

Transcript - Love as Praxis: Initiative in Diversity, Equity, Antiracism, and Leadership (IDEAL) Fellows Program

1/13/2022

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: We will begin our webinar shortly.

So while folks are coming into the room, I just want to remind you all of the schedule of our strategies for success. So after today's session, we have one on the 14th, the 20th, the 27th, and the 28th of January.

So welcome to the Every Learner Everywhere strategies for success in online teaching and learning, the reprise of our interactive conference series. It's a pleasure to have you with us today. My name is Norma Hollebeke. And I am the manager for network programs and services with Every Learner Everywhere.

Before I introduce our speaker, I'd like to take just a few minutes out to tell you a little bit about Every Learner Everywhere, our mission, and the whole values behind Every Learner Everywhere.

Every Learner Everywhere is a collaboration of 12 higher education organizations with expertise in evaluating, implementing, scaling, and measuring the efficacy of digital learning and its integration into pedagogical practice.

Every learner everywhere is one of three solution networks sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation here at every learner, we work with colleges and universities to build capacity among faculty and instructional support staff to improve student outcomes with digital learning.

Our mission is to help institutions use new technology to innovate teaching and learning, with the ultimate goal of increasing the student success, especially for first generation college students, poverty affected students, and students of color.

Some real quick housekeeping notes. We are recording today's presentation, which we will share with you after the webinar. Throughout the presentation, we welcome your questions in the Q&A section.

If participants raise their hand during the presentation, we will not be able to unmute you. However, we will be monitoring the Q&A as well as the chat sections.

As a biology professor and a recovering associate dean, I am excited about today's discussion-- Love as Praxis-- Discussing the Washington State Guided Pathways Initiative in Diversity, Equity, Anti-racism and Leadership Fellows Program.

Our speaker today is Dr. Jeremiah Sims, inaugural director of equity for the College of San Mateo. He was born in Oakland and raised in Richmond, California.

Because of his own life experiences, Jeremiah has devoted his career to the realization of educational equity for Hyper marginalized students.

Jeremiah is an alumnus of the University of California, Berkeley, where he earned a BA in rhetoric with honors, as well as an MA and PhD in education.

Jeremiah's work, chronicled in his first book, Revolutionary STEM Education-- Critical Reality Pedagogy and Social Justice in STEM for Black males, details his experiences as an educator working toward an revolutionary paradigm shift in STEM education of and for Black boys.

His second book, Minding the Obligation Gap in Community Colleges, illuminates the role that community college practitioners must play in order to deconstruct the institutionalization inequities found in higher education.

In two forthcoming books, the White Educator's Guide to Social Justice in Community Colleges by Wallace Sims, Hotep and Towards Liberation Anti-Racism and the Redesign of College Redesign, Sims works to demystify the pernicious relationship between racialized capitalism, and white supremacy, and the role that this unholy union plays in pathologizing poor, hyper marginalized BIPOC students, while arguing for committed educators to work towards an anti-racist growth mindset.

Sims also is an editor for the Peter Lang book series educational equity in community colleges. Wow, that was a hard time to get through all of that because you're so wonderful. But I am going to now turn it over to you.

JEREMIAH SIMS: All right, welcome, everyone. I really need-- in addition to that, you think that's busy. We have five little boys, my wife and I, from 12 to 2 years old. And so I'm so happy that you all are here. I'm going to share my screen right now.

Before I do that, I want you to know that I'm coming here after a rough week. But I'm coming here to spread love and to experience love with y'all. I had a battle with COVID. I did not win, but I am still here. And so I'm feeling better today. And your presence here is

making me so much happier. So let me go ahead and share my screen right now and then we'll get to work.

And so usually, when I lead these kinds of conversations, I've been blessed to be able to lead conversations around equity, justice, anti-racism, anti-capitalism for a long time.

And generally, I like to do workshops now. I like to have conversations where we can be interactive. But the nature of this is not that. And so there's some spaces where I'm just going to read to you-- and I apologize ahead of time.

But there are certain foundational information I want you to have in order to understand the argument that I'm trying to unfurl for you. And so some of these slides I'm just going to read. I won't go through every one of them, but here we go. So let me go to slideshow. Here it is from the beginning. Enable media. There we go.

So it's doing it. It has this cool thing that it's doing here. Let me move this out of the way. Love as praxis. And so I'm using a variant definition of praxis. Praxis is a process wherein you have an understanding-- you come to a level of understanding or you are able to apprehend theory to a point where you can apply it and then you reflect on it.

So many of us have heard the adage that experience is the best teacher. But John Dewey, arguably the foremost educational philosopher, argued that you don't actually learn from your experience. That particular adage is insufficient. You actually learn from reflecting on your experiences. So reflection is key. And so I want to make sure that I highlight that.

So we'll talk about theory. We'll talk about practice. And we'll do some reflective work. And then when taken together, those three things constitute practice, as the way that Freire defined it. And that's the same way I'm defining it here.

So I have a question. And this is an opportunity for you all to be live in the chat. So please don't be shy. What is the opposite of fear? So please put your responses if you're brave enough to do so in the chat. Nice. I like it.

And so this is one of those questions where there's not necessarily a wrong answer because whatever it is for you, that's what it is. And so as you all are doing that, I have one more question.

Can you all say-- and you can answer this yes or no or you can qualify if you'd like, that in 2020 and 2021 you did your best? I know that's heavy. All right, I love it. I love it. I love it. I love it.

And so for me, for me, for Jeremiah J. Sims, the opposite of fear-- and some of you touched on this, is love. I'm, ah, I'm someone who follows the person and work of Jesus Christ. So there's a verse in the Bible that says, that perfect love casts out all fear.

And so perfect-- the Catholic definition-- the universal definition of the word perfect is not flawless. It just means lacking nothing intrinsic. So it's whole. It's complete. It's holistic. It's comprehensive.

