A Storying Methodology for Leadership and Mentoring in Higher Education

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Introduction

Engaging in a qualitative study and identifying a research methodology that allows the flexibility to get to know your research participants, immerse yourself in their experiences, and still maintain the professional distance expected in research, I found it difficult to commit to a specific method. However, storying as a research methodology developed naturally when I began my research on the hidden pedagogies of leaders and mentors. What began as an idea to retell the stories of my participants in a manner that did them justice and also include what I experienced as they shared their stories with me, evolved into a methodological project I had not expected. I quickly realized that storying was taking place and I was engaging in moments of *emotional truth* with them (Raj, 2019). I was invited to share in their experiences, share in their emotions, and internalize what they had experienced as they storied their experiences. There were many advantages utilizing storying as a methodology that became apparent immediately. It did not break the rules of qualitative research,

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but it pushed the boundaries of research and participation in a positive direction. I had discovered how to use storying as a research methodology.

A fundamental interview method is to ask the relevant questions, however, not to participate or show reaction when a participant answers the questions. This is so that one does not encourage a participant in either direction based on the interviewer's reaction. However, I found this method to be ingenuine and slow at building trust. Instead, I incorporated storying in the research methodology where I still maintained the questions, but instead I allowed myself to be part of the participant's storying when they invited me too. It is important to note that I was invited to participate and not the other way around. I believe this approach to interviewing built trust quickly and the storying became more in-depth and meaningful. It allowed me to laugh, get angry, sad, and even cry with my participants. Most importantly, I was inspired by my participants' stories, and they were inspired in retelling them.

STORYING THE HIDDEN PEDAGOGY OF HIGHER EDUCATION MENTORSHIP

In this chapter I utilize my doctoral research as an example of how storying was used as a research methodology. I conducted research on identifying the hidden pedagogies of leaders who mentor in a higher education setting. This chapter is written in a storying format as I present the research and summarize the results.

A brief introduction to the study sets the stage for how the elements of storying emerged in the context of higher education and mentoring leadership development. Higher education organizations, like the rest of the United States workforce, face an ever-changing world to which they must adapt. Organizations are recognizing that their workforce ideologies are also changing because their employees consist of multiple generations working together. These multiple generations do not necessarily always agree on processes and outcomes; however, the continuity of the organization is dependent on them working and communicating together. There are leaders in organizations who successfully lead multiple generations with strong positive outcomes. Some of these leaders may also be mentors who mentor across the generations successfully. Hidden in the leaders' mentoring styles are unrecognized pedagogies used to successfully prepare the multiple generations of workforce. My study identified the personal pedagogies and leadership styles of mentors in higher education

institutions and how they help their mentees and workplace teams move forward. The stories I include in this chapter show how leaders help their mentees and teams communicate with multiple generations and inspire change. Their stories of career advancement center around mentors helping the mentee find their inner voice. It was incredible to witness their re-experiences as the participants storied their journeys in their workplaces.

The research identified the leadership characteristics of leaders and the intersecting mentoring characteristics they possess. It provided a better understanding of the manner in which current leaders mentor multiple generations in the workforce. Moreover, the study explored a personal pedagogy of mentoring among leaders and how it was developed over time through their experiences. An understanding of the characteristics and practices of those who have successfully mentored new leaders is vital to public higher education due to the presence of internal and external forces that higher education leaders encounter (Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2015). A deeper understanding of a mentor's personal pedagogy and how they utilize scaffolded learning to guide their mentees could be used for future development and planning. New leader cohorts must have flexible leadership styles to address continuous change and the survivability of the services they provide to students in higher education (Black, 2015). Equally important is the knowledge and understanding of the characteristics the incoming workforce generations will bring to the workplace.

It was my intent for the larger study to show how successful leaders who mentor the diverse generations in the workforce can successfully prepare their institutions in terms of future leadership. The study uncovered the shared characteristics of leaders who mentor successors and highlighted their personal pedagogical practices. Specifically, it investigated the particular upbringing and events that helped shape these leaders. By analyzing their commonalities and differences, the research offered insight into how and why leaders mentor. The results of the research contribute to the development of mentoring pedagogies for next-generation leaders and propose new ways to support them as they achieve positions of influence in higher education.

The following questions are what inspired me to conduct the study. Can an understanding of a leader's own personal pedagogy, derived from personal life experiences, be key to understanding their leadership style? Once these characteristics are identified, could they be used in the workforce? Is this style effective in a mentoring situation and, if so, what makes it valid?

