

***Mental Health Awareness for Directors:
Tools for Psychological Wellbeing***



J. Eric Wilson, D.M.A.
Director of Bands
Baylor University School of Music

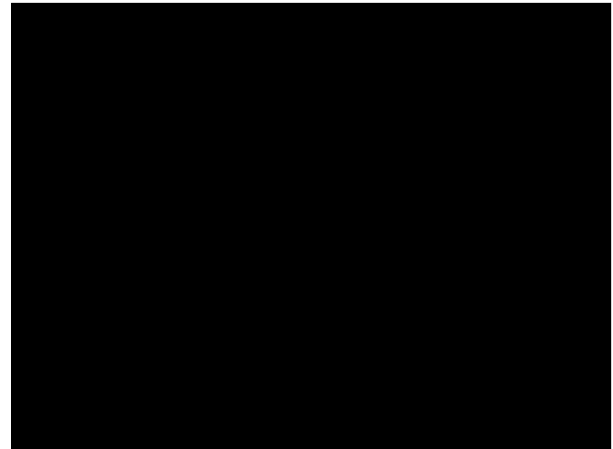
Lynette Wilson, LMFT-S
Marriage & Family Therapist
Journey Counseling



Foundational Premise

“If we want to grow as teachers, we must do something alien to academic culture: we must talk to each other about our inner lives—risky stuff in a profession that fears the personal and seeks safety in the technical, the distant, the abstract.”

Parker Palmer, The Courage to Teach



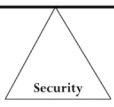
Stressors

Physical
Relational
Societal
Academic
Mental
Emotional

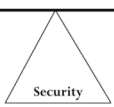
Personal Assessment

“The most practical thing we can achieve in any kind of work is insight into what is happening inside us as we do it. The more familiar we are with our inner terrain, the more surefooted our teaching—and living—becomes.

Parker Palmer, The Courage to Teach

DESPAIR	Vulnerability	Ownership	CONTROL
	Humility Weaknesses	Confidence Strengths	
			
Focus on weaknesses		Focus on strengths	
Imperfect		Perfect	
Unworthy/Not valued		Value based on performance	
Shame		Pride	
Self-condemnation		Self-righteous	
Self-defeating		Critical of others	
Emotionally suppressive		False positivity	
Lacking boundaries		Rigid/Inflexible boundaries	
Hating self		Glorifying self	
Depression		Anxiety/Panic	



DESPAIR	Vulnerability	Ownership	CONTROL
	Humility Weaknesses	Confidence Strengths	
			
Focus on weaknesses	Embrace strengths & weaknesses	Focus on strengths	
Imperfect	Perfectly imperfect	Perfect	
Unworthy/Not valued	Value based on who you are	Value based on performance	
Shame	Humility & Confidence	Pride	
Self-condemnation	Self-compassion/Curiosity	Self-righteous	
Self-defeating	Accept/Learn from others	Critical of others	
Emotionally suppressive	Context-appropriate emotions	Emotionally reactive	
Lacking boundaries	Set appropriate boundaries	Rigid/Inflexible boundaries	
Self-loathing	Accepting self	Proving self	
Depression	Peace	Anxiety/Panic	

Differentiation

“Differentiation is the process by which we become more uniquely ourselves by maintaining ourselves in relationship with those we love.”

Edwin H. Friedman, A Failure of Nerve

How do I be myself...

Stay true to myself...

While remaining connected with others.

Differentiation is:

- A lifelong process of striving to keep oneself in balance between internal and external influences
- Being clear about one's own personal values and goals
- The capacity to take a stand in an intense emotional system
- Saying “I” when others are demanding “we”
- Remaining calm in the face of anxiety, conflict, criticism, rejection, or challenge
- Maintaining a non-anxious presence in the face of anxious others
- Taking maximum responsibility for one's own emotional being and destiny rather than blaming others or the context

Adapted from Edwin H. Friedman, A Failure of Nerve, and Murray Bowen & Michael E. Kerr, Family Evaluation