And so perfect love casts out all fear. And so that verse is in the New Testament, I believe it's 1 John 4:18. And so that verse is really, really profound for me. And I experience it with my children, for example, when my children have scary dreams.

There was a time where I would go in the closet and pretend to fight something, promulgating this toxic masculinity that I don't want my boys to replicate. And I realized that never actually made them feel much better because they would go to sleep and then they would wake up again.

But what needed to happen was I just needed to hold them. And they needed to know that they were loved. And that love, and that comfort, and that care, and concern, and consideration is what allowed them to sleep peaceably for the rest of the night.

I love these answers. Keep it going, folks. So for me, the opposite of fear is love. And the reason why fear is so-- it's really interesting. I'll tell you all this quick story.

So I'm in Northern California right now. Northern California is more conservative than-- I'm way Northern California, towards Oregon, is more conservative than where I'm from in Bay area. The Bay Area is much more left leaning, more liberal.

I'm not making a value judgment either way, but I was talking to a gentleman here. So I like to shoot guns. I don't shoot animals, but I do shoot paper targets. I will take some paper targets down.

And so I was at a-- we have these what are called Bureau of Land Management Roads here. And on these Bureau of Land Management Roads, there's a certain level of decorum there, but they're free. You can just go up, set out targets. And you can go shoot live ammunition there.

And so I don't have a lot of time to be away. I wanted to go shoot. And you gotta peep the scene. So I'm an African-American male. There's not a whole heck of a lot of us here, but there's some shifts afoot culturally.

And so I was talking to an older European American or white gentleman there. He's in his 70s. And so I needed to wait for him to finish so that I could set up my targets because, obviously, you don't walk out on the range while somebody else is shooting because that would be really, really problematic.

And so he stopped what he was doing to allow me to go set up my targets. And so we struck up a conversation. And normally, I'm a conversationalist. I would like to talk. I want to see how people are doing.

I didn't really have time today because I only have so long that I can shoot. Then I got to get back home because, again, my wife is here with five boys from 2 to 12 years old.

And so I need to be there to help out because they're homeschooled.

And so, anyway, he decided he was going to come talk to me. So I'm here. I have my AR-15 in my hand. I'm ready to-- I'm ready to shoot. I put the gun down because, clearly, he wanted to have a lengthy conversation.

And so he told me about how his sons-- who were my age. His sons were treated in school, public schools here in Redding, California. And he said that one of his sons was considered to be mentally retarded. This is something they did-- I'm 46 years old.

Something they did years ago.

They retarded his son. The other son they said he was-- his learning difficulties were so severe that he was unteachable. And so what this guy had to do, who was a mechanic, was take on two more jobs so that he can send his sons to a school, a private school that would accommodate their learning needs.

And he was able to do that. And his sons are wildly successful. One's a fire chief. One's an engineer. And this was from students who were, purportedly, unteachable at the time. And he was upset and tears were welling up in his eyes.

I just met this gentleman talking about the time that he missed with his sons, but it was worth it, in order to put them into school so that they could be successful. And so clearly, he was still upset about what had taken place.

And so there's a critique there. You can critique capitalism and why it's necessary. And the public schooling system-- and why it's necessary for someone to work three jobs and miss time with their children in order for them to get an adequate education.

There are all different types of things if you're going to be angry, I feel like there's some clear culprits. And so he went on this long diatribe about how he missed that time. And then he asked me about my sons.

And I said, well, yeah, my sons are-- they're homeschooled. And he said, that's good. You know why that's good? There's a lot of reasons why I think it's good. He said because they don't have to learn that CRT crap. Talking about critical race theory.

So this didn't matter to his kids anymore. His kids were adults. They had already gone through school. And there were so many things to be angry about. But he had been led to believe that critical race theory was the biggest-- and I told him.

In all honesty, I said, you what? You're right. My kids don't learn about critical race theory at school. They learn about it at home. And so then that was the end of our conversation. We went our separate ways.

And so I'm saying all this not to lampoon him, but he's been led to believe that that is something that needs to be feared. Fear is what keeps people apart.

So if you're on one side of-- if you are an MSNBC adherent, then you've been led to believe that everyone who voted for Trump is anti-vax and is capable of storming the Capitol. Fear has been used to drive us apart. Some fears are healthy, some are not. But they've been used to drive us apart. And so fear is a problem.

I have one more question. So I read this book. It's called Humankind. I highly recommend it, by Rutger Bergman. And the premise of the book is that, ultimately, human beings are actually a lot more decent than we're given credit for.

Actually, the Lord of the Flies is a-- the popularity of the Lord of the Flies has popularized a understanding of the human condition that is inaccurate and is overly pessimistic because when crises hit, that's when you see the most solidarity throughout humankind. And silos are broken down and people work together in solidarity for the common good.

And so one of the things he asked, he said, if there was a new drug on the market and this drug-- there were clear linkages from this drug to suicidal ideation, antisocial behavior, fear mongering, and a desire to detach from reality.

If those things were clearly attributed to this drug, would you let your kids take it? No. Nobody would. He said, you know what that drug is? It's the news because all those things have been proven to be true about the news.

I'm not saying don't watch the news. All I'm saying is that we need to think about how we are receiving the information that we do because we are being led to believe that our differences are irreconcilable when in, actuality, irrespective of where you sit on the

political spectrum, our human commonalities bind us together more closely than our differences do. All right, so I'll move forward.

So I want to talk about a program. And all throughout these slides there are quotes. And I want you to take a look at the quotes. Obviously, if you need to take a screenshot, take a picture.

Think about which quote resonates most with you. And then I can make this into a PDF and share it with Norma later and Patty. And they can share it with folks, too. So this is the verse that I was talking about. Sorry, it was 1 John. There is no fear in love, perfect love casts out fear.

