

MEMO

Gregory Wright

Researcher Memo

Saturday, November 2, 2024

Initially, I had planned to just read through the document first and then begin to code. My main question was really, “How am I going to code?” However, as I began to read, I could not help but begin to see some reoccurring themes. The themes I came up with were struggles/dichotomies, expectations, stress, and commitment. They are listed as follows:

Boundaries

Struggles/Dichotomies

Boundaries vs. No boundaries

Love God vs. Questioning God

Helping People vs. Wanting to be left alone

Expectations

Compartmentalizing

Pastor

To be with people

Can't show emotions & have a to be strong

Personal

Church folk

Stress

Non-stop

Problems

Hours

People's tragedies/losses

Commitment

God

Family

Ministry

So, this was not as hard as I had thought. I plan to read the rest of the interview and plan to meet with my classmate tomorrow to discuss how she has been coming along with her perception of themes. These are my following questions: "I wonder if he was nervous at the beginning of the interview?" (p.2) Concerning his statement on p. 4 about the church being an exacting mistress, "I wonder how his wife feels about this?" I can feel a sense of struggles/dichotomies going on in this first half of my reading- struggles with God, his faith, church, etc. Compartmentalizing stands out to me on p.7. "Does this help him to deal with things better?" On p. 8, "How long does it really take him to recover after a long day's work/service to

others?" On p. 9, it seems like he has a lot going on with his family's health issues and with balancing his duties as a pastor/husband/father.

Researcher Memo

Monday, November 4, 2024

This evening, I met with my classmate Sandra Eiler to discuss about our coding assignment. After greeting one another, we both shared our viewpoints about this assignment. While she had read through the paper one time already, I had only read halfway. I was pleasantly surprised that we had similar but yet different themes from our readings. I listed below just some of the themes that she and I both shared from this reading.

Constant/ Ongoing

Stress-

Overwhelming

Coping-

Plan

Compartmentalizing

Support System

Struggles/Dichotomies (Boundaries)

Boundaries vs. No boundaries

Love God vs. Questioning God

Helping People vs. Wanting to be left alone

Expectations

Had a hard time managing

Roles- pastor, husband, father, pastoral counseling

Expectations of God to keep him in the bubble, p. 5

Faith

Sandra stated that she felt that the gentleman had to “pivot”- had to make adjustments, p. 4; Give yourself some breaks p. 5; p. 9- A mystery... These are just some ideas that Sandra shared from her reading. The goal is to do some more personal reading and to meet and discuss our themes in the next session. Again, I was excited and shocked that we both came up with similar themes. This exercise and encounter went better than I could have expected.

Concerning my reading, on p. 12, Don spoke about his challenges in his marriage and about being in a group with other pastors. That seems to be a good support group to be a part of. On p. 13, he spoke about dealing with anxiety and panic disorder. “I wonder if this has something to do with the struggles/dichotomies that he experiences?” On p. 14, I did not understand when he wrote, “...that in seminary, but that doesn’t mean you know my my dad has OCD issues.” He seems to not finish his thoughts before moving on to something else. He seems to question God a lot about what he experiences (p. 15).

Researcher Memo

Monday, November 11, 2024

Sandra and I spoke about our readings and discoveries so far. She expressed some of her concerns about “Don.” Sandra’s Question: “Called to be a pastor? He appears to be miserable all

of the time. It should not be every day...” She shared that he rarely uses “I” in role of a pastor until p. 5 and questioned his intent with using “you know.” We discussed her thoughts about these. She asked if we were doing too much. Even though we both had questions about the pastor, I suggested that we return to the original task of just coding. She shared that she had created a diagram of her themes. She sent me a copy of her diagram, which I liked. So, I told her that I would create my diagram first and then compare/contrast my diagram with her diagram. We plan to meet tomorrow.

Concerning my readings, I noticed on p. 16-17 that Don has some good coping strategies, i.e. his tool belt, his awareness about not engaging in someone’s pain too deeply. This let me know that he does have boundaries and skills to help him. On page 18, he referred to anxiety and boundaries as gifts. This was a different way of viewing these two aspects. Concerning his struggle from childhood, “could this be a reason for his struggles in other areas of his life?” Through the rest of this interview, he made some great points and was very honest.

Researcher Memo

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

Right before our meeting, I texted Sandra my diagram so that she could see my thoughts in a diagram form. We discussed more in depth about the coding assignment and shared our thoughts some more about our themes, as well as our findings. Due to the lateness and time our meeting, I suggested that we finalize our themes right after tomorrow’s class session, and she was agreeable.

Researcher Memo

Wednesday, November 13, 2024

Sandra and I spoke about the assignment. We delved into creating our themes and categories. While we had similarities in our diagrams, we spoke passionately about our reasons/purposes for the themes that were different. My three themes were expectations, stress, and self-care. Sandra's were roles, expectations, and self. At one point, I observed Sandra holding her head in between her hands and appeared to be wrestling with my response and reason. I told her that we have to just make this assignment work for the both of us. She was willing to relinquish roles, and I was willing to relinquish stress as themes because they could fit as categories underneath the major themes. I told Sandra that I agreed that self could be a major theme and that self-care could go as a category under that. What appeared to connect the two themes were his struggles/dichotomies between his expectations and self. We did have a conversation about his mental health aspect. I originally wanted to make mental health a category; however, Sandra felt that he spoke about anxiety a lot. I was looking at his other mental health issue that he had spoken about working through for 5 years. For the sake of this assignment, I conceded and agreed to just write anxiety. In some of this discussion, we both conceded for the betterment of the overall good, even if we disagreed. What we came up with was a good, working collaboration, which was simple enough and had both of our thoughts about this coding assignment.

Expectations

Roles

Pastor (Church)

Family (Husband, father)

Struggles/Dichotomies

Self

Anxiety

Self-care (Coping skills, boundaries, support system, faith)