysis of this study. Had another researcher taken on exactly the same study, the facilitated discussion may have taken on a different tone and perhaps set a more effective tone for facilitated disclosure at times when I may have allowed the discussion to flow more freely. By this, I am saying that I as a researcher necessarily influence the methods through which participants narrate their stories. This is neither good nor bad, but merely truth in subjectivity.

This model can be expanded further to include subdimensions within the three (intra-, inter-, and extrapersonal) dimensions. For example, though this study did not

examine this level of depth, future studies might consider additional functionality within the dimensions, for example, how exactly an individual filters and attributes value to determine that something is meaningful within the intrapersonal dimension. Or perhaps future research could subdivide that interpersonal dimension into separate layers to include close friends or family and another for other friends, acquaintances, and virtual channels of connectedness. The extrapersonal dimension could also include subdivisions for communities which one chooses, others to which one is granted access by one's demographics or traits, and others with are connected solely by common beliefs. All of these dimensions have different effects on an individual's identification with something as internally meaningful to them. The important point here is that this model offers a common starting point for analysis of complex identity variables and intersections within and across dimensions.

As researchers continue to investigate identity construction and development, as we have been doing for the last few decades, there will be more interest in how these identities interact in whole, real people. We know that we do not build our identities as if they were each stand-alone towers, with my spiritual identity unencumbered by my neighboring towers of sexual or gender or racial or class or civic identity. It is important for future research on multiple identities to adopt an integrative approach that acknowledges intersections and points of connections and disconnections across our multiple social identities.

Supporting Revolutionary Acts of Gender Transgression

The literature on (masculine) gender identity which conspired in the development of this model points unequivocally toward the fact that there is a problem with the straw man that we as a society have elevated to represent contemporary Masculinity. All men in this study recognized that the one singular, hegemonic form is not a realistic, or preferable, archetype to which they might aspire. Instead, they uniformly chose to align with known, trusted, mostly older individuals (men or women) from whom they learned the most about how they want to be *as men.* By seeing and learning from a number of these exemplars, young men adopt the courage to transgress the narrow box of socially-prescribed masculine roles and behaviors that restrict them from authentic self-expression. As described in the previous chapter, congruency channels often push young men to focus their attention on their social selves rather than on understanding and expressing the inner self. An act of transgression against this hegemonic archetype would be for a young man to reposition those congruency channels by finding ways to express himself more regularly with close friends or family. For some, this is seeing other men in professions where they are otherwise underrepresented, or bonding with the boys over books and brains rather than just beer and brawn. The men in this study referenced a number of examples of other people who demonstrated these sometimes small acts of caring for one another, or doing service, or calling someone out when they use homophobic or anti-feminine phrases. The point is that people noticed these small acts, and they helped to shape young men's ideas of what is acceptable for men to do and be.

Any act of transgression is most likely followed by social consequences. In this case, if we are to encourage young men to act authentically, even when that violates an unwritten code of masculinity, it is our responsibility also to prepare those young men with the resiliency to anticipate and endure those social consequences. For example, a college man may cringe whenever he hears his peers jokingly call each other "fags," but he will rarely rock the boat and say "guys, not cool" if he thinks he is the only one in the group with that opinion. So he becomes a frustrated yet powerless bystander. A number of colleges have begun to develop excellent programs working to empower bystanders of violence, bias, and discrimination. These programs empower and compel people to act authentically on the beliefs they hold to be true, even when they are unpopular or socially transgressive. The social psychologist Solomon Asch (1951) conducted research on conformity, identifying that when a large group has a strong opinion, individuals are likely to (at least publicly) conform to that standard. But with the visible presence of even one dissenter, others are much more likely to express their common dissent from the group norm. The same principle is at work when we consider how best to support men who do not identify with traditional gender roles or traits. In public spaces, their congruency channels are taxed, closing off self-expression if they sense danger. But if they have conspirators in their transgression, however small, they are much more likely to act consistently with their espoused beliefs and values.

