Transforming Self-Concept and Leader Development

Course Learning Journal

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**Assignment #4 – Course Learning Journal**

The journal is a written reflection of your learning journey while working on each course. The

Learning Journal integrates the essential elements of the course within your professional field of

interest. The objective of the course journal is to produce a degree of acculturation, integrating

new ideas into your existing knowledge of each course. This is also an opportunity to

communicate the insights gained from the course with your professor.

The course learning journal should be 3-5 pages in length and should include the following sections:

**1. Introduction** – Summarize the intent of the course, how it fits into the graduate

program and the relevance of its position in the curricular sequence.

**2. Personal Growth** - Describe your personal growth–how the course stretched or

challenged you– and your progress in mastery of course content and skills during

the week and through subsequent readings – what new insights or skills have you gained?

**3. Reflective Entry** - Add a reflective entry that describes the contextualization (or

adaptation and relevant application) of new learning in your professional field.

What questions or concerns have surfaced about your professional field as a result

of your study?

**4. Conclusion** – Evaluate the effectiveness of the course in meeting your professional,

religious and educational goals.

**Introduction –**

The academic journey that began at Omega Graduate School (OGS) has been filled with unexpected turns, unfortunate twists, and, more importantly, unforeseen blessings. The purpose of selecting and matriculating at OGS was to first immerse oneself in postgraduate studies tailored to the diverse needs of the older adult learning community. Second, it was a program with a good professor-to-student ratio. Third, it was a program that deeply valued the stages and experiences brought to the table, making each student feel genuinely respected and valued. Fourth, a program that has a respectable timeline of program completion. Other benefits of OGS are the instructors' engagement with the students, the virtual wrap-around services and academic support offered by faculty and staff, the asynchronous class format, the formal introduction to the pedagogical teaching method, and the regional proximity of the institution. The unique approach to doctoral studies, about dissertations or projects, is evident from the beginning.

Instructors actively encourage learners to start thinking and preparing for the end-of-program requirements, ensuring that students feel prepared and ready. This early exposure to the end-of-program requirements is a significant departure from the more traditional institutions, where work on dissertations and/or projects is only allowed towards the end of the program. Having completed two terms early in this current matriculation, in LDR 807-12, I can attest to the eye-opening experience. The variant in my understanding of social leadership, scholarly research, reading, and writing has been significant. Most importantly, I am inspired and motivated by the exposure to innovative ideas, concepts, and perspectives related to the differences between leader and leadership development. Finding new insights into my life as a man, husband, parent, and student has been refreshing. The sequence of courses and curriculum challenges and supports us, providing academic building blocks for graduation success**.**

**Personal Growth –**

*Because of the profound nature of those revelations and to prevent any sense of superiority, I was given the gift of a handicap to keep me in constant touch with my limitations. Satan's angel did his best to bring me down; what he did was bring me to my knees. No danger then of walking around with a false sense of pride! Initially, I did not perceive it as a gift and pleaded with God to remove it. Three times I did that, and then he told me, "My grace is enough; it's all you need. My strength comes into its own in your weakness." Once I heard that, I was glad to let it happen. I stopped fixating on the handicap and began to appreciate the gift. It was a case of Christ's strength being perfected in my weakness. Now, I accept my limitations with grace and a joyful spirit; these limitations humble me: abuse, accidents, opposition, and misfortunes. I let Christ take over! Thus, the weaker I become, the stronger I am, finding strength in my weakness*

(II Corinthians 12:7-10, The Message Bible-Remix).

If I could capture my current experience, it would resonate deeply with the relevant scripture passage. Entering doctoral studies while grappling with a debilitating and unpredictable illness has significantly put my resilience and determination to the test. The academic journey—with its demands for extensive work, research, reading, and writing—is inherently rigorous, yet the external challenges frequently complicate my progress. I find myself needing tenacity in the face of fatigue, perseverance amidst a regimen of prescription drugs, resilience when confronted with setbacks, patience considering uncertain prognoses, and courage when surgery looms as a possibility for success. Nonetheless, I remain steadfast in my commitment to persevere until my time is truly up. The course LDR 807-12 Transforming Self-Concept has given me a fresh perspective on self-reflection, aiding my ongoing development as a leader.

Although I am not currently in a formal leadership role within or outside of ministry, the past two terms have taught me valuable lessons about resilience and humility. This has led me to ponder why, despite not actively serving on the front lines of ministry, I have encountered many obstacles since beginning my journey at OGS. There must be something profound and transformative waiting for me beyond graduation. Dr. Curtis McClane, you have unknowingly inspired me in my annotations and dropped nuggets of weighty matters in my lap. It was not until LDR 807-12 that clarity about the juncture of life that I have now been informed that change is the catalyst for transformative learning theory. As an older adult learner, I am becoming more empowered and confident in navigating new and existing challenges and environments. I am filled with hope for the transformative power of learning. In the words of the late Rev. Dr. J.V. Bottoms, Sr., constitutively, I often remind myself, "Don't give up until you go Up."

**Reflective Entry –**

 As I journey through each term, I am committed to self-improvement. Even without a current ministry position, I am using the new perspectives and insights gained and will continue to gain from this program to redefine my leadership in this era. This redefinition is not just a change but a transformation, a metamorphosis of my leadership style. Looking back, investing in doctoral studies prepares me for the future and enriches my present by providing opportunities for academic growth and leader development. The education process of OGS is prophetic, didactic, edifying, affirming, and refreshing.

**Conclusion –**

 I appreciate the giftedness that God has given me, though, at times, I am amiss. I have taken it for granted and underappreciated it, often wrapping it up in a napkin and burying it in the ground. Omega Graduate School (OGS) has breathed new life into the near collapse of my ministry's lungs. In addition to learning new insights and perspectives, OGS is providing academic safety, a cocoon that, while amid it, God is making straight the crooked places in my leadership life. The impact of forming oneself can be painful at times. Since starting classes, it has allowed me to delve into deep reflections about the past, present, and future. To date, I am almost six years in remission from colorectal cancer with no dysplasia recurrences. Amid research and writing, I have ascertained that even though people may get over or think they have overcome life's hardships in the face of insurmountable odds, it is still emotional because the pain has no time clock. But I find solace in the fact that God is always there, guiding me through. Thus far, the OGS experience is worth its weight in gold, the best-kept secret in post-graduate studies for older adult learners. Each instructor ensures learners know how to learn, research, read, and write on a scholarly level. Self-efficacy and concept have never been too much of an issue as OGS provides, equipping learners to 1) discover their true leader-self, 2) learn to be successful, and 3) develop into a transformational leader. Taking the initiative in and for one's learning is paramount to success.