Storying as a Methodology

The study focused on engaged higher education leaders, administrators, and their mentees in their current workplaces. For the purposes of this study, the leaders in higher education were currently administrators. Its purpose was to identify the individuals' unique personal pedagogies they practiced and refined throughout their careers. The study took a narrative inquiry approach by listening to the individuals' personal story. However, through storying, each participant's personal experiences on leadership development and mentoring experiences were heard and felt by me. Drawing from Dewey's ideology of experience and given that narrative inquiry has roots based on the Deweyan theory, the narrative inquiry approach was a natural choice (Dewey, 1958). The study set out to capture and understand the personal growth of each individual in the study; the idea of one experience leading to another experience and building upon those experiences is embodied in Dewey's experience foundations (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

A critical component that I wanted to capture was the authentic experiences of the participants. I did not want them just to answer the question and then move on to the next. I wanted them to take their time and tell the story how they wanted to, and in a way that I would understand what they were storying to me. It was when the participant felt comfortable enough to get to know me and trust me so they could speak from a position of authenticity, my objective was accomplished. I knew that learning from their experiences would be vital to the success of the research. So I thought about, how I could achieve this and yet stay true to storying? I decided on Clandinin's narrative three-dimensional inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Clandinin's narrative, three-dimensional inquiry space approach maintains Dewey's contextual concepts of experience as the main focus in the methodology, which focuses on personal and social interaction (one of Clandinin's concepts); past, present, and future (Clandinin's concept of continuity); and notion of place (Clandinin's concept of situation).

To better understand the personal pedagogical characteristics of the participants' mentoring styles, semi-structured interviews were conducted as the primary method of data collection and offered flexibility during the interview process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). An interview protocol was developed with questions that stimulate thought and dialogue. This enabled me to ask non-scripted, impromptu follow-up questions as the interviewee responded.

With the foundational research methods in place, the next task was utilizing a tool that would build trust with the participants so that their storying would emerge through our conversations. The "ah-ha" moment in finding the correct research tool was when I read "The Storying Teacher" (Raj, 2019).

Raj (2019) states, "Storying is the concept of making stories your own through telling them from your own unique perspective, positionality, and cultural perspective" (p. 6). I chose this style to stay true to my interviewees as they shared personal experiences regarding their career tracks and views on new and rising leaders in higher education. Storying was much more than sharing a story; the stories were in-depth, emotional, and transparent. The storying comes to life as the interviewees describe their experiences from a personal reflection, self-examining experience by fusing not only the storying, but also the "whys," "whos," and "places" into storying.

Storying brings with it an emotional truth. Emotional truth, as described by Raj (2019, p. 7), is an instance when a trust or bond forms during the sharing process, and both the storyteller and the listener have an "aha" moment in which the listener understands what is being conveyed. The teller also knows it is being realized. It is a connection and trust-building moment (Raj, 2019). During the interviews, there were endless moments of emotional truth connections with laughter, emotions, and problem-solving as events were recounted through storying. As a listener, emotional truth provided a space for me to share in the experience as my participants shared their experiences with me. Through emotional truth, I could tell what was being shared was faithful to the heart of each individual and was never perceived as an interview question answered just for the sake of answering it.

Emotional truth was at the core of what I wanted to achieve during the interview process. How was I going to accomplish this? By being genuine to myself throughout the research process. I decided I was going to interview the participants, and when organically invited to engage in their stories, we would each experience the moments of emotional truth. This is when I actively participated. This meant I laughed, I cried, and displayed anger, and other emotions freely. There was one clear boundary I set: I did not offer my opinion or reinforce my participant's thoughts through encouragement, I just simply engaged and actively participated in the dialogue.

Thus, using Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional inquiry space for analysis, and Raj's (2019) concept of emotional truth in storying as a method, the stories were analyzed with regard to how

participants' experiences took place in the space of interactions, continuity, and location. Employing the narrative inquiry approach, there is not a strict methodology to follow, but there is a pathway to guide the research objectives. Understanding this flexibility of narrative inquiry, the analytical methodology was intended to guide the research but also to enable flexibility (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Wang & Geale, 2015).