One of the most obvious examples of this gender transgression on campus is often captured by the population of gay, bi-, questioning, or transgender men. A significant measure of the strength of social pressure on campuses related to that hegemonic masculine archetype is, unfortunately, the extent to which these sub-groups of men feel

safe being out and authentic on their college campus. And the responsibility to ensure that safety falls in the hands of all professionals and students, gay and straight, of all genders in that community. The benefits of a community that welcome authentic self-expression are enjoyed by all its members, not just those on the social margins, so it is in everyone's best interest to work diligently to support such a place. So, as mentioned in the previous chapter, it is important to recognize how risky it can be to engage in acts of gender transgression. And allied communities and social conspirators are keys to supporting this revolutionary work. Men's groups can offer some of this support by affirming gay, bi, or trans men; or advocating against violence against women; or positioning themselves as allies on social advocacy issues. But the most powerful influence that men can have is on other men. Returning to my Transcendence Model of Identity Construction, we have already established that trusted others most frequently provide the channels for one to transcend oneself and his immediate relationships and feel connected to communities. If we are ever to rid ourselves of the unrealistic influence of the hegemonic masculine archetype, we must find ways to continue to support revolutionary acts of gender transgression until that day when they are no longer revolutionary, but merely common.

Value of this Study

This study sits in a unique space in higher education and student development literature, between two distinct branches of writing on identity development. Initially, I imagined that this study would result in a new model to represent the overlapping gendered and spiritual identity development of college men. But as the data emerged, it

became clear that to try to parse these identities was too simplistic of a solution. We construct identities in a much more integrative manner, so it does them injustice to separate them into component pieces and study them in isolation without context. Therefore, it was important to build an identity *construction* model rather than a *developmental* theory. One value of this study is that it lays a foundation for those contexts in a nested model describing dimensions of the inner, social, and engaged self. The dimensions in this model are slight adaptations to existing theories, but the channels described to connect the dimensions are a unique contribution that also lend a great deal of agency to colleges and universities to design learning experiences to foster development of those congruency and transcendence channels. They represent development as a process and a tangible learning outcome that can be sought, planned, and potentially assessed.

Additionally, this study contributes a unique methodological value in its dialogical narrative approach. This method combines action research, group dialogue, and narrative inquiry to collect identity data across multiple points of contact to match the social contexts represented in the resulting model. In this particular instance, the methodology included a quantitative survey as the structural backbone, which also served as one of many data points to illustrate participants' narratives. As a mixed method approach that combines multiple types of data collection, dialogical narrative has much to offer when studying constructs as complex and nuanced as social identities.

Conclusion

This unique dialogical narrative study bridges a gap between two different fields of identity literature – spiritual identity and masculine gender identity. Throughout this study, it became clear that it would not be possible to identify a clear and distinct model showing generalizable intersections between one's spiritual and masculine identities. The resulting theory, a Transcendence Model of Identity Construction, emerged out of participants' narratives and provides a landscape in which identities develops. The model includes three dimensions – the inner, social and engaged self – and two channels connecting these dimensions. The idea of these channels offers perhaps the best opportunities for Colleges and Universities to design experiences that help to create learning experiences which help to create channels for students to bridge dimensions by building relationships and developing meaningful commitments and connections to communities.

This study also identified that young men orient themselves socially toward models of behavior and belief. They identify archetypes (real, imaginary, or composite) for behaviors, traits, or roles that they would most like to emanate. These archetypes are either endorsed by communities to which an individual belongs, or they can also be personally identified and individually endorsed as valuable and motivating. These aspirational archetypes could be spiritual mentors and/or masculine role models, as all of these social identities have some archetypes to which we look for validation and congruency.