Differentiation in Action

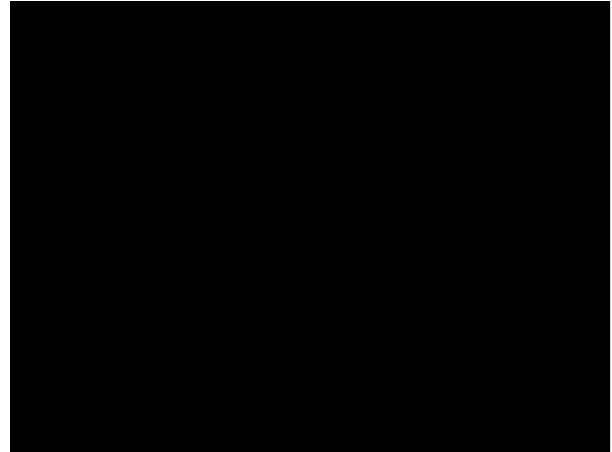
“A well-differentiated [person] is not [someone] who tells others what to do or orders them around...rather, someone who has clarity about his or her own life goals, and therefore, someone who is less likely to become lost in the anxious emotional processes swirling about. [This is] someone who can be separate while still remaining connected, and therefore can maintain a modifying, non-anxious, and sometimes challenging presence. [This person] can manage his or her own reactivity to the automatic reactivity of others, and therefore be able to take stands at the risk of displeasing. It is not as though some can do this and some cannot. No one does this easily, [but] most...can improve their capacity.”

Edwin H. Friedman, A Failure of Nerve

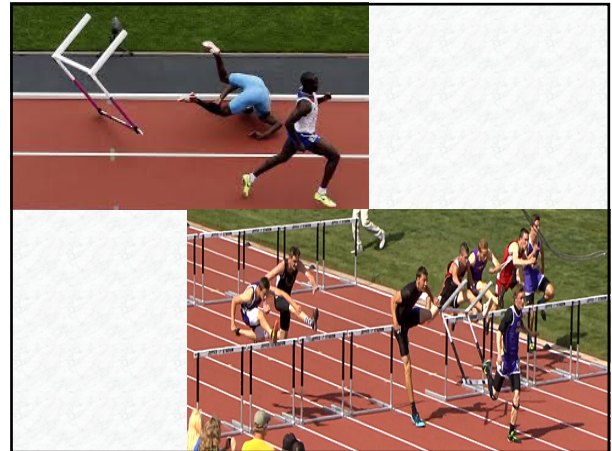
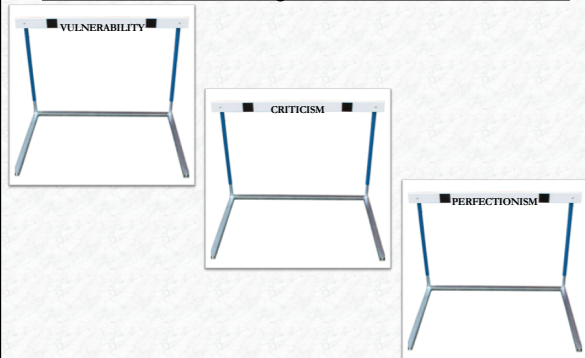
Differentiation in Classroom

“The higher the level of self-differentiation, the more [the group] can cooperate, look out for one another’s welfare, and stay in adequate contact during stressful as well as calm periods. The lower the level of differentiation, the more likely [they] will regress to selfish, aggressive, and avoidant behaviors.”

Murray Bowen and Michael E. Kerr, Family Evaluation



Personal & Professional Hurdles



Vulnerability

“Teaching is a daily exercise in vulnerability.”

Parker Palmer, The Courage to Teach

In ourselves = weakness and inadequacy
(*we are repelled*)

In others = courage and empowerment
(*we are inspired*)

Conflicting Connotations of Vulnerability

<u>Negative</u>	<u>Positive</u>
Fear	Love
Self-Doubt	Belonging
Comparison	Joy
Anxiety	Trust
Uncertainty	Empathy
	Creativity
	Innovation

“The Man in the Arena”

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood...who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly....”

