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Thinking Deeply in College: An Inquiry into Contemplation Amongst Undergraduate Students

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Thinking Deeply in College:

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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Abstract

In student development theory, a crisis is considered the impetus for development. For undergraduate students, contemplation is one of the ways students resolve their crises. This study was an inquiry into those contemplative practices and was guided by the following research question: What are the contemplative practices of undergraduate students, and what are the outcomes of those practices? After eleven students were interviewed, findings revealed 1) an enrichment of the meaning of the word *space* to include space in time; 2) contemplation is perceived by students as deep thinking; 3) contemplation is often connected to spiritual practices; and 4) students' contemplation is enhanced by an articulation of their thoughts. Additionally, 5) contemplation can cause fear and anxiety, although 6) it ultimately leads to greater clarity and allows students to make more informed decisions on how to live. These findings imply that professionals in higher education encourage students to deal with crises through contemplation, especially through articulation (journaling, processing with friends, "one-on-ones," etc.). The findings also explain how a student might advance from stage to stage in various student development theories.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Eighteen-year-olds know everything—and then they go to college. It takes reaching this critical season of life for emerging adults to realize how much knowing and growing they have to do. Students encounter a variety of crises in college, ranging from roommate tiffs about keeping the sink clean to existential questions regarding identity, morality, epistemology, spirituality—and, ultimately, truth. Undergraduates handle these issues in a variety of ways. Help may be found in a faculty member or hall director, counselor or therapist, books, or online forums, and still others may resort to ignoring the issue completely. What follows here is an inquiry into one of the ways undergraduates resolve these issues: contemplation.

Contemplation (n.d.) is formally defined as "deep reflective thought" and can take a variety of forms. Contemplative practices (used interchangeably here with *meditation* and *mindfulness)* prove more passive, like a daydream or musing while in the shower, or they appear active, like meditation or reflective journaling. Such practices also serve as a crucial component in many major religions—including Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam—as a way to focus consciousness and orient attention towards some subject, god, or spirit. Additionally—and on the contrary—the very same methods of contemplation may also provide a means for atheists to hone their own secular beliefs (Harris, 2011). It is an ancient practice addressed by Plato (Rosen, 1980) and Aristotle

(Charles, 1999; Rorty, 1978), as well as modern contemplatives such as Thomas Merton (1998) and Henri Nouwen (2013). Outcomes include intellectual-emotional equilibrium, cohering of thoughts, and increased self-awareness and are but a few of the reasons it remains a critical practice for over two millennia by myriad deep thinkers.

As already mentioned, emerging adults soon meet with uncertainty after they step on campus (Slaikeu, 1990). Much student development theory—reviewed more deeply later in this study—builds on this concept of personal crisis for the undergraduate. Many theories indicate crisis as the impetus for undergraduates to build new, more complex frameworks for interpreting the world (Erikson, 1959; Marcia, 1966; Perry, 1968; Sanford, 1967). But such theories leave unaddressed the specific ways those new frameworks develop. One purpose of this research is to help fill in the gap left in these theories by identifying methods of crises resolution and, specifically, to look more closely at the contemplative method.

A cursory observation of university students reveals how many of them keep busy with extracurricular involvement, work, academics, social events, student programs, social media, and television, to name a few. To make space intentionally for yet another activity—and one so cerebrally engaging as contemplation—is uncommon and perhaps even countercultural. "Contemplative" is not a common descriptor of the contemporary undergraduate.

Although contemplation is rare among undergraduates, it does exist. One indication is the increasing general interest in mindfulness across popular culture—from *Time Magazine*'s February 2014 issue "The Mindful Revolution" to *Newsweek*'s special edition "Mindfulness" in August 2017—as well as in academia. According to the

American Mindfulness Research Institute (2017), in 2000, only 10 published journal articles related to mindfulness. In 2010, this number grew to 143 articles, and in 2017, the number of mindfulness-related articles totaled 692. Moreover, several higher education publications such as *Insider Higher Ed* (Redden, 2007), *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Gravios, 2005), and *Teacher's College Record* (Roth, 2006) have posted content or published articles related to contemplation and meditation.

In addition to this increased interest among popular culture and academia, many faith-based institutions place great emphasis on disciplines such as prayer, reading of sacred texts, and reflection, all of which foster a contemplative state of mind and similar contemplative practices. More research in this area may prove of particular help to such faith-based institutions, especially those in the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities.

Given the pivotal nature of emerging adulthood in lifespan development, the prevalence of crises in higher education settings, and the demonstrated benefits of contemplation, the overlap of these three appears promising territory for student development practitioners to explore. Thus, the purpose of this study was to answer one basic question: What are the contemplative practices of undergraduate students, and what are the outcomes of those practices?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In this exploration of literature surrounding contemplative practices in American higher education, the general concept of contemplation is covered first, then reflection, journaling, and finally, three student development theories pertinent to contemplation.

Contemplation

Practical examples of contemplation include a student sitting on a bench in a natural area of her university campus, allowing her mind to wander while she waits to meet up with her friend; a perplexed CEO who does not know how to proceed on an issue and so writes out their thoughts for clarity; a young man going on a walk to clear his mind; and a waitress waking up hours before her morning shift to practice the meditative and reflective disciplines of her spiritual tradition.

These examples show how contemplation can be either passive, like a reverie with no end goal or purpose in mind, or active, like a concerted effort to understand how and why one feels the way they do. Wherever on the spectrum of effort contemplation may take place, the activity is essentially the same. Sarath (2003) defined it as "systematic methods of invoking heightened states of consciousness, or awareness" (p. 216). Others describe contemplation as intellectual openness (Naropa University, 2018), and still others say it "revolves around introspection (looking within), reflection (critical thinking or brooding) and attention (desired actions)" (Singh, 2017, p. 321).

In this context of this study, contemplation is simply considering the contents of one's mind.

Contemplation as an alternative to current pedagogical methods. Educators agree the most important goal in higher education is for the students to learn how to think critically (Gardiner, 1994). The mode of teaching often used in higher education—the lecture—is being called into question (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), and doubts surrounding traditional higher education pedagogies have forced educators to look for alternatives or modifications to current methods. One such modification is the implementation of contemplative practices.

Research has shown meditation may improve ability to maintain preparedness, orient attention, process information quickly and accurately, and even impact academic achievement in the classroom (Hall, 1999; Shapiro, Brown, & Astin, 2008). Considering these outcomes from meditative pedagogies and the questionable state of current undergraduate teaching methods, contemplative practices may provide a viable alternative or addition to the current system.