The research questions guiding the narrative study suggested two streams of analysis. First, the stories of the participants were coded and analyzed according to how those stories illuminate key moments and experiences in the mentors' and mentees' lives that give meaning to the ways in which they engaged with one another and other colleagues in their workplace through storying. These individual narratives included leadership epiphanies that were identified as instrumental in the development of a leader's personal pedagogy for mentoring; therefore, the data analysis technique of re-storying is appropriate. A second stream of analysis included close examination of data to uncover patterns and identify themes across the participants as they discussed their leadership styles and how they engaged in the mentoring process. The second stream incorporated methods of thematic narrative analysis (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Below, I present the story of a mentor/mentee relationship that was included in the study. Before doing so, I want to note that as I began the interviews and was listening to their stories, I immediately noticed that much of the dialogue was related to many of the social events taking place across the United States at that moment in time. White privilege, immigration, social injustice, racism, and democracy overlapped with Covid-19. Consequently, I not only was engaging with them through storying but I was relating to their experiences given what was currently happening socially. To the extent that I can, I have made every effort to present the participants' stories as they had been presented to me. However, as I heard their stories and was invited to be a part of their storying experience, I naturally had my own thoughts and own experiences to share about the current social context in the narrative. As the stories are shared, there are times I add my voice along with the participants'. Sometimes it is as interpretation, and sometimes as reinforcing the shared experience. From the larger study, I decided to provide one story of two participants, Adam and Rachel, who are mentor-mentee partners. Their backgrounds, experiences, thoughts, and understandings about their work world are woven together so that they are captured individually as well as within their mentor/mentee relationship. The following is their storying collected in a research setting.

Adam and Rachel

The unique mentoring relationship between Adam, the mentor, and Rachel, the mentee, began when Rachel was hired by Adam's team as a student assistant. Adam saw something in Rachel that would turn out to be her passion for succeeding in a male-dominated technology industry. Adam is a White, educated male holding an administrative-level position at Southwest Coast University. He is a member of the X-Generation cohort, born in the years between 1965 and 1979, and works in the technology industry, which, by tradition, is a male-dominated industry. Rachel, Latinx, is a recent college graduate from Southwest Coast University and is a Z generation, born between the years 1995 and 2009, and was raised in the region of her university's location.

Adam, who is very conscious of his White, male privilege, holds an extraordinarily strong social justice core to his leadership style and overall persona. Yet, as a cisgender gay male, he also understands being of a minority social group. He was educated at a prestigious school located on the West Coast of the United States, holds a Master's degree in Public Policy and Administration, and is contemplating pursuing his doctorate degree. In addition to his full-time administrative job, Adam periodically instructs as an adjunct professor for graduate-level courses.

Rachel who recently graduated and recently secured employment at a Fortune 500 technology company has political values that align herself with free education and Bernie Sanders's ideology of social responsibility and liberal perspectives. Examples of this ideology are healthcare provided for every resident, college education for all who seek it, and taxation of the highest earners to help support such objectives. This was re-enforced when asked more about why the Bernie Sanders's ideology, to which she had a very sincere and thoughtful reply. From what I gathered from the interview, the ideology she welcomed was providing a free education to everyone, so students are not in debt. She stated that society should be looking at free education differently. Free education should be available because it is an investment from the government in its own people. The more people who are educated, the less discriminatory they are, and more likely to contribute socially and economically. In her view, the government looks at the budget and says, "We cannot afford free education," and believes that what they really are doing is cutting off access to the education that would better our society as a whole. She is aware of the various privileges and disadvantages social groups have. This awareness comes from her first field of study, child development, before she delved into the

technology world and completed a degree related to the technology industry. An important attribute of Rachel is that being of Latinx descent, she values her culture and heritage. To Rachel, family is important to her and is a factor of influence and encouragement. This is a known characteristic of those from a Latinx descent who are raised in similar communities. It is a goal of a Latinx family to raise good children with cultural values and appreciation of their heritage (Flores, 2018).

Adam and Rachel's mentoring partnership began while Rachel attended Southwest Coast University. Rachel was part of student leadership and was a student assistant in Adam's department. Her first position was in customer service answering technical questions; nowhere near what her major then was: child development. It was not until she met Adam that her major and career changed to technology. When I asked Rachel the question, "Was there anyone who was the most influential to your career path?" she enthusiastically answered, "Oh, yeah. Definitely!" and named Adam as a strong contributor to her career path. Although her career has just started, she has already moved on to the corporate world with a Fortune 500 technology company, starting off with an internship.