Teddy Roosevelt

Educators’ Arenas

Classroom/ensemble settings

Parent/teacher conferences

Meetings with administrators

Relationships with colleagues

“Vulnerability is not weakness, and the uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure we face every day are not optional. Our only choice is a question of engagement.... We must walk into the arena, whatever it may be—a new relationship, an important meeting, our creative process, or a difficult family conversation—with courage and the willingness to engage. Rather than sitting on the sidelines and hurling judgment and advice, we must dare to show up and let ourselves be seen. This is vulnerability.”

Brené Brown, Daring Greatly

Criticism

Creative Arts profession is performance-based,
often in high visibility venues

Creative endeavors = Critics present

Performing artists are “professional nitpickers”

Balance is key: 1) impossible to avoid;
2) not healthy to ignore; 3) shouldn’t be defined by it

“I don’t care what people think, I don’t worry about the critics in the arena’ sends a huge red flag up for me. We’re hardwired for connection. When we stop caring what people think, we lose our capacity for connection. When we become defined by what people think, we lose our capacity to become vulnerable. Not caring what people think is its own kind of hustle.”

Brené Brown

“Resistance wants us to cede sovereignty to others. It wants us to stake our self-worth, our identity, our reason-for-being, on the response of others to our work.... The professional cannot allow the actions of others to define his reality.”

“The artist cannot look to others to validate his efforts or his calling. He must do his work for its own sake... not for fortune or attention or applause.”

Steven Pressfield, The War of Art

Common Critics

Shame: Not worthy

Scarcity: Never enough

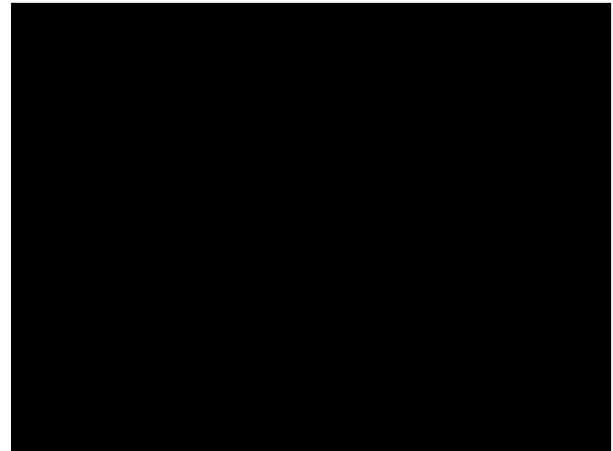
Comparison: Don’t measure up

Additional Critics

Parent / Co-Worker / Administrator / Mentor

Yourself

One or more supporters (by invitation)



Traps of Criticism

We become the critic...

- to feel better about ourselves
- to increase self-value (inauthentic)

“If you find yourself criticizing other people, you’re probably doing it out of Resistance. When we see others beginning to live their authentic selves, it drives us crazy if we have not lived out our own.”

Steven Pressfield, The War of Art

Perfectionism

Debilitating Disease

or

Helpful Habits?

“The demand for the perfect is the enemy of the possible good. Be peace and do justice, but don’t expect perfection in yourself or the world. Perfectionism contributes to intolerance and judgmentalism and makes ordinary love largely impossible.”

Richard Rohr

PERFECTIONISM

Other-focused
 “What will others think?”
 Seeking to earn approval/acceptance
 “I am what I accomplish”
 Avoiding weaknesses
 “I am not/will never be good enough”
 No flaws allowed
 Driven out of a fear of failure
 Defensive disposition regarding criticism
 Unattainable goals
 Resentful of falling short
 Addictive belief system
 Self-destructive
 Protective measures
 Negative self-talk
 Hypercritical (of self & others)

HEALTHY STRIVING

Self-focused
 “How can I improve?”
 Seeking to genuinely grow and develop
 “I will do my best”
 Identifying and refining weaknesses
 “I am enough, and am ever-evolving”
 Embracing imperfections
 Possessing the courage to risk
 Positive response involving criticism
 Realistic goals
 Pleased by progress
 Nurturing life foundation
 Self-compassion
 Transparent processes
 Balanced self-evaluation
 Encouraging (toward self & others)

Adapted from the research of Brené Brown

“Leadership does not mean perfection but rather a commitment to excellence whether as an artist or as a person. Failures along the way do not derail authentic leaders; they simply act as corrections and guides to something better—they are opportunities to learn and grow, to do things better next time.”

