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# Legal Education as Contemplative Inquiry: An Integrative Approach to Legal Education, Law Practice, and the Substance of the Law We Make

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*In this paper, the author describes the advent and increasing prevalence of contemplative pedagogy within legal education and discusses some of the ways that contemplative approaches to legal education and law practice are infusing the legal system with a new consciousness, one that may amount to a new birth of freedom by and through law, and through reimagining education—for lawyers, and for us all.*

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For more than a century, since the legal academy superseded local apprenticeships as the means of gatekeeping and training new entrants to the profession, law schools have had the special responsibility of educating America's lawyers. Like other institutions dedicated to educating professionals, law schools are tasked with providing substantive knowledge, skill development and training in ethics and values. They have developed into formidable resources for individuals and communities across the country. And they have never been more roundly seen as failing to provide the resources and results that their students and our communities need most than right now.

Legal education today is facing a wide range of challenges which together have reached, in the eyes of many, the level of crisis. The challenges not only raise important questions and stinging criticisms about traditional legal education, law and practice, but from many quarters also include larger questions about the role of lawyers in an ever more diverse society. As I've discussed more fully in previous essays, these challenges have arisen from both within and without. They have created within legal education a desire for experimentation and the will to change.

Against this backdrop, and consistent with the broader movement for contemplative approaches to teaching and learning, a movement for contemplative legal education and law practice has emerged. So far, it has brought about a range of classes and co-curricular trainings and workshops at law schools across the

country. It has led to the opening of two centers of mindfulness in law, and the founding of a sub-section on Mindfulness within the Association of American Law Schools, the organizing body of accredited law schools nationwide. Still in its early stages, this movement is already changing legal education and law practice in profound ways. In the coming years, we can expect more evidence that law itself is changing in response.

Despite its being at the very earliest stages of aborning, the term I've coined to refer to and describe these developments is "contemplative law." But many may wonder: just what does this new term mean, and how is it showing up in the world today? In the balance of this paper, I discuss some key features of contemplative law that appear to be emerging. I highlight how these features meet the most well-founded criticisms of legal education from a range of different perspectives. I show how these approaches deepen our students' engagement with the substance of legal education while at the same time assisting them in developing much-needed skills and clarifying values in ways that lead to the formation of lawyers who are more holistically capable of serving the needs of 21st-century America. By the end, I hope to show that these developments are part of a larger movement to transform legal education, a wave of change that portends a new birth of education for a life in law—making it more effective, more inclusive, and more liberating for all of us.

### **Why a Contemplative Approach to Law and Legal Education Now?**

Like it or not, as citizens and vulnerable to an increasingly complex, increasingly powerful international and indeed supranational political economy, we all depend on lawyers. American society depends upon a professional class of expert lifelong learners, scholars, teachers, and advocates to assist in the maintenance of the rule of law in our democratic system. Given the privilege and responsibility of articulating "individual," "civil" and "human" rights and responsibilities across multiple layers of governance, the legal system itself is a good deal responsible for shaping our limited sense of our relations and responsibilities to one another (Gabel, 1984). At the same time, deep economic and social expectancies depend on the law as a stabilizing institution. Hence, it is nearly always under simultaneous pressures to change and to remain the same.

Notwithstanding the limitations inherent in a system of laws intentionally shaped to fit comfortably within and stabilize particular presently-dominant sociohistorical systems, enlisting law in the service of positive social change is both an ongoing reality and an ever-present possibility. Despite its tendencies toward maintenance of the status quo, legal history is replete with evidence of the role that legal scholars, in conjunction with other change agents, have played in influencing what Oliver Wendell Holmes (1897) famously called "the path of the law." Hence, legal educators see the opportunities inherent in our work as teachers to shape its contours and, where desired, to do what we might to hasten its success.

Of no small moment in all of this is the experience of legal education itself. Legal educators are the first “face” of the system that new lawyers see. Each year, tens of thousands of students enter law school to begin the arduous process of socialization and education that comprises traditional legal education. It wasn’t always that way. For centuries before that, lawyers primarily received their education through the process of apprenticeship to established lawyers, “reading the law” and working in specific communities to develop the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to the service of the role of counselor, advocate, and, when called upon, wise leader among the powerful. In earlier days, then, lawyers developed their skills in specific relationship with an expert mentor working in a community. Moreover, training in legal ethics reinforced more general ethical commitments supported by religious and moral precepts shared by the broader culture. And, although access was limited to a relatively small and privileged subsection of the population, for some time lawyers were trained to view their work as more of a service and calling than a business and career.