Mentoring

Adam attributed part of his success from his own experience with mentors. He recalled a time when one of his mentors asked him to make a career plan, but he did not know how, so he asked for her guidance, "She goes, 'Go research it.' And I learned a lot from doing that," Adam recalled. He saw the value of not being told what to do but given the guidance to complete challenges on his own. However, he remembered that she was flexible in her mentoring pedagogy when she recognized he went to her with a problem that needed more than guidance; he truly needed help with it. During these times, she provided direct guidance and transparent advice. Staying true to her pedagogy style, she never once told Adam what to do or how to do it. Experiencing how she scaffolded him through his problem-solving, he seemed to do the same with his mentees.

When I asked about personal mentoring style, I immediately noticed that Adam's resembled the same characteristics as his own early mentor. He did not make decisions for his mentees, nor did he always provide the solution for them. Instead, he asked them how to solve problems for themselves or give constructive forward feedback. When Adam began to get to know Rachel, he saw a passion for success in her eyes. He began to ask her questions about her career choice and schooling. He noticed she

had a gift for understanding technology and wanted to learn about her goals. It turned out Rachel was unsure of her career goals in the sense of what choices she had. However, she indeed had a distinct goal that she was determined to achieve, and that was to ultimately provide for her mother and family.

Family to Rachel is not only her core support system but also a responsibility. She wants to be able to give back to her family for the support they have given her throughout her life, especially to her mother. Understanding this cultural attribute of Rachel, Adam began to mentor her on many levels, such as career, education, and sometimes personal motivation. For example, as a mentor, Adam helped her acquire another student assistant position within the technical department that was more specialized and would help with her future career. As Rachel progressed in her new position, Adam was by her side, ensuring she was not only brushing up on the skills she possessed but also preparing her for an industry dominated by men. He worked with her on the set of skills needed in the professional workplace but did it in a way so Rachel kept her voice, identity, and culture.

Through our interview, I could tell Adam was a grounded person. Each of my interviewees was asked what their definition of success was, and the answers seemed to be standard everyday answers. For example, success can be defined as achieving a goal, having a team where morale is high, and so on. However, Adam's answer was different and profound, "They are intellectually, spiritually, physically, emotionally, and financially [successful]. And so, for me, being successful is not neglecting any of those things." Throughout his interview, his answers were thought out, clear, and paced in a manner where he wanted to share his experiences. Another characteristic I saw from Adam was how straightforward he was with examples and did not hold back. An example of his straightforward dialogue was when he described a mentoring moment with Rachel. He tasked Rachel with understanding and presenting on a technology matter. He recalled, "Okay. Tell me what your experiences are with this software." She would kind of hem and haw. Adam said:

> Nope, that's not it. You need to come back here in a week and to be able to tell me a story, be able to [just] go, "Because this is what it's going to be like when you interview or when you go to one of these meetings and you're just shaking hands with people. You want to be able to say, 'Oh, well, when I did the internship at [ABC Company], I helped with business processes, and we

moved these forms online. And then, part-time as a student assistant, working in IT at the University, I created forms within the software to do X, Y, and Z, and I helped with the upgrade from this release to that release. And these are the things I did with the upgrade.'" I go, "It's got to just roll off your tongue like that. Otherwise, people are not going to hear the confidence in your voice."

How to accomplish self-confidence was one of Adam's mentoring practices for Rachel to learn and experience.

Leadership

When Rachel first met Adam, her first passing thought was she would not relate to him because of his racial ethnic identity. This impression of hers was not in a judgmental or negative way, she just was not sure they would relate. This first impression quickly passed for Rachel. Instead, she stated that she was intrigued by his leadership style and also how incredibly supportive and understanding he was with his team. Her example of his leadership style was her description of when she attended a project meeting which brought partners across the various on campus technology departments. "So it was like five different people and they were arguing." She continued:

> But yet, they were all literally saying the same thing to each other. But it kind of sounded like they were arguing to each other. And so the way he explained it was, "Well, it sounds like this is the whole idea. And you, you, you and you have already stated that. And so this would be the result of that. Is that what you all want?" And then they would be like, "Yeah. That's exactly what we're trying to say." And it's like, "You've already been saying it." So Adam was able to consolidate that for you all, and really put that out on the table.

She learned from Adam's communication style, how he problem solves without shaming others or dominating the conversation by using his position.