So we'll talk about the Washington State Initiative, IDEAL, in Diversity, Equity, Anti-racism and Leadership. So the initiative, we've had over 1,000 applications thus far. We're on our third iteration. It starts February 11. We've had over 1,000 applications for 90 spots. Students who participate in this are awarded \$1,000 stipend through Guided Pathways in Washington State.

These are semester long programs, except over the summer, we do six consecutive weeks. During spring, we do more a semester model. So we have a team of folks that go through, and vet, and review, and ultimately select applicants.

And it's just-- man, the stories that these people tell-- I want to say young people, but they're not all young. Some of the students are older than me because community college.

So our first cohort, we had students-- the youngest student was 17. The older student was 49. So we get to see that over and over again. So generally, a cohort size is about 30. We bring in guest speakers. And we have office hours. And so we'll talk more about the program moving forward. So I'm going to go to the next slide.

So here's a quote, rest in peace, Bell Hooks. Love is an action, never simply a feeling. And we're going to talk about radical love. We're going to talk a lot about radical love, especially because the radical love that I'm identifying is based on the personal work of Jesus Christ.

But it was taken up in a really particular way by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King. And we're right around the corner from his birthday now. And Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, somebody I've written about, somebody I studied because he and his work is a microcosm of Justice work because much of what Dr. King actually was speaking to has been de-radicalized.

And so much of the work, the equity and justice work that we have been engaged in has been de-radicalized. And so I want to start with the primary presupposition that we started with our ideal scholars as we began to look at policies, practices, procedures, and pedagogies that ensured inequity for hyper marginalized students.

And just if you're not familiar with the term hyper marginalized, you can be marginalized for being a Latina. You can be marginalized for being poor. You can be marginalized for English being your second language or third language. If you have all three of those realities, when each one is overlaid, there is an exponential marginalizing effect, so that's what hyper marginalization looks like.

Here's what we'll talk about today. I'm going to try to get through it. So this is one of my favorite love warriors, Professor Cornel West. The practice of radical love, you are embracing human beings across the board, but you do give a preference, very much like Jesus to the least of these, to the weak, to the vulnerable. That includes poor whites, and Browns, as well as the poor in Black ghettos.

So we're talking about a human experience. How can we positively impact human beings that have been stigmatized as those who are not deserving of love?

And so I want you all to think about— before I go to the next slide, has there been a time in your work, recently, over the last two years, where you felt loved? Or do you even expect that from the work that you're doing? So feel free to add your comments in the chat.

All right, so let's get some context. And this is from a book— the book I actually changed the title from what Norma read earlier. It's called— the book that's coming out. It should be coming out in March. And it's called— let me make sure I get it right. The White Educators Guide to Equity— Teaching for Justice and Community Colleges.

OK, so here's some context. From its inception here in the United States, the institution of compulsory k-12, public education has been a tool to mechanically reproduce a certain type of student. This is what Louis Althusser argued.

To be more precise, k-12 schooling here in the United States is designed after a factory model that reproduces a Eurocentric, middle class aesthetic. And so what Althusser was talking about was— so you're all familiar with the term hegemony.

So hegemony has two primary features. It has an Ideological state apparatuses that work on an ideological level and repressive state apparatuses that work extrinsically. So those are extrinsic and they work through compulsion. People have to compel you.

So a police force, a militia group. Those would be considered repressive state apparatuses. Tools that can be wielded by the state that compel you to do something from the outside. Ideological state apparatuses are schools, churches, places like that make you conform through ideology.

This is why our schools have failed far too many poor, ethnoracial, minoritized students of color. According to recent reports, 80% of America's teaching force self-identifies as European-American. And what is more, more than 65% of all teachers are in fact European-American women. This demographic number holds true in higher education as well.

And that's not a problem in and of itself. But we have to understand that there can be issues around cultural dissonance that arise. And if the power structure is such that it privileges a certain kind of cultural aesthetic, anything that is seen to be non-standard is in danger of being penalized and pathologized.

And so I just want to be clear. The thing that we start with, the understanding that we start with, the guiding presupposition is that the community colleges that our students are hailing from are not broken.

Many of us, you smart people, smarter than me have spent your career trying to fix a system that's not broken. Our educational system is working the way that it was designed. It's inequitable by design. So it's achieving the outcomes that it was designed to do.

So we have been harming ourselves. Pouring ourselves out completely, trying to fix the system that's working the way that it was designed.

And so in order to do the necessary work of creating opportunities and pathways for all students to be successful, we have to understand that we have to radically reimagine the scope, the function, and even the governance of the way that our institutions of education work.

All right, love is the whole thing. We are only pieces. We must reckon with the truth. This synchronicity between word and deed results in radical integrity. In educational spaces,

word and deed have to match for individuals and institutions to be truly equity advancing.

For example, mission statements that speak to a college's commitment to poor, ethnoracial, minoritized students of color, and to equity, and to justice must be accompanied by a budget that makes manifest the commitments offered in a mission statement, or visions, or goals, or solidarity statement.

More simply put, your institution's budget is its mission statement. It doesn't matter what type of adjacent mission statement it has. If you want to know what a college, or a program, or a nonprofit organization what they value, look at their line items. That will tell you what they value.

All right, so here's what we're up against in doing equity work, equity advancing justice centered work. I call these the four As-- axioms, ambivalence, apathy, and antipathy. So axioms are things that are held to be unquestionably true. You can think about some innocuous ones. The things that you put in your ears, people call them Q-tips. They're actually called cotton swabs. Q-tips is just a company that owns a lion's share of the market. But if you ask somebody what it's called, typically, they'll say a Q-tip.