As mentioned, interest in contemplative practices is motivated by a desire to find more effective pedagogy, but the interest has also come as a reaction to the pervasion of technology, seen by some to fill the crevices of time once available for deep, contemplative thinking (Bennett, 2006). The trend of literature supports this (American Mindfulness Research Institute, 2017)—an interest in contemplative practice in higher education began in the late 1990s (Hall, 1999; Langer, 1997; O'Reilley, 1998; Remen, 1999) and has only increased into the 21st century. This trend coincidentally parallels the increased use of personal electronic devices (smartphones) among emerging adults.

Contemplative practice in the classroom. Twenty years have passed since the first piece of contemplative literature for higher education was published, and many educators have since incorporated contemplative practices into their courses (Hickey & Yarbrough, 2013). In one such case, Fran Grace (2011) gave an example from two students who took her class on contemplation, "Quest of the Mystic." One student came into the course with a severe drug addiction and little understanding of his addiction, much less any desire to change his actions. However, after several "applied inquiries," he reported to the researcher how his addiction dictated "[h]is study habits, friendships, financial expenses, [and] free time" (Grace, 2011, p. 101), the awareness of which convinced him make more informed, wholesome decisions as he moved on in the course. After engaging in class assignments, another drug-addicted student went so far to say,

> Everything in this class—readings, meditations, videos, assignments, discussions—seems to go together. I learned the material from every level. It's so amazing to learn it for life, not just for a test. The semester is over, but not my learning. (Grace, 2011, p. 104).

Grace (2011) used these examples to support her case for implementing contemplative methods in the classroom, a case represented by a growing number of educators. Grace (2011) wrote, "In content-based pedagogies, students frequently meet a 'goal' (for example, pass an exam) then lose the learning soon afterwards. But with contemplative methods, the learning builds over time" (p. 104). Other educators, including Hall, Jones & O'Hare (2018), corroborated positive outcomes of contemplative practices in the classroom from their own studies, reporting students' growth in self-

awareness and self-management, as well as non-academic competencies like social awareness and relationship skills.

Grace (2011) acknowledged that, although these outcomes frequently occur, contemplative methods are not unfailing. Not surprisingly, aversion of certain students and professors toward such practices can hinder their benefits, which she noted are reserved "for those so inclined" (p. 105). Only those teachers and students who desire to participate in otherwise uncommon pedagogical practices reap the benefits.

Shapiro and colleagues (2008) posited that mindfulness in undergraduate and graduate programs is imperative for deep learning. In their survey of literature on contemplation, they found students' cognitive and academic performance was linked to meditative practices, as well as their mental health and psychological well-being. Moreover, they found meditative practices enhance creativity, interpersonal relationship skills, empathy, and self-compassion—all extra-curricular capacities generally left for student development professionals to foster in students.

However, not all literature on contemplative practice in higher education is pedagogical. Many have utilized such practices through extracurricular interventions. Murphy (2006) and Oman, Shapiro, Thoresen, Plante, and Flinders (2008) found weekly mindfulness-based exercises successful in lowering stress. Other programs have seen the success of meditative practices by adding yoga to counseling sessions (Adams & Puig, 2008; Rybak & Deuskar, 2010). Still others have found silent and monastic retreats to improve self-awareness (Ibach, 2017) and whole-person development in general (Williamson, 2017).

Undergraduates' contemplation of "big questions." Humans have long contemplated the big questions of existence (human origin, morality, etc.) and contributed their thoughts to the conversation mostly in educative settings (Gamble, 2007). Simmer-Brown (2013) commented, "Contemplative pedagogies in higher-education classrooms employ methods adapted from meditative practices in great religious traditions in order to enhance student learning and to fulfill the historic purpose of a liberal arts education: to discover the nature of human life" (p. 33). Classical educators in antiquity encouraged their students not only to seek practical knowledge for a career but also to seek ultimate truths for understanding existence. Schnickle (2012) addressed this idea: "Existence is a mystery, and the work you choose must allow you to engage and explore this mystery" (p. 203). However, the university seems to have since waned in its efforts to encourage students in the mysterious and difficult way of ultimate sense-making (Astin, Astin, Chopp, Delbanco, & Speers, 2007).

"How we know is as important as what we know," noted Hart (2004, p. 28). Thoughtful students realize this and are not satisfied just being taught what to do in their disciplines. Such students want to know how and why it is true and if those reasons prove sound, strong, and worthy to build a college degree—and a whole life—upon. Existential inquiries like these quickly lead to the "big questions" of meaning and purpose that Astin and colleagues (2007) referred to in their work. In a focus group interview, one student told the researchers, "A question I've been dealing with is...what is the point of college? [What does] the fact that we're paying for this education so that we can make money later in life . . . have to do with the grand scheme of things?" (p. 30). Bai, Scott, and Donald (2009) were not surprised by this student's question. They

believed “education perpetuates a civilization saturated with a deep sense of ontological disconnect and axiological crisis in all dimensions of human life” (p. 319) and suggested, for the sake of answering these big questions, a radical reevaluation of pedagogical methods for the adoption of new ones—namely, contemplative practices.

Meaning-making and seeking transcendent purposes in late adolescence and emerging adulthood is not uncommon in the literature (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2010; McLean, 2005; Parks, 2011; Shin & Steger, 2016). Such findings substantiate the assertions of Bai and colleagues (2009), who suggested that institutions of higher education can and should be the places where students find such answers. Hart (2004) also spoke to this issue and believed contemplative practices help students find or create these big answers by helping them connect their practical knowledge with meaning and purpose. Hart (2004) stated the integration of such practices “transforms learning and the learner while affecting the very practical concerns of mainstream education” (p. 28).

Reflection

Reflection is born out of contemplation and is considered a contemplative response. However, reflection differs from contemplation in that it is more active, while contemplation is more passive. Reflective practice includes “those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations” (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985, p. 19). Dewey (1933) explained reflective thinking as

> always more or less troublesome because it involves overcoming the inertia that inclines one to accept suggestions at their face value; it involves willingness to endure a condition of mental unrest and

> disturbance. Reflective thinking, in short, means judgement suspended during further inquiry; and suspense is likely somewhat painful. (p. 13)

Dewey's explanation makes a distinction between reflection and contemplation in that he highlighted the intentional and pressing nature of reflection, as opposed to the phlegmatic nature of contemplation. According to Norlander-Case, Reagan, and Case (1999), Dewey saw "true reflective practice as taking place only when the individual faces a real problem that he or she needs to resolve"; that individual must then seek "to resolve that problem in a rational manner. The classroom is an obvious setting for such problems to arise, for both the teacher and the students" (p. 26). Reflection in the classroom does not have to address only problems but could also focus on "special activities (for example, workshop activities), events of the past (for example, what learners bring to the course from prior experience), or concurrent activities in the learner's workplace and community that act as a stimulus for learning" (Boud, 2001, p. 10).