Finally, this study was intended to continue to ground spiritual identity as an important aspect of college students' development. The future of identity research lies in the intersections between social identities, so it is critical that we give voice to as many of these social identities as possible when studying whole human beings and their many contexts. I began this dissertation by mentioning that college men are at an impasse. The patriarchal hegemonic archetype no longer affords them the social mobility and luster it once promised. Young men need a wider range of opportunities for critical reflection and role models that actually reflect the diversity of our communities and the demands of increasingly flexible gendered identities and expressions. Higher education in the United States is uniquely positioned to offer them just that. The young men in this study were both generous with their time and courageous in their disclosure. I am thankful to have learned so much from them, and honored by the opportunity to tell their stories.

Appendix A: Electronic Request Soliciting Participant Nominations

From: Wilcox Elliott, Christopher
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2010
Subject: Nominations request

Hello XXX XXX,

My name is Chris Wilcox Elliott, a doctoral student in the Curry School of Education. As XXXX mentioned in her email, I hope that you might be able to assist me in nominating college men from XXXX student ministry for a unique opportunity.

 I am recruiting college men to participate in an interfaith dialogue group as part of my doctoral research study that is designed to expand our understanding about how both spiritual and gender identities develop and interact over the course of a college career. Altogether, the study will consist of two individual interviews, a 2-page survey, and five consecutive weeks of 1.5 hour dialogue sessions toward the middle of the semester. Dialogue sessions will assemble one consistent interfaith group of 8-10 college men to discuss issues of masculinity and faith or spirituality over the five consecutive weeks. This is a small group, and as you know, the dynamics of the group will be critical to its success. I hope that you can help me to select the right men for this discussion.

 We are looking for undergraduate men who have fairly good understanding of their faith tradition, and those who you believe have the reflective capacity or self-awareness to think through deeper questions of personal meaning and identity. Participants will not be asked to speak on behalf of their faith tradition, as the interviews and dialogue sessions will pertain to their own personal experiences and histories. A diversity of backgrounds (religious, academic, cultural, moral, geographic [within the U.S.], etc.) will be among the primary criteria for selection.

 I would be most appreciative if you could send me the <u>names of one or two men (with a short sentence as to why they come to mind)</u> from your organization who I might contact to participate. I will include your name as his nominator, unless you would prefer me not to do so.

 I will be happy to report my findings back to United Ministries in the Spring of 2011, which *may* ultimately be of value in thinking through additional strategies for engaging college men in your work. Thank you so much for your time. Please contact me via email or phone if you have additional questions.

 Warm Regards,

~Chris

 Chris Wilcox Elliott
PhD Candidate, Social Foundations of Education

Appendix B: Electronic Nomination Letter to Prospective Participants

From: Wilcox Elliott, Christopher
Sent: Monday, February 15, 2010
Subject: You've been nominated to participate...

Hello XXXX,

Congratulations! You have been nominated to participate in a workshop and dialogue group on spirituality for college men. YYYY nominated you to join us for this unique opportunity because she thought you would be able to contribute substantially to our discussion.

This workshop is part of a larger doctoral research study that is designed to expand our understanding about how both spiritual and gender identities develop and interact over the course of a college career. Altogether, your involvement would consist of two individual interviews, a short survey, and five consecutive weeks of 1.5 hour interactive dialogue sessions immediately after Spring Break (Monday evenings from 7-8:30pm from March 15-April 12). Dialogue sessions will assemble one consistent interfaith group of 8-10 college men to discuss issues of masculinity and faith or spirituality over the five consecutive weeks, with the final week being a full celebratory meal. I have been soliciting nominations from faith community leaders and students over the last few weeks, and we think you would be a valuable contributor to this group, XXXX.

Please let me know with an email response if you are interested in joining us, and I will follow up with more specific instructions. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to email or call me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Cheers.