When it comes to leadership, Adam mentioned being vulnerable. He talked about being vulnerable with his team and showing them he cares. Vulnerability builds trust. However, he does not show vulnerability to his boss, as he felt his boss is not emotionally open. He does not mean this as a negative characteristic, but he is conscience of this and respects the boundary. He also noted how ego can get in the way of leadership, "But one of the things I've learned is that people's egos get in the way of doing

good work." I interpret this as to be vulnerable, one must also be aware of their ego and let it go. As expressed in the previous paragraph, not shaming others to make a point is important to building up teams and a strong indicator why the younger generations would gravitate toward Adam's leadership style.

Learning from his leadership style, Rachel says her leadership style is in transition. When I directly asked about her leadership style, she struggled and hesitated before answering. She noticed she was hesitating, too, because she acknowledged that she is in a place in her life when her leadership style is still developing and her learning is still taking place. Her hesitation was not a lack of self-confidence or leadership skills, but she was quickly self-evaluating her leadership place where it was, currently is, and where she wants it to be. My observation of her during the interviews was that she is a strong, young, developing leader and in the works of making her leadership imprint. As she described her leadership style, her example came from Southwest Coast University and how she delivered her ideas to management. When she had an idea, she would blurt it out and see where it would go. Now with her new employment, she has learned to be more strategic before giving ideas and make sure her thoughts are thought through before presented. This has taught her how to be adaptable in an array of different situations. She admitted that her experience is as a novice, "I guess, this is real-world experience. And when you're in college, it's slightly different. And I didn't realize that until maybe my senior year going into, now, my traineeship and now the full time [job]." What Rachel indicated is that she is growing as an individual and is aware of the point in time she is in her career and the growth that is currently taking place, self-awareness.

Generations
As I continued to interview Rachel, I could tell there was a definite divide between her generation and both the older (X-Generation, born in the years between 1965 and 1979, and Baby Boomers, born in the years between 1946 and 1964) and younger generations (not yet named generations or younger members of the Z generation). Rachel is a member of the beginning Z generation, born in the year 1995 and later. She thinks that members of older generations see her age cohort as young and she believes the older generation is not open to listening to their ideas. I asked Rachel to expand on the comment of "not open to ideas." With confidence, she stated that a conversation should at least happen among the

generations, "No. I think it should be a two-way conversation." She then went on to describe a mock example of her conversation with those who are older. She stated, "Oh, I'm younger so they [think they] should be right most of the time and they should [also] be able to let me know certain things." She respected the older generation and their knowledge, but that did not mean the older generation should assume they are always right. They should also be able to recognize what knowledge younger generations have as well. Rachel believes her generation has much to contribute when engaged in conversations at work.

Rachel also described her encounter with the younger generation, still yet to be defined. She acknowledged that they seem to have the same struggles with her age that she is encountering with her older generations:

> Well, I want to remind them that I'm not—I mean, like yeah, I may be considered an adult but this is still a two-way conversation, so it's like we should learn from each other. And I think it's different, too, because younger generations, I feel like when I talk to them, they're very confident nowadays compared to when I was growing up.

As she spoke, I could not help but make the connection from the literature review of how younger and older generations will for the most part perceive each other negatively (Chillakuri & Mahamandia, 2018; Clark, 2017; Wilson, 2009). She continued about the older generation, "Sometimes, oh no, you have to really, really respect your elders and you don't always have to contribute to the conversation." She then pivoted to the younger generation:

> Now it's like, "Now, these younger generations are very exposed to certain conversations." They really want to contribute their own opinions. But they are still looking for that guidance. And it's like, "No. I try to kind of talk to them and let them know we're both working together." And I'm like, "We'll form an idea based off of both of our ideas.

What I find unique about Rachel's conversation is that she is providing the younger generations an approach that she wished the older generations would give to her, mirroring a style like Adam's mentoring style.

Adam, although from an older generation, provides her with the feedback in a communication style she verifies works for her and her generation. Rachel describes the generation divide well:

And younger generations are. They're a little bit more riskier. Not riskier, but they're more excited to try new things. They're the ones who are in my opinion more creative because they're not really seeing any boundaries. Whereas older generations, especially in current work environments, I think they kind of know like, "Oh, well, how much is that going to cost?", or like, "Who's going to maintain these things?" They start looking at those type of things, whereas the younger generation, it's like, "Oh, no. I just have this idea and I want to do it." And it's a great idea, but now let's start talking about the logistics of it or the details on what it takes to actually get this idea to [come to life] be alive.