In 1984, Donald Schön published his seminal work *The Reflective Practitioner*, in which he wrote extensively about *reflection-in-action*. Other scholars advanced his work by adding *reflection-for-action* and *reflection-on-action* (Killion & Todnem, 1991), additions that encourage a more in-depth review of events by emphasizing the importance of active reflection both before and after events, not just passively during them. In agreement with Killion and Todnem (1991), Boud (2001) stated, "Just as important as [Schön's] approach, however, is the considered reflection that takes place away from the press of immediate action when we pause and take stock of what we are doing" (p. 11). Perhaps the most notable scholar informed by Schön's work is David Kolb (2015), whose work specifically incorporates reflection as it influences the undergraduate's learning

experience. Kolb (2015) stated, "In experiential learning theory reflection is defined as the internal transformation of experience" (p. 58).

In review, contemplation gives way to reflection, a more active form of contemplation whose purpose is to assess the past and learn for the future. A longtime aid to these processes is the practice of writing. From ancients like Socrates to moderns like Charles Darwin (Darwin, 1987; De Beer, 1959), great men and women did not just think their thoughts—they wrote them down. In contemporary times, this manifestation of contemplation is known as journaling.

Journaling

Journaling is often used in educational settings ranging from mathematics (Borasi & Rose, 1989) to psychology (Jolley & Mitchell, 1990), from nursing (Gillis, 2001; Hubbs & Brand, 2005) to geology (Heller et al., 2011). Articles and studies that discuss the use of journaling in education started to appear in the late 1970s (Emig, 1977) and early 1980s (Erdman, 1983; Flower & Hayes, 1981). Since then, the concept of journaling proliferated in the literature and appears a growing practice in the classroom.

Journaling is writing. Journaling is personal writing. In synthesizing the research of Vygotsky (1934/1962), Luria & Yudovich (1971), and Bruner (1973), one scholar observed, "[H]igher cognitive function, such as analysis and synthesis, seem to develop most fully only with the support system of verbal language—particularly, it seems, of written language" (Emig, 1977, p. 122). Yinger and Clark (1981) concurred with this idea: "Writing forces people to think in ways that clarify and modify their ideas. In short, people learn from writing" (p. 2). According to Boud (2001), a prolific scholar on reflection (see Boud, 1992; Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 2013; Boud & Walker,

1990/1998), journaling is not just recording events in written language—it is more. He said journaling is "a form of reflective practice, that is, *as a device for working with events and experience in order to extract meaning from them*" (p. 9, emphasis added).

Journal writing as it relates to dialogue. In multiple places in the literature, it is posited that reflection may prove most effective when combined with dialog. The first part of a journaling exercise should be writing, the second part is reflection on what was written, and third is dialogue with another person about what was written and what was found upon reflection. This three-part method was first put forth by Clark in 1981, a method he called "systematic reflection" (p. 22). A similar method of writing followed by discussion was used later by Hughes, Kooy, and Kanevsky (1997) in the "double entry journal."

Heller et al. (2011) used this three-part method while doing geographical field research. They stated that, during the process of writing and reflecting, they "became conscious of common themes including ethical dilemmas, power relations, and researcher fatigue" and added that they could then "critically analyze the experiences, examining the strategies implemented to resolve such predicaments" (p. 67). Their journaling practices allowed them to become more aware of themselves and their problems and thus led to more articulate conversations, resulting in helpful behavioral changes. Their article had such an effect on the community that it won the *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*'s biennial award for 2009-2011 and allowed the authors to write another piece (Mackenzie et al., 2013) urging professionals across disciplines to make use of journaling to improve learning and research experiences.

Summarily, contemplative practices such as reflection and journal writing have garnered growing interest among professionals in higher education—faculty and student affairs practitioners alike. The reason is likely the outcomes: savvier problem solving, richer understanding of concepts, more precise articulation, and increased awareness of self and others. All of these naturally lead to a more complex and wholly developed college student. The most pertinent theories for this study are reviewed below.

College Student Development

Perhaps the most helpful definition of development was put forth by Nevitt Sanford in 1967, who defined development as "the organization of increasing complexity" (p. 47). Jones and Abes (2011) provided a definition more suited for college students in particular, describing development as "some kind of positive change occurs in the student (e.g. cognitive complexity, self-awareness, racial identity, or engagement)" (p. 153). Psychologists put forth theories to help explain racial identity, gender identity, socioeconomic class identity, sexual development, moral development, spiritual development, self-authorship, and more. In order for student development professionals to be most effective in their practice, theory must be consulted and applied regularly. What follows here is a discussion of the theories most pertinent in framing this study of contemplation.

In the 1950s and 60s, Erik Erikson (1959) put forth his seminal theory of lifespan development, defined by eight stages: 1) basic trust versus mistrust; 2) autonomy versus shame and doubt; 3) initiative versus guilt; 4) industry versus inferiority; 5) identity versus identity diffusion; 6) intimacy versus isolation; 7) generativity versus stagnation; and 8) integrity versus despair. Each stage is characterized by a crisis—two competing

constructs pitted against each other. According to Patton, Renn, Guido, and Quaye (2016), a crisis is a "'turning point,' that individuals resolve by balancing the internal self and their external environment" (p. 288). Furthermore, Patton et al. (2016) stated that, although

> the concept may suggest otherwise, a crisis is not necessarily a negative experience. Instead, it serves as a catalyst for development. A crisis represents an experience or set of experiences that prompt developmental changes. How individuals negotiate developmental changes will shape how they grapple with later life encounters. (p. 288)

In 1966, James Marcia teased out Erikson's fifth stage, identity versus identity diffusion, into four statuses. Each status is characterized by responses and crises: foreclosure (no crisis/commitment), moratorium (crisis/no commitment), identity achievement (crisis/commitment), and diffusion (no crisis/commitment).

What is most important to understand for this study is the process of advancing from status to status to, hopefully, identity achievement. Patton et al. (2016) explained identity achievement as something that "comes after an extensive period of crisis (exploration) in which individuals sort through alternatives and make crucial choices that lead to strong commitments in setting goals and establishing a firm foundation" (p. 292).