~Chris Wilcox Elliott
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Appendix C: Preliminary Participant Survey

Name: _____

Major(s) / Minor(s): _____
_____
_____

Age: _____   # of college semesters completed: _____

Hometown? _____   Race / Ethnic Background: _____

Religious/Spiritual Affiliation or Denomination: _____

How would you describe your current views about spiritual/religious matters? (circle all that apply)

Conflicted   Secure   Doubting   Seeking   Not Interested

My Spiritual/Religious Beliefs: (1=Strongly Agree, 2=Somewhat Agree, 3= Somewhat Disagree, 4=Strongly Disagree)

Have helped me develop my identity………………………………………	1	2	3	4
Are among of the most important things in my life………………….…....	1	2	3	4
Give meaning/purpose to my life…………………………………….…..	1	2	3	4
Help define the goals I set for myself…………………………………..	1	2	3	4
Provide me with strength, support, and guidance…………...……………	1	2	3	4
Have been formed through much personal reflection and searching….….…	1	2	3	4

(adapted from HERI, 2004)

Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following:

E = Essential   VI = Very Important   SI = Somewhat Important   NI = Not Important

					Code
1. Becoming a local community leader	E	VI	SI	NI	ctzn
2. Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment	E	VI	SI	NI	ctzn
3. Integrating spirituality into my life	E	VI	SI	NI	commit
4. Reducing pain and suffering in the world	E	VI	SI	NI	care
5. Becoming a more loving person	E	VI	SI	NI	care
6. Finding answers to the mysteries of life	E	VI	SI	NI	quest
7. Feeling a sense of connection to a higher power	E	VI	SI	NI	commit
8. Seeking out opportunities to help me to grow spiritually	E	VI	SI	NI	commit
9. Participating in a community action program	E	VI	SI	NI	ctzn
10. Attaining wisdom	E	VI	SI	NI	quest
11. Improving my understanding of other countries and cultures	E	VI	SI	NI	ctzn
12. Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	E	VI	SI	NI	quest
13. Helping others who are in difficulty	E	VI	SI	NI	care
14. Helping to promote racial understanding	E	VI	SI	NI	ctzn
15. Seeking to follow religious teachings in my everyday life	E	VI	SI	NI	commit
16. Improving the human condition	E	VI	SI	NI	ctzn
17. Attaining inner harmony	E	VI	SI	NI	quest
18. Seeking beauty in my life	E	VI	SI	NI	quest

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Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: (mod. from O'Neil, 1986)

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree

_____ 19. Strong emotions (aside from anger) are difficult for me to understand.

_____ 20. Moving up the career ladder is important to me.

_____ 21. I often have trouble finding the words to describe how I am feeling.

_____ 22. I sometimes define my personal value by my career aspirations or success.

_____ 23. I am sometimes hesitant to show my affection to men because of how others might perceive me.

_____ 24. I feel torn between my hectic work schedule and caring for my health.

_____ 25. I strive to be more successful than others.

_____ 26. My needs to work or study keep me from doing other things that I would like to do.

_____ 27. Finding time to relax is difficult for me.

_____ 28. I am more comfortable expressing my appreciation of relationships with women as opposed to men.

_____ 29. I have difficulty telling others that I care about them.

_____ 30. Making money is part of my idea of being a successful man.

_____ 31. I have difficulty expressing my more tender feelings.

_____ 32. I am often concerned about how others evaluate my performance at work or school.

_____ 33. Hugging other men is difficult for me.

_____ 34. Overwork and stress caused by a need to achieve in school hurts my life

_____ 35. I am uncomfortable holding hands with other men under all circumstances.

_____ 36. Expressing my emotions to other men is risky.

_____ 37. I rarely explore my own emotions to determine why I am feeling a certain way.

_____ 38. My school or work often disrupts other parts of my life [eg. home, family, health, leisure]

Appendix D: Sample Interview Protocol for Participant Pre-Interview

Interviewee:
Date & Time of Interview:
Location:
Participant will have already completed pre-survey and participant consent forms. Describe research study in more depth, including interviews and dialogue groups. Ask for any questions about the process.