If I ask y'all what the AR-- an AR-15 is, most folks will say assault rifle because that's what we've been led to believe. It's axiomatic. But that's not what it means. It's an Armalite Rifle, 15th version. And so those things are innocuous.

But there are other axioms in education, for example, Black students come from a culture that doesn't value education. So if you hold that axiom to be true, what happens is that you can become ambivalent to the suffering of Black students because they don't value education.

And that is used as an explanatory tool and also an exculpatory tool. Now, we don't have to do any additional work to work against the educational oppression that they've been subject to based on the families that they've been born into because they come from cultures that don't really value education.

So if we don't question the axioms that guide the work that we do-- think about deficit model thinking. Deficit model thinking is impelled by axioms, then we can become ambivalent.

Ambivalence is, I'm not really so sure. I'm on the fence about that. But the thing about it is, when you're on the fence, guess what? Sitting on the fence necessarily fortifies the weight of the fence and it becomes more difficult to move.

So we're trying to remove barriers. We cannot be on the fence because it makes it more difficult to move. And so this is a linear process. If you don't question axioms, institutionalized and personal axioms, you become ambivalent. If ambivalence goes unchecked, then you become apathetic. And so apathy means-- apathetic means beyond feeling. It's not my concern. Why don't they stop talking about slavery? Why are women still talking about suffrage? Aren't we equal now? Look at Kamala Harris. And so there's all these different conversations.

Why are people still talking about playing the race card? We had Obama. We're post race now. And so there are all these crazy conversations that come up when people become apathetic because ambivalence is unwillingness to wrestle with privilege. Apathy is an outright denial of privilege. And then when you get to antipathy, antipathy is a deep seated disdain. So what happens is when you start to hear people yelling about all Lives Matter, that's based on antipathy.

I'm angry that they're saying Black Lives Matter, which is the reason I'm angry is because I'm harboring some anti-blackness. And I want them to stop talking about it. And it's when you-- it's a recriminatory strategy, when you blame victims of oppression for making you feel bad that they're oppressed.

And so these things happen individually. And they also happen institutionally. And these are the things that we need to combat. And so ambivalence is a cognitive emotional refusal to take a position caused by gaps in knowledge and inability or unwillingness to wrestle in privilege and discomfort.

Apathy is indifference. The position is taken but you're choosing not to work through discomfort. And there's a defensiveness that characterizes apathy. And then antipathy is a disdain for feelings of complicity with and in white privilege.

Not that people want to get rid of white privilege, or cis hetero patriarchal privilege, or any kind of ableist privilege. I just don't want you to talk about it because I don't like the way it makes me feel.

Misplaced anger at hyper marginalized peoples for causing feelings of guilt, blaming people's victimized by white supremacy and racialized capitalism for even bringing it up in the first place.

All right, so what do we need? We need love. This is the book Minding the Obligation Gap. Everything that we do positively impacts some of our students and negatively impacts others. Sorry, just a second.

Equity efforts alone won't fix this. We need justice. We need to love justice to the point that we are willing to fight for it. Equity is just the first step in a long journey toward actual tangible justice.

Put simply, the fence that ambivalent educators sit on is nothing more than an additional obstacle for poor, ethnoracial, minority, students of color.

So now we're going to talk about love, y'all. This is my favorite thing to talk about. We're going to talk about love, but not just any kind of love. And here's another quote for you all-- power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice.

All right, what is reactionary love? A lot of times, as institutions of learning, we are functioning in a kind of reactionary way. How do you know it's reactionary? It's transactional.

An action performed or feeling experience in response to a situation or an event. It's context bound. Reactionary love is context bound, is situational, is transactional, is passive, is triage, only attends to micro-aggressive behaviors. This is treating symptoms but not addressing the chronic disease.

So when we talk about, for example, the achievement gap. The achievement gap is a byproduct of white supremacy and racialized capitalism. If you fixate on the achievement gap but you don't deal with the chronic diseases, the achievement gap will permute, but it will persist. It will just change. It will transmogrify, but it will persist. So I'm making the argument for radical love. What is radical love look like? And I want to be clear. I'm not talking about amorphous nebulous-- what do you call it, that one channel that has all the modeling shows? Hallmark Channel.

I'm talking about love as an action. There's something that Gandhi talked about. Gandhi talked about satyagraha. Satyagraha is love force. It's a soul force and a love force.

There's a verse in the Bible-- it talks about how-- in Matthew. It talks about how violent men-- talking about John the Baptist, how violent men sees the kingdom of God. That violence, that word violence, if you look up the Greek is actually a force. And that force is love.

And so what Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King wanted for society was for us to come to the realization of a beloved community. A beloved community where people were recognized and that their dignity was affirmed, irrespective of what their ethnoracial identity was or their socioeconomic status was.

And so I would argue that even though he is one of the leaders in nonviolent resistance, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King was spiritually violent. Not physically violent but spiritually violent because his spirit was unwilling to accept inequity and injustice for all people.

So radical love, it involves or causes a complete or dramatic change. Radical love, in differentiation from reactionary love, necessitates a radical re-imagining of structures of power.

It demands paradigm shifting interrogation, is proactive, It's holistic. It's transformative. It's invested in treating chronic diseases like anti-blackness, white supremacy, and racial capitalism. All right, I'm going the wrong-- OK, here we go. Sorry.

Have enough courage to trust one more time and always love one more time. So now, I'm going to talk about the program itself. The goal of the Initiative and Diversity, Equity, and Anti-racism, and Leadership fellowship is to encourage, empower and equip IDEAL fellows to advocate for justice, not just in the classroom but also at the policy and procedural level.

Fellows will be helped to understand what equity can look like in community college system as well as society writ large. We will examine how community colleges can function as disruptive technologies that disrupt macro structural inequity.