A similar process of development is found in William Perry's theory of intellectual and ethical development. According to Perry (1968), the process begins in a position he called *dualism.* The next position is *multiplicity,* followed by *relativism,* and finally, *commitment*. The student's transition from position to position takes place when

their views of truth become more complex, a process catalyzed by a crisis, much like Erikson's and Marcia's theories.

Again, the purpose of this study was to learn more about the development of college students as they encounter crises and specifically to understand the role contemplation may play in resolving them. These three theories were selected as examples of student development theory because they provide a foundation for studying crisis as the impetus for development.

The literature suggests that contemplation, reflection, and journaling improve self-awareness (Grace, 2011; Ibach, 2017), interpersonal relationship skills, articulation (Mackenzie et al., 2013), creativity, empathy, and self-compassion (Shapiro et al., 2008). This literature indicates the intentional practice of such behaviors could increase, improve, and accelerate holistic development in students both in and out of the classroom. Research on the effects of contemplation on development is useful to student development professionals as they seek to help their students advance from stage to stage, growing into more complex and more fully developed individuals during their college years. In keeping with these findings, the question this study sought to answer is as follows: What are the contemplative practices of undergraduate students and what are the outcomes of those practices?

Chapter 3

Methodology

As the previous chapter reveals, there indeed exists a substantial amount of literature on the topic of contemplation in higher education. Still, much remains to be understood in regard to the extracurricular, personal contemplation of an undergraduate. What follows is an explanation of the methods used to explore undergraduates use of contemplation, as well as the justification for selecting these particular methods.

Qualitative Research

According to Creswell (2017), "Qualitative research is best suited to address a research problem in which you do not know the variables and need to explore" (p. 16). He added that qualitative research is most useful when "you need to learn more from participants through exploration" (p. 16). The nature of this study was highly exploratory. Therefore, a qualitative approach to research was most appropriate for gathering the rich detail and nuances of undergraduates' personal contemplative experiences. Certitude regarding contemplation is the ultimate end, but a basic understanding was a more reasonable objective for this study, to which this approach is well suited to serve given the topic's nebulosity.

Phenomenology

There are five types of qualitative methods in research: case study, narrative, ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology (Creswell, 2017). This study used

the phenomenological design. Justification for selecting this method is found in the nature of the study: to understand the experience of contemplation. Creswell (2017) stated, ". . . a *phenomenological study* describes the meaning for several individuals of their *lived experiences* of a concept or a phenomenon" (p. 57, author's emphasis); Creswell later stated, "The basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a descriptor of the universal essence" (p. 58).

The phenomenon in this study is the experience of contemplation, which the researcher purported to understand in the context of crisis in the lives of undergraduate students. With the phenomenon identified, the researcher then "collect[ed] data from persons who have experienced the phenomenon, and develop[ed] a composite description of the essence of the experience for all of the individuals" (Creswell, 2017, p. 58).

Context of Study

This study took place in a private, Christian liberal arts institution located in a small town in the rural Midwest. The institution has approximately 2,100 students enrolled (56% female, 44% male) with approximately 200 teaching faculty. The school places a high priority on spiritual development and often encourages students to practice spiritual disciplines. Optional chapels are offered three times a week and maintain an average attendance of about 1,000 students. Additionally, 89% of students live on campus or in university-owned housing.

Participants

The purpose of this study was "not to generalize to a population, but to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2017, p. 206). The availability of participants who are "information rich" (Patton, 1990, p. 169) with respect to

contemplation indicates that purposeful sampling was most appropriate in order to explore this central phenomenon. Participants were selected based on recommendations by supervisors of student leaders from various departments on campus. Recommendation criteria was based on suggestions from Creswell (2017). To be recommended, the student must have shown signs of thoughtfulness, high articulation, high self-awareness, and likelihood to be comfortable in an interview. Eleven individuals participated: nine seniors, one junior, and one freshman (five male and six female). This study preferred seniors as they have the most experience to reflect upon within the undergraduate population (four years of higher education experience as opposed to one or three years), and it was expected they would have greater ability to articulate those experiences.

Procedure

After students were selected, they each participated in a one-on-one interview with the researcher. The participants were asked open-ended questions about their understanding of contemplation, how often they contemplate, what prompts their contemplation, and what methods aid their contemplation. Such questions solicited opened-ended responses so "the participants [could] best voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher or past research findings" (Creswell, 2017, p. 218). Interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The researcher reviewed the transcriptions to identify reoccurring themes in the students' responses. Once themes were identified, the text was coded based on those themes. According to Creswell (2017), the purpose of coding is to "make sense out of text data, divide it into text or image segments, label the segments with codes, examine codes for overlap and redundancy, and collapse these codes into broad themes" (p. 243). After all

transcriptions were coded and subsumed into general themes, the researcher reported findings as they were helpful to answering the research question: What are the contemplative practices of undergraduate students and what purposes do they serve?

Benefits

Existing research has revealed the benefits of contemplative practices as used within both curricular and extracurricular programs, but little study has addressed students' personal contemplative practices—including why they practice contemplation, the outcomes of such practices, where they do it, and why they might avoid it. The benefits of such research may reveal a correlation between contemplation and moral development, intellectual development, and identity development. In the hands of student development professionals, such certitude about the benefits of contemplation can significantly influence the creation of new student development programs and best practices. Furthermore, such certitude could potentially result in the formulation of a new student development theory relating to the benefits of contemplation.

If participation in contemplative practices proves too low in the data to draw any significant conclusion about the benefits of contemplation, such data can at least help answer why students avoid contemplation.

Chapter 4

Results

Transcription analysis yielded 351 significant text segments that were indexed into 37 codes and subsumed into 7 general themes outlined below. As previously stated, this research was intentionally exploratory, ideally to lead to better understanding of the contemplative practices of undergraduate students and what happens as a result of those practices and to develop an understanding of contemplation's phenomenological essence and its consequences. The findings are broad in scope and reveal several unexpected results, while also providing some greater detail to the results that were expected.

Definition and Understanding of Contemplation

When asked to define contemplation, most participants (8 of 11) said contemplation was simply "deep thinking" that involved a serious and prolonged investigation into a certain thought. Participant 9 said,

> I think a lot of [contemplation] has to do with intensive and reflective thinking. . . . if I were to sit and contemplate about my future, that's not thinking of it just in logistical terms, but it seems more philosophical to me than literal, if that makes sense. Contemplation is thinking on a deeper level, engaging with whatever the idea is a lot more intentionally.