Whatever the merits or demerits of that old system, it has long since faded and a new wave of change in legal education is well underway. As American society becomes increasingly diverse and our politics and culture more polarized, our communities are increasingly fragmented. The technological revolution is creating ever new ways of performing legal work, and the advent of a global economy is upending the business model that was the old system’s underpinning. Taken together, these changes portend many more: the old models for educating lawyers are giving way to as-yet-not-fully-formed but undoubtedly new models. Already, students rightly expect something more than the traditional lectures and ever-increasing debt loads, while employers are demanding fewer, but more “practice-ready,” graduates. In addition to training in traditional knowledge and lawyering skills (legal analysis, advocacy, and so on), students and potential employers and clients alike are asking for lawyers with a greater range of conflict management and problem-solving skills. The demand is on the rise for lawyers with better relational and emotional awareness, sound peacemaking skills, and the inner resources and character upon which truly wise counsel rest. With these changes, demands for alternative forms of legal education are increasing, and new opportunities for reshaping legal education continue to arise.

For those analysts of law and legal education familiar with the critical legal studies tradition, these changes are not entirely surprising. Some of the contemporary pressures and demands for change dovetail in sometimes surprising ways with criticisms that have been raised from the critical legal studies corner for more than a generation, since law schools first began to be open to students from a broader cross-section of the population. Law schools were not all established by, staffed by, developed for, and attended by white men, but up until a generation ago, indeed, the vast majority were. They were focused on providing the training

necessary to supply the ever-expanding demand for lawyers to assist in meeting the legal needs of actors in a the vast array of public and private settings comprising the hierarchically-structured, modern political economy. And they were committed to providing lawyers who would, primarily, assist in maintaining the status quo. The changes afoot in legal education today are coming as a result of structural changes to the business of law, but they may well lead to reforms which mirror those long sought by progressive, “outsider” legal critics (i.e. feminist critical theorists, critical race theorists, “Queer Crits” and so on) as well.

In short, despite the pains of the dislocations already accompanying change, some would argue that law schools are now being called upon to become what the American Bar Association (2012) has long assured the public that they already were: institutions “providing educational programs that ensure that its graduates understand their ethical responsibilities as representatives of clients, officers of the courts, and public citizens responsible for the quality and availability of justice” (p. ix). They are being called upon to deliver a more 21st-century, student- and client-centered education, appropriate to the particular challenges facing our diverse and transnational legal marketplace now. Contemplative practices and pedagogy are poised to become central to the processes by which law schools answer this call.

### **Awareness, Presence, and Wisdom: The Core Contemplative Skills for Lawyers and Their Effects**

Contemplative practices take a wide variety of forms and range across a number of traditions. Yet, for all their differences and varieties, the central skill and experience at the heart of contemplative practices is awareness. The capacity to bring greater awareness to one’s experience, and to focus awareness on particular aspects of experience, is what we mean by *attention*. Increasing one’s capacity for open, intentional awareness—for paying attention on purpose, with intentionality, and with as little judgment as possible—is at the heart of the secular contemplative journey in the West. Hence, the incorporation of those skills and capacities across a range of appropriate locations in the legal curriculum is at the heart of contemplative legal pedagogy.

Indeed, the capacity to bring one’s attention into focus is at the heart of the broader transhistorical and international movement for contemplative education. Its roots run deep. Here in the U.S., perhaps the seminal contemplative education theorem is from psychologist William James, who in 1890 sounded the call which many contemplative educators see themselves as answering today: “The faculty of bringing back a wandering attention is the root of judgment, character, and will. An education which should improve that faculty would be the education par excellence” (James, 463). While teachers across the academy have recognized the

virtue of such a faculty for true learning of all kinds, the legal academy's special responsibility for forming lawyers with ethical commitments to serve people in times of crisis renders the development of this faculty of utmost and perennial importance.

Contemplative practices help develop awareness skills, but they ultimately do much more. They assist in the development of the capacity for meta-awareness—the ability to be aware of our awareness, and thus of the capacity to “bring back a wandering attention.” In the development of the knowledge, skills, and values of conflict professionals, this capacity has tremendously important implications—not merely for one's own personal or intrapersonal wellness, but, more importantly, for lawyers' capacities to work with others and on behalf of others for systemic justice.