In order to do this, IDEAL fellows will spend time analyzing extant literature on educational equity and justice. And they will become adroit in applying their knowledge to real life situations by using the impact equity toolkit in order to make recommendations to their respective colleges.

By the end of the program, IDEAL fellows will represent-- excuse me, present to their respective colleges regarding ways for their campus to become more equity advancing. So the impact equity toolkit is a toolkit that I designed with my partner, my life partner. Racial IMPACT stands for innovative. Innovative in this context means, is it moving us towards justice? Measurable, can you measure it? It's purposeful, anti-racist, caring and transformative.

And the wonderful folks at Every Learner Everywhere created a workbook. I'm sure that you all will have access to that. If you have any questions and you want to have a deeper conversation about that particular tool, we even feature trainings on the IMPACT. Just reach out to me. My personal information will be available.

And so I want to read this from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's better half, Coretta Scott King. Love is such a powerful force. It's there for everyone to embrace that kind of unconditional love for all of humankind. That is the kind of love that impels people to go into the community and try to change conditions for others, to take risks for what they believe in.

Which is what her husband did, the same thing she did. We have to be-- even though he got the press, her life was under constant threat of danger. Their house was bombed. She would get phone calls.

There was, at one point, in the book called *The Radical King*, Martin Luther King said that just the phone would ring nonstop. People didn't care that Coretta answered the phone. They would threaten her and threaten their daughter.

There were bombs under their porch, so she lived as much of that life. She just wasn't in the limelight in the same way. And so she's speaking from a place of understanding and knowledge.

Students don't care about what you know until they know that you care. This is a quote from Victor Hugo. In IDEAL, we endeavor to engender a positive and empowering atmosphere where students' identities do not have to be compromised in order to achieve academic success. We work to do this at the curricular level.

And so what I found is that intentionally carving out spaces within a given educational milieu for marginalized students to recognize, discuss, interrogate, and disrupt their marginalization has shown marked increases in student engagement. I found this out doing work on my dissertation and some of the other things that I've worked on as well. All right, so love as praxis. So what does this mean for us? It's clear that my-- these are things that we need to think about if we want to commit to love as praxis.

It is clear that my individual and our institutional actions are impelled by love. Radical love, not hokey love, not performative love, but radical love. Radical love means that-- so radical love, as defined by Cornel West, is made up of two primary components-- radical integrity and radical humility.

So radical humility is necessary so that the cowardly self can die. Why does the cowardly self need to die? The cowardly self has to die so that the courageous self can live. And so the courageous self can achieve something that Cornel West calls *paideia*.

It's a deep learning, a soul craft where people can be transformed and their work can transform other people. So you need radical integrity and you need radical humility. And that radical humility looks like daily dying.

And so we got to understand-- I'm 46 years old as of late December. Martin Luther King achieved the things that he achieved before he was even 40 years old, before his life was snuffed out prematurely.

He achieved so many things, but when he was eulogized, there was only one sentence offered at his eulogy. You know what it was? Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King learned how to die daily, period.

That daily dying allowed for a daily rebirth. And the rebirth was the courageous self. The courageous self was able to live. When they asked Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King how he was able to lead people on the Montgomery bus boycott-- because it was a huge undertaking.

These people who now had to walk places where they would normally take public transportation or folks who were fortunate enough to have cars would run their cars to the ground to provide rides for their compatriots.

He talked about a time where he had just gotten threatened for the last time and he was over it. He said he could not-- he could not continue to go forward-- even if he was ready to die, he wasn't ready to put his family through that.

He talked about how he went into the kitchen. It was 3 o'clock in the morning. He was having a cup of coffee. He put his hands in his face and he started to pray. He said the divine showed up to him.

Love appeared to him and said, if you're willing to fight for righteousness, I'll be with you every step of the way. And from that point forward, fear was gone. And so he was able to lead people and form a beloved community because the fear was gone. And there was a radical love that impelled him to continue to move forward.

Do our policies, practices, procedures, and pedagogies demonstrate authentic care? Do our marginalized students and colleagues feel included, and affirmed, valued, and safe? I know some of y'all spoke to that. Whoops. Sorry. And are we growing? Are we becoming more equity advancing?

So here's the program in practice. This is some of the things that we highlighted.

Theory, application, reflection. We wanted to co-construct knowledge with students. We

wanted it to be dialogic. We wanted them to learn how to love each other, to stay in a growth process.

We wanted them to open their hearts to one another. So we modeled that. We were affirming. We led by example and we created an environment that fosters radical love.

This is what we need to do if we want to— so listen, people were trying to figure out, once COVID hit, how to create an engaging online learning experience for students.

We did it, not because we're amazing pedagogues but because we love. And we created opportunities for students to love and to love in return. Because here's the thing, radical love necessitates a radical level of accountability too.

So when students said things that were problematic, we responded from a restorative justice model. We responded with radical love. Hey, here's why this was problematic. I know that that's not what you intended because I know your heart. And so let's figure out how we can phrase that so that we can move forward together as this beloved community.

And so I'm going to keep going— so I want to be mindful of time. We have to learn how to speak the truth in love. This quote from Cornel West is incredibly impactful.

Tenderness is what love looks like in private. Justice is what love looks like in public.

And again, traditionally, we would have a conversation. It would be interactive. And I'm sorry that I'm talking at y'all, but I want to make sure that I get this information with the time that we have.

So what does it mean to speak the truth in love? So I can look at Timothy Jones. I'm just looking at the name from the chat. So say Timothy does something that's untoward.

Timothy would never do that, but Timothy does.

And I can say, hey, Timothy, you messed up. I can't believe that you would do something like that. I can't believe that you microaggressed Laura in that way. All the work that we were doing up until this point is now undone.

And I don't know where to go from here. Or I can say, Timothy, I know your heart. And I know that you never intended to cause any harm, but there was harm caused nonetheless. So let's figure out how we can restore the trust so that we can continue to move together in solidarity.