Participant 10 echoed the sentiment: “And thinking is more, I don't know, surface level I guess. And then contemplation is just basically thinking for an extended amount of time. . . . So it's like a deeper version of thinking.”

After defining the nature of contemplation as a kind of higher—or deeper—level of thinking, participants also made a distinction between formal and passive forms of contemplation, stating contemplation need not always happen in an intentionally created space solely for contemplation, but rather contemplation can occur during impromptu mental reflection and in unexpected physical spaces. Participant 4 said, “. . . sometimes I’ll find myself in a moment, but I won’t be, I’ll sort of somehow disengage and I’ll be able to start contemplating what’s happening around me at the same time.”

Also, Participant 9, “. . . a lot of the times that contemplation happens it's not intentional for me.” When about the places they contemplate, Participant 1 laughingly said they contemplate “Um, everywhere,” and Participant 8, in response to a question about the specific times they contemplate, also laughingly replied, “. . . all the time.”

Six participants expressed that they often passively contemplate when in conversation with other people. Participant 5 said to that effect,

> I contemplate when I’m with people a lot of times. . . . if they say something, I might ask myself, “What does that mean, and how does that relate to who I am as a person?” So, often times it can be in group settings, which is a lot trickier cause . . . it’s harder to really think when you hear so many other people’s voices, including your own voice inside your own mind.

Although most participants only implied it, three participants explicitly mentioned contemplation is also something that can happen with other people, implying that conversation itself could be a contemplative practice because it involves some sort of higher inquiry. Participant 6 expressed that, although contemplation was first personal, they added later, "I also think that contemplation can happen in conversation and stuff like that too." Participant 7 said counselors/mentors act as contemplative aids: "I want to seek wise counsel cause I wanna make sure that what I'm thinking is valid, not that what I think to myself is invalid, but I just want to make sure that I'm not distorting the truth."

Space

Participants stated contemplation was most conducive in certain preferred conditions. In explaining these conditions, participants constantly used the word *space*, typically to describe either solitude, an interval of time, the qualities of physical locations, or a combination of those three ideas at once. Some examples of this use of the word include, ". . . especially here [at college] there's no space to go to be by myself where I know I'm gonna be by myself" (Participant 10), or "I can think for a few minutes but it can feel like I've thought of a lot of things in that space of time" (Participant 9). Also, Participant 4 noted, ". . . contemplative spaces for me are spaces where I feel more free from expectations than I normally do. Expectations on my time, on my attention, that kind of thing." Thus, this theme is grouped into three sub-themes based on the way the word was used: space between people, space in time, and physical space.

Space between people. Participants stated contemplation most often happened in solitude. ". . . [Contemplation] happens at a higher focus when I'm by myself cause I don't have those external voices," said Participant 5. Participant 1 felt similarly: "I like

to contemplate in places obviously away from other people, all free from distraction." When other people ("voices") were present, participants found it difficult to hear their own thoughts and sought out private, solitary spaces for their contemplative practices.

Space in time. Seven participants expressed one of the necessary components of contemplation was having enough time, especially emphasizing how difficult it was to find or create that time. Participant 9 said,

> It's hard because especially as a student your schedule is just like boom boom boom all the time, and there's not a lot of slowing down and really thinking and engaging with something deeply unless you make the time for it.

Students commonly preferred to contemplate in the morning or in the evenings. When asked why, Participant 4 said contemplative practice "usually happens more at the bookends of the day" and explained how "the rhythms of the mornings sort of lend themselves to contemplation and as do the rhythms of, like, winding down for the evening—getting ready for bed, that kind of stuff."

Physical space. *Space* was also used to describe the physical places in which students preferred to contemplate. The spaces students mentioned included coffee shops, dorm rooms, common rooms in the hall, the shower, and the prayer chapel on campus. The most repeatedly mentioned spaces, however, were not indoors. Six students expressed spaces out-of-doors and in nature provided especially contemplative situations, two of them stating they regularly go on walks around campus or in nature.

In expressing their frustration of being trapped inside because of inclement winter weather, Participant 10 said, ". . . all I wanted was to go outside and sit in the woods." Participant 4 spoke of the beauty of nature and how beauty was an aid to contemplation:

> . . . one of my favorite places to think was the marina because you could look at the sea and you could look at the birds and you could look at the people but not have them expect anything of you. And that to me has much more virtue as a contemplative space than a square, white room. So, beauty . . . is also a fairly important characteristic of a contemplative space . . .

Living Truly

Presented thus far are students' definitions of contemplation, as well as the spaces in which it takes place. In regard to its purpose, students practiced contemplation to discover the right, best, or true answer in their situation. Participant 3 described it as bias correction: ". . . looking at different sides of the coin might be also contemplative. And seeing others' perspectives as well, and not just your own bias in a situation." Participant 4 described it as a way to verify their conception of reality:

> . . . contemplation is, feels necessary for me because it helps me to make what I feel to be a more accurate representation of reality. . . . I want to be accurate to the world that I live and I don't want to be living under false impressions . . .

As that last example demonstrates, the outcome of contemplation allowed the student to perceive a truer way to live in the world, as opposed to contemplating for its own sake. In several other instances, students mentioned how the purpose of contemplation was for the purpose of right actions—contemplative practices were not merely right thoughts but right thoughts that informed actions. Six instances of this were recorded from participants. Participant 7 spoke of how contemplation is "reflectively thinking about what you've learned and being able to [do that] for a long period of time";

those thoughts are then applied to one's life, "so that you're making sure you're using what you're learning and making sure you're applying it effectively and correctly . . ." Participant 11 wondered, "[W]hat would have to change in my world with this new information is something that I ask myself." The same idea was articulated similarly by Participant 5, who said contemplation is like "one thought which leads to another thought which leads to another thought which leads to action."

Spirituality

Considering that this study was done at a religious institution, it is not surprising that all eleven participants, at one point or another during the interview, connected contemplation with prayer, personal Bible study, reflection, meditation, and other devotional practices. When asked to explain their understanding of contemplation, Participant 3 said, ". . . a practice that I have used in the past would be like Prayer of Examine. So you kind of examine your day and . . . look for sin . . . that was pretty introspective for me." The same participant later offered, ". . . if I'm contemplating something there's a good chance that I'm either talking it out loud in prayer to the Lord . . ." Participant 1 said, ". . . when we're contemplating, it's you in the moment with you and God…"

Because students contemplate to find the truth in a situation (as presented in the previous section), they also tended to incorporate the Bible and God into those contemplative spaces because they view them as ultimate sources of truth. In other words, Biblical ideas and the impression of the Holy Spirit upon the student provide insight into their situation, helping them make the truest decision or develop the truest understanding: "That's just like, the Word of God and that's just complete truth, so when

I can relate what I'm feeling and what I'm thinking to something that I know is true it grounds it more" (Participant 10).