Ramona Wis, The Conductor as Leader

Happiness

An emotional state consisting of *positive affect*
 (experiencing more pleasant than unpleasant)

Meaningfulness

A cognitive and emotional pursuit of *purpose and value*
 (living a consistently rewarding life)

HAPPINESS

- Short-term satisfaction
- Largely present-oriented (isolated events)
- Having one's needs/desires satisfied
- Largely free from unpleasant events
- Being a “taker”
- Interpersonal involvements that benefit self
- Short-lived and fleeting feelings/experiences
- Carefree presence, lacking in worry/anxiety
- Life generally easy and straightforward
- Achievements/accolades can take precedence
- Experiences/activities that bring joy and satisfaction while performing

MEANINGFULNESS

- Long-term fulfillment
- Integration of past/present/future (linked events)
- Ongoing pursuit of goals & dreams
- Benefits of pleasant and unpleasant events
- Being a “giver”
- Personal contributions for welfare of others
- Lasting and permanent feelings/experiences
- Presence of stress/worry/argument/anxiety
- Life generally challenging and complicated
- Relationships more important than achievements
- Experiences/activities which involve, encourage, and develop one's personal “voice”

Adapted from “There's More to Life Than Being Happy” and The Journal of Positive Psychology

“For, in the end, it is impossible to have a great life unless it is a meaningful life. And it is very difficult to have a meaningful life without meaningful work.

Perhaps, then, you might gain that rare tranquility that comes from knowing that you’ve had a hand in creating something of intrinsic excellence that makes a contribution. Indeed, you might even gain that deepest of all satisfactions: knowing that your short time here on this earth has been well spent, and that it mattered.”

Jim Collins, Good to Great

Conclusion

“We come into this world with a specific, personal destiny. We have a job to do, a calling to enact, a self to become. Our job in this lifetime is not to shape ourselves into some ideal we imagine we ought to be, but to find out who we already are and become it.”

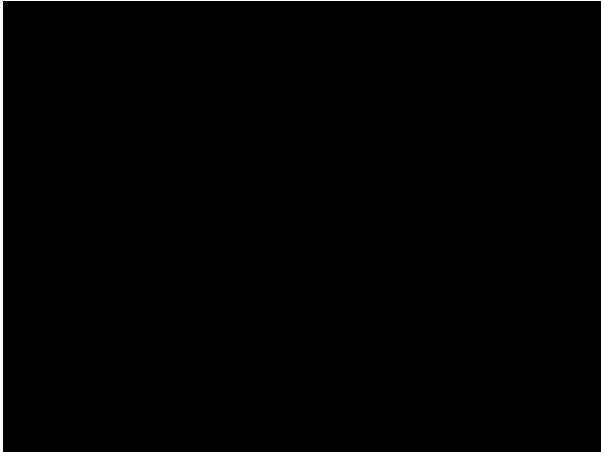
Steven Pressfield, The War of Art

“Leaders are pioneers—people who are willing to step out into the unknown. They search for opportunities to innovate, grow, and improve.... Leaders know well that innovation and change all involve experimentation, risk, and failure. They proceed anyway. One way of dealing with the potential risks and failures of experimentation is to approach change through incremental steps and small wins. Little victories, when piled on top of each other, build confidence that even the biggest challenges can be met. In so doing, they strengthen commitment to the long-term future.”

James Kouzes & Barry Posner, Leadership Challenge

“May the passion you have for music and teaching ever strengthen your purpose. May your dedication to your students be matched only by the joy they bring you. May you spend all the days of your life cherishing the wonder that is you, and the profound impact you have on all those you teach. Walk with them, excite them, empower them, make them curious, push them, and gently invite them to grow. For that is your passion, it is your calling, it is your mission, it is your purpose.”

Peter Loel Boonshaft, Teaching Music with Purpose



Have a restful and rejuvenating break!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Contact Information

J. Eric Wilson

Lynette Wilson

E_Wilson@baylor.edu

LWilson@journeycounselingwaco.com