In both instances, you can make the argument that I told the truth, but in only one did I tell the truth and love. You know how you can tell whether or not you're speaking the truth in love? Because the byproduct is growth.

You want people to be convicted, and quickened, and encouraged to continue to move forward. But if there's only condemnation-- I spoke the truth only so that I can demonstrate that I know more. And I didn't speak the truth with love.

And so our practice has to be with each other. And with our students, we have to speak the truth in love. So we know a tree by its fruit. If we are uncomfortable with being uncomfortable, we will not grow.

We have to be motivated by a love for real justice. We have to be empathic. We have to have grace for one another. We have to be unwavering. Grace does not mean that we do not hold each other accountable. It simply means that we hold each other accountable with love.

All right, I'm going to see if this works. I don't think it will. So there's a four minute video on YouTube that my 11-- then 11-year-old edited. You can search it. Oh, here it goes.

Let's see if the sound works. I just want to play this for you. Whoops. Can y'all hear it?

INSTRUCTOR: Hey, Kevin, I think you may still be muted.

STUDENT: Thank you.

STUDENT: It's important for college to advocate and take protocol for the well-being of the student.

STUDENT: The retention rates of all students of color is a negative percentage.

STUDENT: Bellevue has all of these great things, but they aren't following their mission.

STUDENT: North Seattle has an equity office that is providing great resources and avenues to support and celebrate diversity. That is awesome. Our next question is, how effective is it?

STUDENT: All right, I believe that is us.

STUDENT: This is not new information, but institutions have higher tuition rates for international students. But today, we are asking, why? We want to create access to the body in an equitable and prosperous community at Shoreline.

STUDENT: Can you guys all see my screen?

INSTRUCTOR: Yes.

STUDENT: OK, having an explicit statement regarding diversity and equity is missing from many syllabi on our campus.

STUDENT: That would seem to harm and foster resentment and strip the rights away from transgender people all over our nation. Fear isn't just increasing but is growing at an alarming rate.

STUDENT: The program does have a few shortcomings that need to be addressed so that each and every student can benefit from a program such as this.

STUDENT: By identifying ways that their diversity can no longer be their adversary here in Seattle, but rather something that can be supported, celebrated, and championed toward student equity.

STUDENT: They are aware that if there were bias motivated violence or threats targeting students and staff, it impacts the quality of work and opportunity for growth and success.

STUDENT: There's a breach of civil liberties and eats away at the core of our civil society.

STUDENT: We know that the Honors College program has the most diversity within its cohorts. So why are we making it hard for this diverse population of students to pay for their success through this program?

STUDENT: Major implications.

STUDENT: Because they really have widespread long term negative affects.

STUDENT: We see a 6% usage rate of the equity office.

STUDENT: Bellevue College has a BIRST committee however, it needs to be more accessible and updated to better serve students.

STUDENT: Transgressions against our transgender brothers and sisters isn't just a slap at decency, but it's something that stains us all. This is not an isolated incident.

STUDENT: If 75% of students are getting help financially to be successful in their education, then we should be empowering them further with access to resources.

STUDENT: Not offer any of the BIRST committee information, it's difficult to localize and difficult to maneuver.

STUDENT: college campus has a total of three designated--

JEREMIAH SIMS: So I'm going to stop it here because I know that it's difficult to see. I apologize. I am not as technologically savvy as I would like to be. And so it's available online. It looks like Philip shared it. So thank you so much, Philip. You can check it out. It's just 4.5 minutes.

And this is their final projects. And it just captures this. There's a much longer video. So if y'all want the longer video, a couple of hours longer, you can get the entire presentations.

I'll put my email here in the chat. And then we'll go forward. Sorry about that y'all. I thought that I could click it and it would get bigger. Not so much this time. All right, so I'm going to move forward.

All right, so the IDEAL way. The goal of this program was to create agency-exciting opportunities for community college students to radically reimagine how they can commit to anti-racism and how they can contribute to the transformation of educational experiences for all students, especially hyper-marginalized students.

Concomitantly, the goal of the program was to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment predicated on radical love that disrupted structural barriers and welcomed, validated, and celebrated all students.

And so here is a quote from Erich Fromm. Love isn't something natural. Rather it requires discipline, concentration, patience, faith, and the overcoming of narcissism. It isn't a feeling. It's a practice.

All right, so what we were striving to create was the beloved community. There can be no real transformative equity work without radical love. We were working to develop a kind of beloved community in the spirit of the beloved community that MLK fought so hard for, the same community that he unfortunately died for.

And so this is one of my favorite verses-- greater love has no one than this to lay down one's life for his friends. This is the reality of Jesus, reality of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, countless folks who have committed to this work at a huge personal cost.

No love, no justice. Too many things on my screen. Dr. Cornel West argues-- and we talked about this. Tenderness is what love looks like in private. Justice is what love looks like in public.

I think that Dr. West is essentially arguing that where tenderness is lacking in private interpersonal relationships, love is absent. And concomitantly, where oppression based on race, socioeconomic status, gender, religion, and/or sexual orientation, and the intersections thereof exist, love is absent.

Put simply, freedom, real freedom requires love. West argues that not only is there radical love in freedom, but that there is also radical freedom in love.

Radical love necessitates a radical re-imagining of structures of power. We talked about that. Love makes your soul crawl out from its hiding place, as from Zora Neale Hurston.

OK, radical integrity. According to West, radical love is not possible without radical integrity, which means that we have to be-- we have to willingly sacrifice the cowardly self, which is cold, defensive, and selfish.

The cowardly self resists love and is therefore incapable of reciprocating love and is adversarial to real, radical, unconditional love. In order to get to radical integrity, we must arrive at radical humility.