In line with their idea that contemplation is "deep" thinking, participants mentioned spending a lot of time thinking about the questions of ultimate concern, particularly the difficult questions of their faith, the answers to which would have major implications about the way they lived their lives. Such questions included, "Why is God this way? Why is this happening in the world?" (Participant 3), "whether or not . . . God is sovereign, if he ordains sin and, I don't know, just huge questions" (Participant 6), and "the nature of suffering and the crappy things that happen to people" (Participant 9). When answering what they contemplated most, Participant 2 said, "My feelings and my beliefs, and . . . *what my foundation of life is*. But I think the deepest things, that contemplating actually truly helps with, is when it has to do with myself . . . my heart or beliefs, my faith" (emphasis added).

Articulation

Another recurring idea was how the articulation of thoughts aided the students' contemplative process. Nine students stated writing or speaking helped them contemplate for three reasons in particular.

First, articulation gave participants a clearer understanding of their thoughts: "I can understand what I'm thinking better sometimes by just verbalizing it to other people" (Participant 6); ". . . verbalizing [thoughts], like talking about it out loud, is what really helps me to contemplate" (Participant 7); "writing stuff down is the clear cut way of understanding your thoughts . . ." (Participant 5); "[writing] forces me to put my thoughts into words, and then I get a clear idea of what I'm actually feeling" (Participant 10).

Additionally, for students who practiced journal writing, six said they preferred to write on paper than type on a computer: “Typing, I don’t know, it’s just, it feels very academic to me . . .” (Participant 5); “. . . writing feels—like the process of forming the letters myself—makes me more connected to the thing that I’m doing which in turn enhances the contemplative process and I don’t get that when I type” (Participant 4).

Secondly, articulation helps them remember what they contemplate: “Also, I can just remember it better. So if I am thinking about it the next day then I'm like, ‘Oh yeah, I wrote that down,’ and I can picture it in my head what I wrote down” (Participant 9); “I remember the best when I write when I’m contemplating” (Participant 5).

Lastly, verbalization helps them stay focused when they are contemplating: “. . . [writing is] just a way of keeping me focused on what I’m thinking about, instead of drifting” (Participant 3); “. . . when I pray I write it down because that's the only way to keep my mind from wandering so far off course that I'm not completing the task at hand” (Participant 9).

Negative Perceptions of Contemplation

As outlined above, the participants found contemplation a helpful practice for a number of reasons. However, eight students said contemplation can cause fear, anxiety, and general discomfort. “. . . some people find it really awkward—silence. You know, it's scary” said Participant 11. Though students cited a few different reasons to support their negative feelings toward contemplation, these reasons can be subsumed into one: contemplation is the acknowledgement and embracing of the unknown—why would they be contemplating if the answers were clear?

When asked to explain why they might avoid contemplation, Participant 1 answered, “Sometimes fear. You’re afraid of what you’re going to find [when you’re] examining something.” Participant 3 explained how, in contemplation, “[y]ou’re actually dealing with the problems that are in front of you instead of numbing yourself to it.” The participant later said that the process might not even yield any results, which may lead to even more discomfort and frustration: “. . . the more you think about things the more you—questions lead to questions [laughs], which is tough, when you start thinking about things deeply. So that’s uncomfortable, and not having the answers to questions I think makes us uncomfortable.”

When an answer was not clearly identifiable, five students specifically mentioned how “overthinking” is a problem for them: “. . . there’s a limit to how much I want to contemplate cause it does tire you out mentally” (Participant 5); “. . . if I think about a way that something could go wrong, then I start thinking about all of the other places of my life that will be effected if this one thing goes wrong” (Participant 9). Participant 7 added that contemplation “can be bad in a sense that you over analyze things . . . if you over-process something then you're almost undermining what you originally perceived a situation to be when it can be just so simple in the first place . . .”

Other Findings

A number of other noteworthy ideas emerged, but they either did not fit neatly into a theme or did not occur enough times to be considered essential to contemplation. Those peripheral findings include mention of the Enneagram, which provided two students with a greater understanding of their relationship to contemplative practices, and a third student mentioned the Enneagram as sometimes the object of their contemplation.

Occurring twice in the interviews was the practice of recording a thought on a smartphone so participants could return at a later time to contemplate on it. Another two students mentioned how smartphones can be a distraction and deterrent to contemplation. Two other students also mentioned how a bus ride can be a conducive contemplative space for two reasons: 1) because "you can stare out the window and think" (Participant 4) and "just look at like the passing—like the sky" (Participant 11); and 2) ". . . because the other passengers have the expectations of you sitting in your seat and shutting up [laughs]" (Participant 4). Participant 11 explained an instance of when they got on a bus and "went by myself and put in headphones, [and] listened to white noise." Finally, relating to the Christian idea of living for and loving others, two students mentioned how they use contemplation specifically for the sake of others. Participant 5 said they contemplate "to be able to help others better by better understanding myself."

Summary of Findings

The guiding research question was to understand the contemplative practices of undergraduate students and the consequences of those practices. To answer this question, the resulting themes from this chapter are organized into two theme categories: those that describe the essence of contemplation and those that describe the consequences of contemplation.

Essence. According to these results, the essence of contemplation is deep thinking that often takes place in unoccupied spaces of time in solitude. To assist such practices, some students contemplated in beautiful spaces, especially in nature. To clarify their thoughts, students add the element of articulation to their contemplative practices such as journal writing or verbalization with a friend or mentor. Additionally,

according to these students, contemplation is a profoundly spiritual activity and is seamlessly incorporated into other spiritual practices.

Consequences. The consequences of contemplation can be fear and discomfort because it investigates an unknown or complicated question that may have a potentially undesirable outcome. However, several students reported this process was ultimately positive because, whether the outcome was favorable or not, their contemplative reflections allowed them to discern more truly the object, question, or situation they were contemplating and therefore allowed them to live in a way that was in closer harmony with reality.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The findings of this research are further explained in this chapter, which includes the following sections: a discussion of the findings, implications such findings may have on practice, suggestions for further research, and potential limitations of the study.

Review and Discussion of Results

Essence of contemplation. As indicated in the conclusion of the previous chapter, four of the seven themes provide a description of the essence of contemplative practices among undergraduate students, providing an answer for one half of the research question, "What are the contemplative practices of undergraduate students?"