Masculine Gender Beliefs:
What were you told when you were young about what it means to be a man? Where did these messages come from (sort/rank them in order of message strength)
To what extent do you believe or internalize these messages? How are they relevant for your life today?
How do these messages influence your day-to-day choices? How do they influence your interactions with people – both men and women? (please try to think of examples)

General Spirituality:
Would you consider yourself to be a spiritual person? A religious person? How do you distinguish between these two?
What would you say are some of the guiding principles that organize your spiritual (or religious or moral, etc – using their choice of language) beliefs?

Commitment:
How do your beliefs (be they spiritual, religious, or moral) influence your day-to-day choices and interactions with others (please try to think of examples)?
How much time do you spend thinking about why things happen the way they do (the meaning behind actions or behaviors)? Are these more commonly your own actions/behaviors or external ones that you try to understand?

Spiritual Quest:
You mentioned that "finding opportunities for spiritual growth" is (very →not) important to you. What does that growth look like to you?
Do you have a spiritual/religious/moral role model? If so, what qualities do you notice in that person?

Citizenship:
If you were given the complete authority and limitless resources to change any one specific social problem, which problem would you choose and how might you go about changing it?
Do you feel strongly about any other specific social or political issues?

Ethic of Care:
Are you involved in service opportunities? If so, how do you choose which issues/opportunities matter to you the most?
How would your best friend describe your friendship with him/her? + How is that relationship meaningful for you?

Do you have any hesitation or trepidation about discussing these issues around spirituality and masculinities with a group of other men? Have you had any other experiences like this before? What do you expect to learn from these next five weeks in the dialogue group?

Appendix E: Personal Credo Description

Writing your Personal Credo

Traditionally, creeds are communal texts read and repeated in community gatherings or worship spaces to remind the faithful of common beliefs. Religious historian Jaroslav Pelikan describes a moment in the spiritual development of a people—speaking of the Massai of Africa—where they can no longer repeat the prayers and creeds of their teachers but must find their own words for their own context. In many ways, the same is true of college students moving away from family, neighborhood, and hometown and trying to find beliefs and a voice that is truly their own.

For this project, compose a personal credo that distills your unique approach to life into a short credo statement of no more than 150 words—just a few sentences. We'll have time to add flesh to this skeleton later, but for now you're simply beginning to define your beliefs about the world and yourself as precisely as possible.

For this exercise to be meaningful, you must make it wholly your own. This very short statement clearly isn't all you believe; it's simply a way to introduce others to some things you value. In spite of the name, your credo need not be religious or even public. You may decide to focus on commitments to family, service, political action, or the arts. As you look for a focus, try to choose concrete language and to find something that helps others understand your past, present, and future choices.

Resources and other thoughts on Credos.

As you begin to articulate your own credo, you might spend some time reflecting on creeds that have shaped political, social, or religious movements you're interested in. What kinds of statements have galvanized a group of people or shaped a movement? Would you consider the Preamble to the Constitution or the Communist Manifesto to be creeds? Do Amnesty International, Greenpeace, the Honor Committee, or other groups on Grounds use statements of belief to identify themselves?

Can creeds be negative as well as positive statements, dividing as well as uniting people? In an interview on "The Need for Creeds," Jaroslav Pelikan suggests, "in the darkest hours of life, you've got to believe something specific, and that specification is the task of the creed, because, as much as some people may not like it, to believe one thing is also to disbelieve another. To say yes is also to say no." Would you agree that human societies need creeds?

The Need for Creeds with Jaroslav Pelikan on NPR
http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/pelikan/transcript.shtml

Wikipedia introduces the creeds of religious, political, and social groups
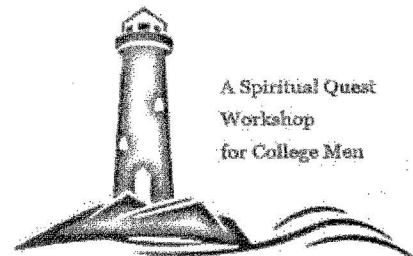> *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creed*
> *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American's_Creed*
> *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scout_Promise*
> *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bodhisattva_vows*

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Adapted from NPR: This I Believe® College Writing Curriculum
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Appendix F: *This I Believe*® Essay Description

For thousands of years communities of faith have identified themselves with short, carefully worded statements of belief, or creeds. Even today, when someone claims to follow a set of beliefs or principles, we often identify these as a credo, literally Latin for "I believe." In the history of religion, creeds have both united and divided believers through statements that sometimes differed only by a few words.