The most salient intrapersonal manifestations of the capacity for awareness noted here appear to be the overall well-being, sense of wholeness and commitment to ethics that is known as integrity. This sense of wholeness leads one to a commitment to sound and compassionate judgment, which promotes ethical living: knowing, in a wholesome sense, right from wrong, and seeking to do what is right even when no one else is looking. Having a commitment to sound judgment and ethical living means one's contemplative awareness leads one more and more to act with the intention of maintaining movement in the direction of the right and the good. A contemplative approach to professional development makes awareness an integral part of what it means to be effective in helping people resolve conflicts with increasing wisdom.

The most salient interpersonal manifestation of the capacity for awareness in public and private life may be what many have called “presence.” By *presence* I refer to the capacity to experience the intersubjective interrelationship between oneself and others, holistically and in the present moment. Here, too, presence does not mean that one is unfailingly unerring in one's interpersonal interactions. It simply means that one is attuned to the reality of the intersubjective being that arises in the company of others (compare Martin Buber [1923]).

Without a doubt, some capacities for awareness and presence are inborn in each of us. However, most of us find our capacities in this regard muted and diminished over the course of our lives, through a variety of efficient means including our conditioning by our families of origin, our cultures, our scholarly and professional training, and the demands of everyday life.

And yet the consequences of this lack of capacity for awareness-based presence are profound. Many have reported a sense of meaninglessness in their lives and work and a consequent drift toward bad judgment and unethical behavior. Perhaps more troubling, lack of presence can also blind us to one of the most pro-

found sources of long-term joy in our lives: our positive relationships with others.

These consequences are the same for all of us, but they are particularly deleterious for those whose main professional responsibilities revolve around interpersonal conflict management and leadership in often emotionally-charged contexts. It may not be surprising, then, to find that lawyers appear to be incorporating mindfulness into their educational and work lives at a rate that exceeds that of members of other professions.

### **Incorporating Contemplative Perspectives into Law Practice**

More than 600,000 people are licensed to practice law in America. Though public sympathy for lawyers may never have been high, we live in an era in which respect for lawyers may be at its nadir. Yet the importance of lawyers in a liberal democratic society—especially in an age of increasing appeals to illiberalism anti- or post-democratic thought—can scarcely be overstated. In addition to helping maintain the system of rights and responsibilities at democracy's core, lawyers serve on the front lines of conflict management and resolution across a wide range of settings both public and private.

Some lawyers enter into the practice of law with some commitment to a contemplative tradition, while others are exposed to such practices later, or are encouraged to revisit them and find new relevance in them. Either way, more and more of those trained in conflict resolution and problem solving see substantive benefits in contemplative practice commitments. They are signing up for intensive training programs in mindfulness that extend over several weeks; they are attending lunchtime continuing-legal-studies presentations on the benefits of mindfulness; they are attending meditation retreats especially designed for legal professionals. This outpouring of willingness to explore the practice of mindfulness meditation indicate a hunger and thirst among lawyers for more deeply meaningful support in inhabiting, maintaining and sustaining their work-life roles. In the course of these efforts, they are normalizing inner work as a component of what it means to be an effective lawyer.

While additional research is desirable, there is no doubt that these practices are of benefit to lawyers in practice today. In an ongoing study of conflict professionals who engage in contemplative practices, evidence is emerging that lawyers experience the same sorts of benefits from contemplative practices that have been reported in research on other populations, with a particular tendency to reflect that the practices assist them in dealing with stress and handling conflict at work. And those who have begun explicitly to rely on these practices to assist them in sustainably performing their work as lawyers tend overwhelmingly to favor not only supporting lawyers in developing contemplative practice commitments on their own but incorporating these practices into legal education itself.

### **Incorporating Contemplative Perspectives into Legal Education**

The uptake of these practices among lawyers has deepened the commitment and strengthened the courage of legal educators interested in introducing contemplative practice and pedagogy into legal education. The infusion of contemplative practices and approaches into traditional legal education has taken a variety of forms, but the most common are courses, called by various names, which introduce contemplative practices as means of assisting lawyers in developing a deeper, more meaningful sense of their professional identity and an approach to law practice with the potential for self-growth and renewal over time. These courses may focus on the development of professional identity generally, or they may assist law students in developing particular skills such as trial advocacy or facility with ethical issues, with assistance in incorporating mindfulness or contemplative awareness as they go.

In addition, more and more law schools are offering co-curricular offerings which enable students to obtain regular mindfulness-practice experience and guidance in a group setting. At the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law and the University of Miami School of Law, first-year students have the option of introductory courses in mindfulness. And Richard Reuben of the University of Missouri is spearheading the first-ever empirical study of the efficacy of such a course for students in their first year of law school.