Contemplation is deep thinking. Students distinguished contemplation from thinking by stating the former is a deeper, more philosophical, intensive, introspective, searching, and deliberative act. This deep thinking can happen in intentionally created spaces for contemplation (formal contemplation) but also during "disengaged moments" in conversation or while occupied with another task (passive contemplation).

Space is a preferred ingredient in contemplation. Participants frequently used the concept of space to describe their preferred contemplative circumstances, stating contemplation was easier with sufficient space from other people, sufficient space in time, and sufficiently stimulating physical spaces, especially beautiful spaces and spaces in nature.

Contemplation is spiritual. Every student expressed at one point or another that contemplation tends to be spiritually motivated or combined with spiritual practices such as prayer and Bible reading. One reason for this is because these students consider God and the Bible as ultimate sources of truth, providing guidance toward what is right and beneficial and away from what is false or adverse.

Contemplation is enhanced by articulation. Students stated writing or speaking in contemplation increased their understanding because it forced them to provide otherwise nebulous thoughts or feelings in a definitive form, namely, in words. Participant 10 described this process:

> . . . when I struggle with words, I struggle with actually thinking about how I'm feeling and understanding how I'm feeling because I'm just thinking based on feelings, but I can't put to words what those feelings are, so then I don't really understand what's going on.

This participant later added, "Being able to see [my thoughts] in an actual written out sentence that makes sense to me and to other people helps me to explain it." This is also why students cited conversation with others as having contemplative qualities. In helping others understand their thoughts through the process of verbalization in conversations, they also help themselves understand the thoughts that would have otherwise remained unclear in their mind.

Whether speaking to an audience, an individual, or writing to oneself on paper, grammar helped achieve coherence in communication because following these rules aided in clarity. But such rules were only followed when the participant was expressing them outwardly in conversation or on paper. In conversation, there is motivation to make

sense; in writing, there is motivation to follow the rules of grammar. When contemplation is merely thinking, there is not sufficient motivation to select particular words to accurately represent their thoughts, nor is there sufficient motivation to follow the rules of grammar to organize all the words and phrases understandably. It is presumed that, for this reason, students' contemplative practices sometimes included practices requiring verbalization.

Consequences of contemplation. The second half of the research question sought to understand the outcomes, or consequences, of contemplation. Two themes from Chapter 4 help answer this inquiry.

Contemplation can cause fear and discomfort. Students often feel afraid to contemplate, perhaps because they fear the conclusion—the product of their contemplation—will either necessitate an undesirable change in their behavior or reveal an unfavorable outcome of their situation. This fear is heightened for the "big questions" of ultimate reality and their subsequent answers, which shape the students' worldview. It appears as if amount of fear is correlated to the scope of change required by an unfavorable outcome.

The very nature of contemplation is rooted in uncertainty because contemplation assumes unknowing, and to face such unknowing is at least uncomfortable and at most, anxiety-inducing. Moreover, students mentioned overthinking and overanalyzing as a frequent negative aspect of contemplation, often tirelessly recalculating and re-reasoning to make sure they are correct in their assessment of a situation or idea.

Contemplation allows students to discern the truth and, thus, live truly. Not one participant saw contemplation as an end in itself but saw it, rather, as a means to an end.

According to the students, the end of contemplation is action, and in particular, right action. For every participant, contemplation affects the way they live—it gives them a truer understanding of their situation and, thus, greater discernment as they act. This may be contemplation's most valuable outcome.

Implications for Practice

Encouragement of contemplative practices. As stated in Chapter 2, Jones and Abes (2011) defined student development as "some kind of positive change [that] occurs in the student (e.g. cognitive complexity, self-awareness, racial identity, or engagement)" (p. 153). Seminal theorists like Erikson (1959), Marcia (1966), and Perry (1968) postulated such development cannot take place unless it is first prompted by a crisis. According to Marcia (1966), a crisis is "the adolescent's period of engagement in choosing among meaningful alternatives" (p. 551) because their current way of thinking or living is proven problematic or illogical. How and if the student resolves this crisis determines the degree of development. Although contemplation was universally acknowledged among participants as useful for resolving crises, they admitted to sometimes avoiding it because it is emotionally difficult or because they simply do not have time.

Student development practitioners bear in their title their purpose—to see students mature and grow more complex. When students avoid contemplation of a crisis, whether out of fear or busyness, they forfeit an opportunity for development. Therefore, when students face such crises, practitioners ought to encourage the use of contemplative practices in their students to foster the development they work to create.

Creating space. As indicated by the participants, the word *space* has great significance to the practice of contemplation because it simultaneously refers to three things at once: space between people, space in time, and physical space. In contemplative vernacular, participants sometimes included the idea of time into the word *space*. An awareness of the enriched meaning of space should affect a more accurate usage of the word in contemplative conversation and writing.

Articulation in practice. This research supports Emig's (1977) and others' (Vygotsky, 1934/1962; Luria & Yudovich, 1971; Bruner, 1973) belief that "higher cognitive function, such as analysis and synthesis, seem to develop most fully only with the support system of verbal language" (Emig, 1977, p. 122). Therefore, whether in personal practice at home, pedagogical practice in the classroom, or in student leader training, it would be most beneficial to incorporate writing and speaking. Such exercises produce definition and clarity of the participants' thoughts, allowing for increased comprehension of both intra- and interpersonal communication.

Christianity and the word. The Christian tradition holds deep respect for the word, that is, communication. This sanctity stems from the Gospel of John's declaration of Jesus Christ as the embodiment of the word. John says,

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1, 14, ESV)

This implies language is an especially sacred phenomenon because it is comprised of words, the unit of language. Therefore, when one partakes in the process of

articulation—turning chaotic thoughts into ordered communication—one is practicing what God practiced in the beginning when God ordered the world through his words:

> The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God *said*, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. (Genesis 1:2-3, ESV; emphasis added).

For Christians, an understanding of the sacred nature of writing and speaking increases their value and, therefore, the effort one may put forth in such processes. Making this connection is crucial for increased engagement and enriched experience for students in and out of class.

Further Research

The exploratory nature of this study allowed it to be broad in scope, although at the cost of being less extensively in-depth. As expected, this study yielded helpful but preliminary findings that could provide a heading for future projects.