Rachel stayed true to a collaboration style of, "Let's work together." From the interviews of both Adam and Rachel, I could tell this is the same style Adam possesses.

When it comes to Adam working with multiple generations, he witnessed older generations are more reluctant to change and can show anxiety toward change. As for the younger generation, his observations are they are more open to change and sometimes overly excited about the change. He cautioned that these are not absolutes, and you can have older generations excited and striving for change and those of the younger membership dreading it. He reminds me that for the younger generation who are eager for change, they are not necessarily thinking the whole process through, "If you've got one person and they're eager to go in and break a couple of eggs, do they have enough information to be able to do that without making the entire shelf fall apart, right, or destroying the room." His example made me think about how to coach a younger generation that is willing to drive change, but still is inexperienced to understand a holistic understanding of the change and the possible impacts. How can a leader encourage novice teams to move forward without the hovering of an older generation? Adam addressed this concern, "And sometimes that's great, and sometimes we kind of scratch our head and say, 'Oh, we wish so and so wouldn't have done that yet.' But at the same time, we don't want to squash their spirit." It is another example of how Adam stays to his core beliefs in guidance and letting the younger generation learn by building upon their experiences.

Storying Insights

The above section is an example of how storying was not only used as a methodology, it is an example of how I wrote the storying recounts in the

research. I recount that during the interview process, utilizing the funda-
mentals of storying made the process fun. This was because I was able to
participate in an unbiased manner which maintained the integrity of the
study. When I was interviewing Adam and Rachel, there was so much I
could relate to; for example, I understood as a member of the Latinx com-
munity how family is so important to Rachel and their advice is weighed
in every decision made. As for relating to Adam, being an administrator in
a university myself and working among multiple generations, I resonated
with the different communication styles.

At times, Adam asked me if I identified with some of the storying he
was sharing, and I would concur, which gave him confidence to keep
speaking. Toward the end of the first interview, Adam asked me to share
my story as a Latino, and I did. He was then invited into my storying
where he also shared in my moments of truth with myself. I will admit, at
first, I was a little reluctant only because I did not want to break any par-
ticipant protocols, but I realized I was not. Thus, I began to engage in my
storying and I witnessed him feeling the experiences I was presenting.

It was not until the second interview with Adam that I realized the
fruits from sharing my own storying with Adam. The second interview
with Adam was very deep and emotional. Almost immediately after our
salutations and beginning with the first interview question did Adam
begin to once again share his experiences through storying and the
moments of truth were stronger and more prevalent than before. It was
then that I realized sharing my own story created a storying bond between
Adam and me, researcher and participant. Trust was established and he
trusted me with re-storying his storying experiences. Storying becomes
more of an art form than it is a science.

Pedagogical Insights from Adam and Rachel

To add more insight on how storying contributed to my study, the re-
storying of the experiences of the study's participants led to several themes.
There were key insights from Adam and Rachel as I analyzed their stories.
The specific times when Adam and Rachel told the story of their mentor-
ing relationship, I could draw insight into the moments of truth and the
pedagogical practices that are the focus of this study. Because of the diffi-
cult social conditions taking place in the nation, such as Covid-19, immi-
gration, the social and racial justice movements, and new dangers to
democracy, I have chosen one of the themes and the insights that emerged
from Adam's and Rachel's social and cultural awareness.

Cultural Competency

Adam's cultural competency with cultures outside of his own is strong, and this is a strength that benefits his mentees. He mentioned during our interview that he went to an integrated public school, and he was one of the few White kids attending. Although I did not get a chance to question more about his experience of being a "minority" in a racially diverse school, I cannot help but wonder if this was the beginning of his cultural competency. While in his Master's program, he completed a culminating paper on cultural competency, and he allowed me to read it in my own time. It was clear Adam's clarity and knowledge in cultural competency has shaped his leadership style. By nature, Adam is an empathetic person, and it is easy for individuals to gravitate toward him and to trust him.

Adam is also very conscience of White privilege to the point where he bluntly calls it out. He told me a story of a trip to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, with some of his White friends. He noticed his friends were somewhat racist in a micro-aggression way and had no clue they were. In a conversation with them, he asked them, "Do you know what White privilege is, or do you believe in White privilege?" He recalled that, of course, they did not. So, in a very expressive confident manner, he helped them get it, "So let me make it super clear to you." He goes, "What's that?" I go, "If you go to rent an apartment or you apply for a job or you walk into a store, do people perceive you as White?" He's like, "Yeah." I go, "Then you have no [*explicit expression*] clue what happens if you were to walk into any of those situations as a Black man. It's that simple."