Although more research is certainly needed, early evidence suggests that such interventions have significantly assisted law students in deepening their understanding of the course material. For example, Charlie Halpern and Emiliana Simon-Thomas (2012) reported early indications of positive effects on well-being and performance resulting from an introductory course in mindfulness at Berkeley. And interviews and reflective essays from my own law students report similar effects.

In addition to general “mindfulness and law” offerings, efforts have been made to incorporate mindfulness into a broad range of courses across the law school curriculum. So far, this has taken place in electives, such as trial advocacy and courses on professional identity development, but core courses such as Torts and Property Law have also been sites for the introduction of mindfulness.

An example from my own work is my course on Intro to Race and Law. In it, I incorporate a number of traditional and contemporary contemplative practices: mindfulness meditation, contemplative writing, contemplative storytelling, and mindful communication exercises. I instruct students in the Western mindfulness meditation tradition developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn (1990), describe its benefits, and incorporate guided meditations or moments of silence into the class discussions. Students are given weekly journal assignments and instructions on mindful, contemplative writing, and they are encouraged to experiment with such practic-



es in their journaling, as well as in the early stages of formulating their thoughts on research interests and beginning to write their research papers.

In addition, students are introduced to contemplative practice not only as a practice supporting their *intellectual* development—i.e., assisting them in knowing what they know and how they know it—but to support their *social and emotional* development as well. Because learning is inherently not only an intellectual but also a social and emotional process, these practices assist students in teaching and learning about race as lived experience known in some way by each of us, experience that is often constructed by law and interactions with legal authority. Learning in these ways is profoundly rigorous and thorough. Contemplative practice and pedagogy serve to assist students in a holistic process of re-membering or recollecting the “racialized” self as the one who knows, or, in this case, *the one who knows what race is, feels like, and looks like, from within the experience of it*, a process that, for many, is significantly deepened by this array of contemplative practices.

For example, the practice of contemplative storytelling invites students to “tell one of the stories that stand out for them most” around racial experience, such as how they first came to know the meaning of race, an incident in which they learned racial views from a family member, and so on. They are invited to tell the story first in writing, in a journal reflection; then to share the story in a dyad or small group setting; and finally, time permitting and as desired, to the whole class. In the process, they each examine their lives from deeper and more-varied-than-usual perspectives—through dialogic processes, in which students take turns mindfully listening and speaking, and through examining the stories by which they construct a sense of themselves and a felt understanding of “race” and how it is made and remade in the world, by writing about these stories again and again.

Through these processes, students learn and grow. They learn to articulate some of the meanings and constructions of “race” with nuance appropriate to their own experiences and newly deepened knowledge of it. They grow in their capacity not only to develop trust in their own and others’ capacities to speak and listen from the heart, but also to co-create communities capable of making such connections together. They experience not only the connective power of vulnerability but also the reconstructive power of owning their own stories.

My ultimate objective is consistent with the research on good teaching: to create rigorous, student-centered, identity-safe learning communities in which every student can thrive and, collectively, each class learns together (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman, 2010). Such communities depend on the presence of teachers committed to ongoing self-reflection, a commitment enhanced by contemplative practice commitments. They depend on the presence of teachers with respect and concern for every student, commitments enhanced by the sense of awe and awareness of the vast potential and value of all others that is the frequent

consequence of contemplative practice. My belief is that our classroom communities can be all the more effective where contemplative practices are explicitly, thoughtfully, and intentionally introduced in appropriate ways to enhance student learning. Thus, I seek to develop an approach to legal pedagogy in which both rigor and caring are demonstrated by and experienced as the awareness-based presence of all toward all. The central values of empathy, compassion, willingness to work with others to solve problems, and desire for mutual well-being arise out of those practices and lead to the transformation not only of the legal education process but of law students themselves.

The contemplative approaches brought to bear on the study of race and law in my classes appear to assist my students in examining legal cases in their embedded contexts, examining their own and their families' historical experiences at the intersection of race and law, and communicating deeply with one another about its effects. These alternative approaches to teaching the materials make a difference in terms of students' capacities to understand the real-world implications of the law, enhance their sense of well-being and connection to one another, and make commitments to work for change.