The theories of Perry (1968), Marcia (1966), and Erikson (1959) prove quite useful as they relate to the study of student development because they explain the developmental stages (or statuses) of emerging adults. However, such theories would benefit from further explanation of the movement from one stage to another stage. How exactly do people move from stage to stage? While these theories suggest the transition starts with a crisis that is resolved over time, greater clarity regarding what exactly happens in that time will be useful to educators in their work with college students. Therefore, it would be helpful to more closely consider the process, not just the stage/status. Considering the effectiveness of contemplation to resolve crises,

incorporating such contemplative elements into the application of these theories may increase their practical value and usefulness in the field.

Another area of potential research is the sacredness of the word and its connection to verbalization processes, especially as it relates to the idea of God bringing order over chaos in the creation story through the word, which is Christ. Although a number of inquiries have been made and contributions given to the subject of Christ as the Word (Bultmann, 1958; Gooch, 1996; Ong, 1967; Perkins, 1987), none have explicitly connected the ideas to student development practice.

Limitations

Every effort was given to preserve the validity of the study. However, there were some limitations. First, these limitations include researcher bias. Objectivity remained the highest priority in this study, but it cannot be guaranteed because of the researcher's prior experience with and interest in contemplative practices and research.

Second, participants' choices of words created some difficulty in the study. Although the participants had experience with contemplative practices, few apparently thought directly and extensively about those practices. The participants' contemplative vocabulary, therefore, was scant, and some students struggled to describe their experiences under the pressure of an interview. In some instances, the difficulty of interpretation increased because one student used a certain word to describe a phenomenon when another student used a different word to describe the same phenomenon. Creating vernacular uniformity among participants is likely impossible. However, pressure could theoretically be eliminated by allowing the students to respond

qualitatively to a survey rather than an interview, allowing them more time to verify that their responses accurately describe their experience.

Finally, the number and diversity of participants represent another limitation. Only eleven students were interviewed, and all students attended the same institution. The contemplative experiences of undergraduates at community, comprehensive, and research institutions, as well as Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Tribal Colleges and Universities, were excluded from this study. An increased number of participants and an increase in diversity of those participants would provide a more complete answer to the research question.

Conclusion

The guiding question for this research was, "What are the contemplative practices of undergraduate students and are the outcomes of those practices?" The research yielded six main findings that suggest the essence of contemplation is deep, spiritual thinking in sufficient space, and it is typically enhanced by the articulation of one's thoughts. The consequences of engaging in contemplation can be fear and discomfort but also an ability to discern the truth and, thus, an ability to live truly. These findings imply that professionals in higher education would be wise to encourage students to deal with crises through contemplation and especially through articulation (e.g., journaling, processing with friends). The findings may also explain how a student might advance from stage to stage in various student development theories.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in a research study on contemplation. You were selected as a possible subject because you exhibit contemplative practices in your personal life. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you many have before agreeing to be in the study. The study is being conducted by Dan Read, a student in Taylor University's MAHE program, under the supervision of Tim Herrmann.

STUDY PURPOSE
The purpose of this study is to understand the contemplative practices of undergraduate students and the outcome of those practices.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE TAKING PART IN THE STUDY
If you agree to participate, you will be one of 8 to 10 subjects who will be participating in this research.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY
If you agree to be in the study, you will do the following things: • Participate in an interview (approximately 30-60 minutes) with the researcher at Taylor University in January or February • Participate in a follow up meeting (approximately 15-25 minutes) to make sure the researcher has gathered the correct information from your interview in January or February.

RISKS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUD:
While on the study, the risks are:
• Potential discomfort upon mentioning past issues you may have once contemplated about. If at any time you feel uncomfortable talking about something with the researcher, you are encouraged to skip that particular question.

BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY
The benefits of participation that are reasonable to expect are a greater understanding of contemplation as a tool to help students resolve minor issues or major crises in their personal lives.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Your identity will be held in confidence in reports in which the study

may be published and databases in which result may be stored. Recordings and transcriptions will be kept of interviews but will only ever be used by the researcher. When a defense is made of the thesis and it is published, pseudonyms or placeholders will be used. Organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the study investigator and his/her research associates, the Taylor University Institutional Review Board or its designees, the study sponsor, Tim Herrmann, and (as allowed by law) state or federal agencies, specifically the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) etc., who may need to access your research records.

COSTS
There are no known costs to participating in this study.

PAYMENT
You will not receive payment for taking part in this study.

COMPENSATION FOR INJURY
In the event of physical injury resulting from your participation in this research, necessary medical treatment will be provided to you and billed as part of your medical expenses. Costs not covered by your health care insurer will be your responsibility. Also, it is your responsibility to determine the extent of your health care coverage. There is no program in place for other monetary compensation for such injuries. If you are participating in research which is not conducted at a medical facility, you will be responsible for seeking medical care and for the expenses associated with any care received.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS
For questions about the study or a research-related injury, contact the researcher Dan Read at 954-918-4857. Inquiries regarding the nature of the research, his/her rights as a subject, or any other aspect of the research as it relates to his/her participation as a subject can be directed to Taylor University's Institutional Review Board at IRB@taylor.edu or the Chair of the IRB, Susan Gavin at 756-998-5188 or ssgavin@taylor.edu. Additionally, Tim Herrmann, the faculty advisor for this project can be contacted at tmherrmann@taylor.edu or 765-998-4399.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY
Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with Taylor University. Your participation may be terminated by the investigator without regard to your consent in the following circumstances: if you do not participate in the interview or in the follow up meeting, if the information collected during the interview is not helpful to the researcher.

SUBJECT'S CONSENT

In consideration of all of the above, I give my consent to participate in this research study. I will be given a copy of this informed consent document to keep for my records. I agree to take part in this study.

Subject's Printed Name: _____

Subject's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Date: _____

If the study involves children who will be providing their assent on this consent document, rather than on an assent document, use the following signatures:

Printed Name of Parent: _____

Signature of Parent: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. How would you define contemplation?
2. How often do you contemplate?
3. On a scale from 1-10, 1 being not contemplative at all and 10 being very contemplative, how would you rate yourself? Why do you give yourself that rating?
4. Why do you contemplate? What moves you to intentionally contemplation?
5. Where do you contemplate? Why?
6. How much time do you spend in "contemplative session"? When do you end a contemplative session (i.e. how do you know you are done)?
7. What prevents you from contemplating?
8. Do you write when you contemplate? If so, why? Do you type, or do you have a physical journal?
9. Can you think of an instance where contemplating helped you? Why was it helpful?
10. Can you think of an instance when contemplation was unhelpful? Why was it unhelpful?
11. How does contemplation relate to your faith practices/spiritual disciplines?
12. What kind of things are you contemplating about most?
13. Why do you conflate contemplation at spiritual disciplines?