The passion and emotion that came from him as he told this story was emotionally provoking. It was as if I were there experiencing the moment with him, a strong moment of truth. Another strong realization was during my interview with Adam and Rachel, an observation I made as they answered my interview questions through storying was that they also did something more than recall examples. They were able to bring forth the meanings of their memories via a personal reflection. Again, I attribute that to the participants being comfortable with vulnerability and with me.

Social Awareness

During Rachel's student days at Southwest Coast University, she was a part of the ASI organization, and she recalled an incident in which the university was not taking one of their recommendations seriously. The proposal would hugely impact students who may be at risk of being homeless. She immediately noticed that the answer given by the university was,

"No other university is doing it, and we have already done it this way." This was the feedback they received. She felt that what the university was really telling them was there was no need for change because they already had a process in place. Adam, as her mentor, was able to help them organize themselves and present their case in a different manner. He gave examples of new communication styles, backing up their position with research and data to re-present their ideas. Upon her reflection of the example above, she recounted how the older generation does not want to change or is not as open to new ideas. Her generation, the younger generation, wants to try new ideas. Her generation is realizing they do not necessarily know how to get through to the older generations, and some communication negotiations need to happen. She used this particular learning experience as a cornerstone to navigating different communication styles.

Adam reflected on leadership and change that happen at an organization. He also takes notice of leaders who are not really leaders. For example, a leader watches for change and changes when needed, "Leaders ideally, like good leaders, they'll understand the need for change if there is one. And they'll start moving people in a direction of change but only where there's value, right." He gave me insight into how he problem solves change in an almost methodical manner. First, by ways of self-reflection, he constructs plausible present-day scenarios in his mind and rehearses how he would resolve them. However, he is not just thinking about one solution but many solutions and will play out the many possible outcomes in his head. He then will work with his teams to implement one of the ideas to achieve the outcome that produces the best value. During his self-reflection, he reminds himself to be patient with change management. I related to Adam and his problem-solving techniques and I also learned from his recount. As I, too, practice self-reflection, I learned from Adam to invite my team into my self-reflection and problem-solving process because by doing this, we can successfully strategize on synergistic outcomes.

Conclusion of Study

I included the narratives of Adam and Rachel as an example of utilizing storying as a research methodology. It is apparent that my own moments of truth became important in the research. My own thoughts are intertwined with the re-storying of Adam and Rachel. The intent is to add

more understanding to the context of the narratives shared with the reader. It provides an opportunity for the reader to be invited to share in the experiences of the participants as they retold their stories and offers a unique invitation to share my own researcher's experiences as I retold their story. Storying is an experience where all participants, whether researcher, participant, or reader, can share in the moments of truth.

When I began this chapter, I noted the questions that drove the research. Can an understanding of a leader's own person pedagogy, derived from personal life experiences, be key to understanding their leadership style? Once these characteristics are identified, could they be used in the workforce? Is the style effective in mentoring? It would have been difficult to uncover the personal pedagogy of Adam's mentoring without storying or see Rachel's developing leadership skills working across generations. From my research not only is storying a research methodology, I know now that storying can be instrumental in mentoring and leadership development. Reflecting upon the moments of truth shared in the research and my own leadership and mentoring, I realized I lead and mentor by storying my own experiences which is my personal pedagogy. I do this by being vulnerable and sharing my experiences with others that turn into moments of truth. Furthermore, I mentor by sharing both the stories of success and the stories that highlight mistakes. Utilizing storying as an approach to developing the next generation of leaders and mentors is effective and empowering.

My Own Mentors and Mentoring

To end this chapter, I would like to invite the reader into my thoughts in narrative storying fashion. I share a point in time where I began to develop my research with the guidance and reflection from my past mentors intersected with new mentors. They were instrumental in helping me complete my research despite the challenges of the first outbreaks of Covid-19. It was a time where the only thing certain was uncertainty. However, my inspiration for my research started pre-Covid-19.

