

Cultural Narratives Final Presentation: Interview

Who I interviewed: My mom, Denis Patterson.

Why: The people we are surrounded by and the environment we live in shape our personality and our behaviors. So, I wanted to interview my mom to see how she has shaped my ideas and belief system.

My first question related to the resiliency theory. The resiliency theory states that resilience is developed from both the innate resources that exist inside us and the outer resources like family or friends. I asked her how she saw her innate resiliency and her outer resources work together to create resiliency in her life.

My second question was pertaining to Dual Perspectives. Dual perspectives are the idea that a person must have two views of reality. One view from their home culture and one from the dominant culture. They must shift between the two and experience two worldviews. I asked if she felt she had a dual perspective. She said that she felt being a Christian is her home culture and the dominant culture is the post-Christian society in which she lives. She also says that her home culture is being from the North (home) living in the South (dominant). She comes from a small rural town in New Jersey that was made up of middle-class Americans but now she lives in the Southern where she says the culture has very distinct difference between the social classes. With the presence of these social classes, there comes a lot of conflict.

My third question was about the Hero and Heroine Journeys. The Heroine's journey suggests that women must lose their femininity to be a hero. She strongly disagrees with that concept and believes that femineity in itself is powerful. She said her hero moment according to society would be when she helped the Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System receive

accreditation. This was a huge accomplishment, but she said there is another moment in life that is even more important to her. She said the moment she felt most like a hero/heroine was when she helped her mother (my grandma, we called her “Baba” that is Polish for Grandma) pass away peacefully. My grandma’s passing due to cancer was extremely traumatizing, but with the help of my mom she was able to stay in her home throughout her final weeks. My mom said that this time brought out her most feminine qualities like caring, organizing, cooking, and staying up around the clock. This goes to show that some of the most heroic moments in a woman’s life bring out their femineity therefore debunking the myth that women must lose their femineity to be a hero.

The fourth question I asked was how her narrative has changed over time. She said that her narrative shifted when her father decided to move their family out of Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Johnstown is a steel-mill town that is in economic decline. If her family had stayed their her life trajectory would have been much different than it is today. Another major narrative change was when she was working at Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System. She was the Manager of safety and on road to becoming on of the Vice Presidents. She decided to stay home when she had me and my two brothers and homeschool us while working part-time as the Hospital Historian. This career change formulated part of her narrative.

The fifth question I asked was how the narrative of place formulates her narrative. She said she has a strong attachment to Johnstown which is the city she was born in. She said that she gets her sense of humor, her obligation to her family, and her hard-working spirit from Johnstown. Johnstown has been partially rebuilt due to multiple floods, so the resilience of the people is very strong. Many of her relatives worked in the Steel mills after they got out of the military, and they even took jobs as painters or home-repair technicians. She said that her

family's hard-working attitude has greatly influenced her approach to work. When she went off to college, her family always told her to "Remember where you're from". No matter how far you go in life, you must always remember your roots and your heritage. She said that after moving to Spartanburg, South Carolina she said she felt a strong sense of upholding the family name.

The sixth question I asked her was what subcultures she is in or was in. She said that in college at Shippensburg University she felt like she was part of Christian subculture on campus. She also feels like part of a subculture in the South by being a Northerner in a Southern town. My mom is Polish, and she feels her ethnicity more in South. She sees how she looks differently and even talks differently than other people down here.

The seventh question I asked was what her views were on Pre-Modernism, Modernism, Post-Modernism, and Meta-Modernism. She said that she is a mix of both Post-Modernism and Meta-Modernism. She resonates with Post-Modernism because she values the way feelings play a role in shaping our lives. She also values the information aspect of Post-Modernism. She feels that it is very important to be informed. She resonates with Meta-Modernism because she believes it is very integral to have a global worldview. She also values the relational aspect of Meta-Modernism because she believes relationships are what build community.

The eighth question I asked her was her view on the cultural narrative of my generation. She said she feels there is no collaboration between younger and older generations. Therefore, there is really no mutual respect between the generations. She thinks that sometime there is an over-importance of younger generation and under-importance of older generation. She thinks that both generations are equally important. She said it is dangerous to alienate either generation because there is a lot we can learn from each other. Both generations come with their incredible ideas, and we must collaborate to move forward.

The ninth and final question I asked her was how she thinks social media is changing the narrative. She said the advantages are that she can keep up with friends that are in different parts of the country and the world. She said she feels bad for my generation because there is so much pressure to "keep up appearances" on social media. She says social media portrays lives as something they are not. She also said that social media speeds up development of things that should go slowly. For example, someone could talk to someone on social media for weeks but never meet them in person and that could be dangerous to the person.