Radical humility liberation requires truth telling. Radical humility necessitates the daily dying of the cowardly self so that the courageous self can live and love without fear. Radical love has to be predicated on radical honesty, too. When truth is present, there is synchronicity between word and deed.

And so here, what does all this mean? First and foremost, you have to love yourself. So I was sick-- like I said last week. I threw up 40 times in one day. Sorry for the TMI. And I got emails from my job. And they were asking me to turn in some paperwork about something that I had turned in actually two weeks prior.

And I told the person, I said, I'm not feeling good. I have body aches, earaches, everything hurts. I'm just going to go to sleep. And their response to me was, well, can you go to sleep after you do what I'm asking you to do? There was no love in that.

And so we're going to have a conversation about that person and I because it's someone who has looked to me as a mentor. We'll converse about it.

And I think that he will see why that was problematic. But at the same time, I just felt so-- I was already sick. And I felt so much less appreciated based on that response. That was not what love looks like. And so we want to be very clear.

I had to just draw a line because I had to take care of self-care. So before you can love, you have to make sure that you are doing everything that you can do to love yourself.

And so, again, I said I'm not talking about amorphous love. What am I talking about? I'm talking about love that can actually be measured. Radical love can be measured.

When you talk to students about, why you do this-- we do surveys. We love to survey students. And we talk about inclusivity or belongingness. If students feel included and they feel as though they belong in a genuine way, I would argue that radical love is present.

When they don't feel like they belong, when they don't feel like that is an institution or a learning space that is conducive to their learning and to their human well-being, then I would argue that love is absent.

All right, and so now, you, yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection. Those are words from Gandhi.

Incommensurability between word and, in this instance, some form of extrinsic commitment to justice and the actual message to bring these promises to fruition, deed, is not only bad faith, it's dishonest. We have to be honest about who we are and the way that our institutions, our programs, our classes, our schools function.

And so here, the whole point of radical love-- you got to understand this, radical love, radical humility, radical integrity, is to arrive at a radical analysis. The point of radical love in our educational context is to arrive at a radical, love-based analysis of inequity, oppression, and injustice.

Radical love will impel us to commit to radical analysis of our institutionalized and personal idiosyncratic policies, practices, and pedagogy so that we can identify and root out the inequities baked within.

This is what I'm trying to drive you towards. And this is what our students were doing. Not only this but our radical analysis must also result in action, action designed to first mitigate and subsequently eradicate the inequities built into our institutional and personal ways of doing school.

The IDEAL fellowship was devised to create a safe space for community college students to radically analyze inequitable institutional policies, practices, procedures, and pedagogies.

And so now, I want you all to hear from what the student said. So I'll read this. If we want a beloved community, we must stand for justice, have recognition for difference without attaching difference to privilege. And that's what we were trying to do.

Radical love is necessary, even integral, in order to develop a beloved community as defined by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King. Our goal was to create a program that was characterized by and built on a foundation of inclusivity and belongingness.

We didn't want IDEAL fellows to feel that they were just-- feel that they were included and belong. We wanted them to feel loved. Love is creative and redemptive. Love builds up and unites. Hate tears down and destroys.

The aftermath of the fight with fire method-- this is from Dr. King, you suggest is bitterness and chaos. The aftermath of the love method is reconciliation and creation of a beloved community.

Physical force can repress, restrain, coerce, destroy, but it cannot create and organize anything permanent. Only love can do that. Yes, love, which means understanding, creative, redemptive goodwill, even for one's enemies is the solution.

All right, so what we did, we wrestled with complex theoretical material. We had conversations. We brought in experts in the field. We brought in ethnic studies professor to talk about that. We brought in equity champions to talk about that.

I led conversations around settler colonialism, racialized capitalism, really graduate-level material. And what happened was that the students wrestled with this in a safe, inviting atmosphere. And they put it into practice.

So here's the byproduct of radical love. And so I'm going to read this, being mindful of time. After I read this, then I can pause if there are any questions and see if I can address those.

So these are direct quotes from students. What if anything-- this is the question. What, if anything, was different about IDEAL vis a vis other justice centered programs you participated in?

The community bonds are paramount. I have a hard time opening up and trusting folks when navigating a new space. And this space was a breath of fresh air. The speakers we listened to were passionate, and willing, and open to speak.

And Jeremiah and Rachel made themselves available and accessible in the most nurturing of ways. With all that foundation and true expression of love and a professional space, I felt like I could take on anything. This is from Marissa. This is a pseudonym. 29-year-old community college student.

This is it. The most real, justice centered program I've been a part of. I think being in a loving, nurturing, and accepting space was a little more of a shock for me than I was anticipating. I keep talking about how I have a hard time trusting new experiences and how I have a tendency to take a long time to open up. Excuse me.

And this was no different. A lot of the traumas of a system that does not center all of me or understand all that I am takes over. I tend to believe that people in this work say the talking points but essentially don't mean it or are so invested in a certain system that it gets in the way of authentic and true connection. Excuse me.

The authenticity in constantly reassuring that this is for real and the love is for real and centered in justice really touched me in a way I didn't think it would. To be fully honest,

I'm still processing all that I received during this short time. Couple more. What, if anything, was different?

Once acclimated, I believe I was fully engaged, both in group time and in lecture period. The chat where we students work through and commented on topics was a powerful way to build knowledge and understanding of the material and fostering a sense of community.

I was a bit surprised by the strong sense of community built up, both in the groups and with the cohort as a whole. I have attended many Zoom meetings and classes, but none left me feeling a part of a community as much as IDEAL did.

Further, it was a spot of encouragement to meet others interested in radical change, as activist circles can be a bit fatalistic and draining. One more.

What do you feel the main strength of the program was? The main strength of the IDEAL fellowship are the accessibility of material, the community building, the individual empowerment, and the personal interactions with experts in their relative field.