As I entered the workforce in my early 20s, the 2000's era, I kept hearing over and over the negative stereotyping of the Millennial generation and how they are an instant gratification generation. They were considered lazy, not respectful of authority, and would not value what instruction they received from the older generations. Myself being a Millennial cusper, born between 1980 and 1983, meant I was on the cusp

(in-between) of Generation X, born in the years between 1965 and 1979 and the Millennials born in the years between 1980 and 1995, I acknowledged some of the negative stereotypes. However, did not see them as negative, just as untapped ideologies not yet realized. What I was witnessing was a new way of doing business and generational change on the horizon. I wanted to prove this. I wanted to conduct research that would bring a positive light to the multiple generations currently in the workforce.

Fast forward to my later 30s, pedagogy became important to me when I was first introduced to the subject in one of my doctoral courses. It was an elective that I honestly did not remember registering for. I remember when someone would ask me what courses I was taking that semester, I would list them and some would ask me, "What is pedagogy?" My answer to them was, "I do not know, but I will find out when I take the course." During the course, I gained the knowledge of what pedagogy is and was introduced to pedagogical practices. What was profound about this pedagogy course was how the instructor used a method of self-reflection and storying. The course was entitled "Advanced Pedagogical Practices in Achieving Equity" and was taught by Professor Raj who had designed a personal pedagogy activity through storying. Unknowingly, as we started storying about our own personal pedagogies, the professor was educating us on how we had personally developed our personal pedagogical styles— through the exercise of storying. As I made myself vulnerable in the course, I started to realize that I, indeed, had a personal pedagogy that had influenced my leadership and mentoring styles.

I am indeed a product of mentoring and have valued the guidance I have received from my mentors. As my mother and grandmother, both Latinas, were the primary sources of influencing and shaping my core values I carry today, it is through mentoring that I attribute the capability and self-confidence for completing my accomplishments. My first true mentor was from my junior high school, Mrs. Mary, a pseudonym. Mrs. Mary, an African American woman, complimented the values my mother and grandmother had raised me with. My mother died the beginning months of my seventh-grade year. Knowing I would need higher educational guidance with the absence of my mother, Mrs. Mary mentored me and helped me stay focused in junior high. When I entered my senior year of high school, she became the principal of the high school. Staying true to being my mentor, she helped me achieve a dream of mine and my mother's: to attain a college degree. To this day, I still learn from her, and she learns from me as well. One of her lessons that has been imprinted in

my memory is to affirm those around you, appreciate those around you, and always be you.

I have had great mentors guiding me, who challenge and push me professionally. Sometimes the pushing was needed when I felt I was not ready for the next steps, but they saw the potential I had and prepared me for opportunities I may want to take. They never forced me in a direction they wished I would take; instead they provided me with opportunities. It was through my mentors that I also learned to be comfortable with being vulnerable, something I value today. I try to be a leader who is not afraid to be vulnerable but is also not afraid to be vocal and stand up for social justice.

Knowing I had a passion for participating in a workforce made of a variety of experiences from a multi-generational workforce that is leading change in my organization, learning and understanding personal pedagogy, and finally realizing the success I have had with mentors, the study began to create itself. I had the fortunate opportunity to learn about qualitative methods and the value one can gain from observations and interviews. I knew my study would be qualitative as it seemed to me to be more personable and authentic; to which I thank my professors for the epiphany. However, I felt that storying could become a valuable methodology in qualitative research, especially the kind of storying that was described using emotional truth (Raj, 2019). I knew when developing the interview protocol, as a researcher, there is a responsibility to stay neutral throughout the process. However, that was not my style nor was it close to the education I received in my research methods courses. Given the understanding of my research mentor, my advisor, I was encouraged to be true to myself by developing my research using storying as a methodology. She understood, for me to be fully engaged with the research, I also needed to be fully engaged with my participants, which meant I needed to be genuine and authentic myself. As stated before, I interviewed my participants, I did not either agree or disagree with the answers given, but I actively shared in emotions such as laughter, tears, points of pondering, points of self-reflection, frustration, and many more. I did not have a guard up, and when asked a question, I answered it honestly and allowed myself to be vulnerable. This added authenticity to the interview process, and I was no longer an interviewer, rather I was an invited guest into my participants' experiences.

A final note on utilizing storying as a research methodology. For researchers that are looking for a methodology that allows flexibility to

build genuine connections with participants, storying is the solution. It is a methodology that maintains the traditional boundaries between researcher and participant but allows enough out of the box participation to capture the moments of truth of the participants. The participant is no longer giving answers but instead they invite you to experience their stories, and as the researcher you are no longer documenting the process, you are experiencing it. That is the storying methodology process.

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