In the 1950s, journalist Edward R. Murrow hosted a weekly radio series inviting listeners "to write about the core beliefs that guide your daily life." At a time of political and cultural anxiety, the show asked Nobel laureates and everyday citizens to articulate their personal articles of faith even as it called them to listen carefully to the beliefs of others. In 2005, *This I Believe* was revived for NPR as a way "to encourage people to begin the . . . difficult task of developing respect for beliefs different from their own."

For this final project, please write a 1–2 page personal essay describing an idea or principle you believe in deeply. For this exercise to be meaningful, you must make it wholly your own. You might begin with the personal credo statement you drafted two weeks ago, and expand those ideas into a slightly longer personal essay. This short statement isn't all you believe; it's simply a way to introduce others to some things you value. In spite of the name, your belief need not be religious or even actualized. You may decide to focus on commitments to family, service, political action, or the arts. As you look for a focus, try to choose concrete language and to find something that helps others understand your past, present, and future. Some other suggestions from NPR's *This I Believe* ®:

- **Tell a story**: Be specific. Take your belief out of the ether and ground it in the events of your life. Consider moments when belief was formed or tested or changed. Think of your own experience, work, and family, and tell of the things you know that no one else does. Your story need not be heart-warming or gut-wrenching—it can even be funny—but it should be *real*. Make sure your story ties to the essence of your daily life philosophy and the shaping of your beliefs.
- **Be brief**: Your statement should be between 350 and 500 words. That's about three minutes when read aloud at your natural pace.
- **Name your belief**: If you can't name it in a sentence or two, your essay might not be about belief. Also, rather than writing a list, consider focusing on one core belief, because three minutes is a very short time.
- **Be positive**: Please avoid preaching or editorializing. Tell us what you do believe, not what you don't believe. Avoid speaking in the editorial "we." Make your essay about you; speak in the first person.
- **Be personal**: Write in words and phrases that are comfortable for you to speak. We recommend you read your essay aloud to yourself several times, and each time edit it and simplify it until you find the words, tone, and story that truly echo your belief and the way you speak.

We will share these statements with each other over <u>dinner on Monday, April 5th at 7pm</u> at the Lorna Sundberg International Center, <u>21 University Circle</u>. If you are coming from Grounds on Rugby Road, turn left onto University Circle. The IC is at the bottom of the hill. There is parking in the driveway to the right of the building. Call Chris's cell # if you cannot find us. And you are welcome to bring something to share – a side dish, drinks, dessert, etc. Let me know what you're bringing on <u>this Google Doc</u>.

If you would like to see examples of essays submitted to NPR as you draft your own, visit <u>http://thisibelieve.org/</u>. Good luck!

Appendix G: Start Codes for qualitative analysis

General ideas about masculinities
Gender Role Conflict (O'Neil, 1986)
   a. Success, achievement, & power-oriented (GRC-SA)
   b. Competitive (GRC-C)
   c. Emotionally restrictive (GRC-Emot)
   d. Restrictive affectionate behavior or expression toward other men (GRC-RAB)
   e. Conflicted family relationships (GRC-Fam)
   f. Inattentiveness to personal health and balance (GRC-Health)
Resistance to traditional masculine roles

General ideas about spirituality
Young Adult Faith Development (Parks, 2000)
Forms of Knowing: Authority-bound or dualistic
Forms of Knowing: Relativistic
Forms of Knowing: Probing and questioning
Forms of Knowing: Tested truth claims
Forms of Knowing: Paradoxical
Forms of Community: Diffuse
Forms of Community: Mentoring
Forms of Community: Self-selected
Forms of Community: Openness to others

Considerations for Spiritual Development (Love & Talbot, 1999)
         Meaning, purpose, or direction
         Authenticity, genuineness, or wholeness
         Connectedness to self or others
         Transcending locus of centricity
         Relationship with a power greater than self
Commitment to beliefs
Acting on behalf of one's beliefs

Spirituality influencing manhood
Masculinity influencing spirituality
Audience-specific code-switching

Informed Consent Agreement
Project Title: A Study of Spirituality & Gender Identity for College Men

Please read this consent agreement carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of the study is to investigate intersections between spiritual and masculine identities for college men.