The material provided, while on complex and nuanced topics, was presented in such a way that even those relatively inexperienced with equity work in an academic way could quickly be given the tools to understand and materially contribute to the discussions. And having a community of students from different backgrounds but interested in developing skills to do equity work, it fostered a strong sense of community, even over Zoom.

Being able to take individuals experiences with equity and identify the way in which the system works to manufacture said inequity and discuss it as a group, how we can work together to tackle said inequity is a powerful bonding experience.

Said system is monstrous, many headed hydra-- a monstrous, many headed hydra. At first, on an individual level, that fete, which we must accomplish, can be quite discouraging.

But the seminars and presentations by those doing equity work and making real material changes to combat the system shows that progress is possible. It's too late getting short at this point.

But anyway, in short, the IDEAL fellowship is a potent antidote to both the feelings of inadequacy, those new to equity work often feel and to the fatalism that often pervades justice spaces.

And I appreciate you all so much for allowing me to read so much to you. I know that this is not typically the way it's supposed to work. I'm not a proponent of the banking model of education.

Would you recommend this program to a friend? Yes, absolutely. I was very pleasantly surprised by the diversity of the group with regards to gender and sexuality. It was beyond a safe space. It was an affirming space where everyone's identity and experience was often celebrated, as seen as a lens from which we can all learn. This is the byproduct of radical love. This is the work. You don't even get to see your students brilliance if they're not yet in a space where they feel comfortable sharing it with you.

What topic covered this semester was most eye opening? There's an anti-racialized capitalism. A bunch of students spoke to that. And here are some lessons learned. That's the White Educators Guide to Equity. I think it will be out in March.

Remember, radical love, which is made up by important components like radical integrity and radical humility in the final stage results in a radical analysis of inequity and justice from the vantage point of people systemically victimized by racialized capitalism, white supremacy, anti-blackness, misogyny, homophobia, et cetera. I'm not going to read that one.

So here's what we can do. How can we move closer to this reality? We must willingly walk the talk by deepening individual and institutional understanding of what it means to be justice centered so that we can insist on and subsequently catalyze institutional transformation.

We must also demonstrate a commitment to justice by doing the work, not just reading, ruminating, and talking about it. We must deepen individual understanding of how disruption of current policies-- oh, wow, that was-- must be arrived at by working in solidarity with students.

Here's a trick about solidarity. You don't have to arrive at solidarity before you start doing the work. Solidarity comes from doing the work. We must break down silos that we as committed educators and practitioners can foster connections across a network of justice centered community college, education leaders, and practitioners. You have that here.

And then, finally, we must be willing to function as conduits of justice center disruption, which means that we must question both our quotidian and anomalous policies, practices, procedures, and pedagogies.

We must work to employ an intersectional analysis of inequity in order to arrive at solutions that empower, encourage, and equip our students to reach their highest human and academic potential. Thank you so much for allowing me to read.

Hopefully, I'll get to meet many of you again and we'll have another conversation that can be far more interactive. And with that, I'll stop talking, I promise. Norma, it's all yours.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: Well, I have a quick question. There's an interesting question in the Q&A section. And I would like to see if you could at least touch on it is if you've tried to integrate Maslow's theory into your research.

JEREMIAH SIMS: Maslow's theory is important but it's also anachronistic now. We've moved beyond Maslow. So there are some things that we can borrow from. People need to feel safe.

But the ways that we have to-- so when Maslow wrote his hierarchy of needs, there was no kind of intercultural or ethnoracial understanding of a hierarchy of needs.

So you can give someone food and shelter, but the fact that someone is Black in this country means that-- so there's something called minority diminishing return theory.

So there's a one to one correlation with self-reported levels of happiness and socioeconomic status. So people who have more money generally report that they're happier. And it's very clear.

When you look at European-American folks, there's a huge difference between low income white people and high income white people with self-reported happiness. With Black people, irrespective of socioeconomic status, the line is flat.

People who have money who are Black and people who don't have money who are Black are equally sad, with regard to self-reported levels of mental stress. And so the idea is not money.

But being Black in this country-- living as a Black person in this country requires a certain level of weight, a certain level of energy to be expended. And there's no way to recoup that.

And so Maslow is helpful in a contrastive way. But for me, I think that I've tried to move beyond that. And I look more closely at something that's called minority diminishing return theory.

NORMA HOLLEBEKE: Thank you for that. Well, we have come to the end of our hour. I would like to thank Jeremiah for such a wonderful presentation. We obviously have to have Jeremiah 2.0.

So keep an eye out for that when we can get that taken care of. I do want to just give you all a heads up that you will have access to the strategies for Success Webinar recordings through our YouTube channel.

Patty's going to stick that into the chat for you. You'll also get that link when you get the follow up email from today's webinar. We do ask our audience to take a few minutes out to complete a survey for today's presentation.

If you've got something going on immediately after, don't worry. We'll send you the link along with the link to the webinar recording as well, but we would really appreciate it. It's helpful for us to get that feedback from our participants.

Just a reminder, we've got several more sessions this month to go through for the strategies for success. And we'd really love to see you all at those sessions. We also have some other upcoming events. Our director, Jessica Rowland Williams, will be part of a panel discussion for a WCET webcast on January 20.

And then we're also co-hosting a webinar series with our partners at Achieving the Dream on operationalizing equity, social justice, and inclusion for transformation of teaching. So we'd really encourage you all if, you've got the time, to register for that as well. So thanks again.

Quick reminder-- visit the Every Learner Everywhere website if you want some more information. We've also got a great resources page, including a workshop page that gives you the heads up of upcoming events.

Again, thank you to our speaker. Thank you to our audience for participating in today's discussion. We look forward to seeing you tomorrow, as well as next week, and at future Every Learner Everywhere events. Have a wonderful day.