What you will do in the study:
Step 1: Participant Selection and Informed Consent. Participants will be invited to participate and confirmed over email with time commitment and procedures explained initially at this time.
Step 2: Preliminary Survey: Participants will be sent a preliminary survey that they may complete prior to the preliminary interview. If they do not bring the completed survey to the interview, they may complete it in a few minutes just prior to the interview.
Step 3: Preliminary Interviews. Prior to this interview, the researcher will take some additional time to discuss consent, confidentiality, use of pseudonyms, and the structure of the study. These individual, partially-structured interviews, conducted by the researcher, will last between 30-60 minutes and follow a general interview guide. They will be audio recorded, then transcribed by the researcher.
Step 4: Dialogue Group & Workshop Sessions. The next five consecutive weeks will consist of group discussions with all 8-10 participants. These discussions will be co-facilitated by another college male undergraduate student and the researcher. Many of the dialogue sessions engage participants in activities or reflective exercises that produce either written or visual materials. These artifacts will be collected by the researcher initially, and then returned upon completion of the study. Each dialogue session will be audio recorded and later transcribed.
Step 5: Debriefing Interviews. These final individual interviews are loosely structured, allowing time and space for follow-up, member checking, and referrals if needed. Again, interviews will be audio recorded for the purpose of transcription.

Participants can skip any question that makes them uncomfortable during interviews or group meetings and they can stop the interviews/survey at any time.

Time required: The study will require about 9 hours of your time over the course of 6-8 weeks in the middle of the spring 2010 semester. The preliminary survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete, the two individual interviews will range from 30-60 minutes each, and each group dialogue session will last for 1.5 hours.

Risks: There are no anticipated risks in this study, though dialogue groups do pose a potential risk of loss of confidentiality.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research study. The study may help us validate or disconfirm existing theories, or understand male college student development with a higher degree of sophistication.

Confidentiality: The information that you offer in the study will be handled confidentially. You will have a chance to choose a code name or pseudonym. The list connecting your name to this code will be kept in a password-protected file. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, this list will be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any report. All audio recordings associated with this study will be destroyed immediately upon completion of the study.

Your data will be reported in a way that will not identify you. We will make every possible effort to reinforce confidentiality of information shared during dialogue groups with all participants, but we cannot completely guarantee that this information will not be shared by other group members.

Appendix H (continued): IRB Participant Informed Consent Agreement

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

How to withdraw from the study:
If you want to withdraw from the study at any time, you may do so by telling the facilitator(s) or interviewer and dismissing yourself from the discussion. There is no penalty for withdrawing. If you would like to withdraw any part of your participation in the study after you have participated, please contact Chris Wilcox Elliott to do so.

Payment: You will receive no payment for participating in the study.

If you have questions about the study, contact:
Chris Wilcox Elliott
Curry School of Education, PO Box 400173
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22904.
Telephone: 434.924.6897
cwe@virginia.edu

Faculty Advisor: Carol Anne Spreen
Curry School of Education, PO Box 400265
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22904.
Telephone: 434.924.0869
cas9wt@virginia.edu

If you have questions about your rights in the study, contact:

Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D.,
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences
One Morton Dr Suite 500
University of Virginia, P.O. Box 800392
Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392
Telephone: (434) 924-5999
Email: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu
Website: www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb

I agree to participate in the research study described above.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Developmental Era (age range)	Piaget's *Cognitive Development*	Erikson's *Psychosocial Stages*	Kohlberg's *Moral Development*	Gilligan's *Stages of the Ethic of Care*	Loevinger's *Ego Development*	Fowler's *Stages of Faith*	Parks' *Theory of Faith Devel.*	Perry's *Stages of Intellectual / Ethical Dev*	Kegan's *Constructive Devel. Theory*	Chickering's *Vectors of Student Devel.*
Type of theory	Cognitive-Structural	Psychosocial	Cognitive-Structural	Cognitive-Structural	Cognitive-Structural	Cognitive-Structural	Cognitive-Structural	Cognitive-Structural	Cognitive-Structural	Psychosocial
Infancy (0-2yr)	Sensorimotor	1. Oral-Sensory: Trust v. Mistrust	...	PRECONVENTIONAL Ethic of Care	Pre-Social Stage	Stage 0: Undifferentiated Faith		DUALISM/RECEIVED KNOWLEDGE	Stage 0: Incorporative	
Early Childhood (2-6yr)	Preoperational	2. Muscular-Anal: Autonomy v. Shame & Doubt / 3. Locomotor: Initiative v. Inferiority	PRECONVENTIONAL MORALITY / 1. Obedience & Reward/Punishment	Egocentric, derive moral constructs from individual basic needs	Symbiotic Stage / Impulsive Stage	Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective Faith	Consider: forms of knowing, forms of dependence, and forms of community	1. Basic Duality / 2. Full Dualism	Stage 1: Impulsive	Vector 1: Achieving Competencies
Childhood (7-12)	Concrete Operational	4. Latency: Industry v. Inferiority	2. Individualism & Exchange	TRANSITION: from selfishness to responsible to others	Self-Protective Stage	Stage 2: Mythical-Literal Faith		MULTIPLICITY/SHARED KNOWLEDGE		Vector 2: Managing Emotions
Young Adolescence (~12-15)	Formal Operational		CONVENTIONAL MORALITY / 3. Mutual Interpersonal Relationships	CONVENTIONAL Ethic of Care	Conformist Stage	Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional Faith	Stage 1: Adolescent or Conventional Faith	3. Early Multiplicity / 4. Late Multiplicity	Stage 2: Imperial	Vector 3: Moving through Autonomy toward Interdependence
Late Adolescence (~15-18)		5: Adolescence: Identity v. Role Confusion	4. Social System & Conscience	Judgment based on shared norms and values in relationships, groups & society	Self-Aware LEVEL			RELATIVISM/ PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE	Stage 3: Interpersonal	Vector 4: Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships
Emerging Adulthood (~18-25)			POST-CONVENTIONAL MORALITY	TRANSITION: from goodness to truth in one's personhood	Conscientious Stage	3 --> 4 Transition	Stage 2: Young Adult Faith	5. Contextual Relativism / 6. Pre-Commitment		Vector 5: Establishing Identity
Young Adulthood (~25-35)		6. Young Adulthood: Intimacy v. Isolation	5. Social Contract & Individual Rights	POST-CONVENTIONAL Ethic of Care	Individualistic LEVEL	Stage 4: Individuative-Reflective Faith	Stage 3: Tested Adult Faith	COMMITMENT to RELATIVISM/CONSTRUCTED KNOWLEDGE	Stage 4: Institutional	Vector 6: Developing Purpose
Adulthood (35-60)	Post-Formal Operational	7. Middle Adulthood: Generativity v. Stagnation	6. Universal Ethical Principles	Reflective perspective on shared values, constructs moral principles that are universal in application	Autonomous Stage	Stage 5: Conjunctive Faith		7. Commitment / 8. Challenges to Commitment	Stage 5: Inter-Individual	Vector 7: Developing Integrity
Mature Adulthood (60+)		8. Maturity: Integrity v. Despair			Integrated Stage	Stage 6: Universalizing Faith	Stage 4: Mature Adult Faith	9. Post-Commitment		
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