Another approach is the infusion of these practices into substantive core or traditional courses. For example, when teaching about racial profiling—the practice by law enforcement officials of targeting people for suspicion based on race, ethnicity, or national origin—we discuss such matters as criminal profiling generally and its disparate impact on Black and Latino men. We look at cases such as *Whren v. United States* (1996), in which the U.S. Supreme Court insulated police from Constitutional criticism over racial profiling by holding that any traffic offense committed by a driver was sufficient probable cause for a search. In addition to parsing the case for the legal rule and discussing the court's reasoning as we would in a typical law school class, we look at an analysis of its impact by Professor Kevin Johnson, a Latino critical race scholar (who happens also to be a law school dean). We look at data from studies such as one by Yale law professor Ian Ayres which showed not only that Black and Brown men are disproportionately stopped in the city of Los Angeles, but that these racial disparities are by no means justified by legitimate policing practices—such as deciding to police more aggressively in high-crime neighborhoods. In fact, the study showed that Blacks and Latinos tended to be less likely than whites who were stopped and searched in Los Angeles to be carrying weapons or drugs. The data show that Black and Brown men continue to be “over-stopped, over-frisked, over-searched and over-arrested” (Ayres, 2008).

I then incorporate self-reflection and reflection on their own experience of this system. I ask students to reflect on their own experiences with the police. How many have been pulled over for a traffic violation? How many, as a result of that, have been subjected to a full car search, including the trunk? At this

point, often the only hands left in the air are those of the African American and Latino students.

There is one other hand in the air. Mine. Their Black female professor. I had the experience of being pulled over for going literally three miles over the speed limit on a California highway and having the officer ask, for no other apparent reason than, well, my race, to search my car, including the trunk.

I continue our reflection with another prompt: How many have been pulled out of their cars and have had a gun put to their head? By the end, only Black and Brown men's hands remain held above their heads. All of my students are given a chance to reflect on what all of this means to them—as individuals, as members of communities, as thinkers and lawyers in training, as citizens. How do these patterns help us understand the persistence of “race,” anti-Black and anti-Brown ideology, racial hierarchy, and the role of the law in all of this, in 2016?

These discussions, then, provide rich opportunities for reflections by each student and by the group as a whole at a variety of levels—personal, interpersonal, and intersystemic. They invite consideration of the justice system, and perhaps even of unconscious or semiconscious aspects of racial reactivity (stereotyping and the like) that will require more than individual work to undo.

This type of teaching is not for everyone. But I know that many of my students wish that more of their professors were more comfortable supporting deeper exploration of issues like this as they relate to the range of subjects across the curriculum. With the support of contemplative inquiry methods, they become more capable of sitting with hard questions like: how do we promote equal dignity, concern and deeper understanding about topics like this, and increase both substantive and holistic-spiritual knowledge on the part of all, without suggesting that everyone's point of view is equally constitutive, helpful, or harmful; or, that everyone's or every group's experience is factually or morally equivalent? We work through such hard questions with the goal not of answering them once and for all but of living our way through to the best answers we can find, together—provisionally, paradoxically, and as profoundly as we are able given our limitations and our resource constraints. Through all of this work, we all heal a bit more, individually and together. We co-construct a vision of healthy, diverse, reconstructed communities in which everyone matters. We begin to reimagine the world. From this set of insights and experiences, students are able to envision new, principled ways of bringing the law to bear on issues dealing with race. We begin to imagine ways of dealing with these realities of our lives that make real the promise of equality under law and at the same time manifest the kind of contextualized validity and resonance in lived experience that feels like justice.

### **Reimagining Law: Contemplative Changes to the Law We Make**

Among the most challenging questions that my students seek to address is this: how might we support engagement with these questions through law, in ways that go to the roots of the problems that the law seeks to address? For example, in my own experience, and in the experience of not a few of my students, contemplative inquiry into racism, race, and law necessarily invites a look at what race itself actually means when it arises as a barrier to inclusion and leads to what the law calls discrimination. It invites inquiry into the persistence of notions of biologically-essential racial difference, rooted in the pernicious thinking made politically and legally critical in public life in the 17th and 18th centuries, and its particular and stunningly effective racial domination and conquest agendas. Students begin to wonder: how may we simultaneously support the deconstruction, where appropriate, of scientifically questionable notions of biologically-essential differences among human beings, rather than simply re-inscribe these ideas, from generation to generation, and uphold the human dignity interests at the heart of an Equal Protection clause, the interpretation of which has, for so long, that relied upon these racial ideas? When we look to recent research on the persistence of racially-polarized beliefs, we learn that questions like this are seen as especially important: recent research confirms (a) that the belief in biologically-essential racial difference persists, despite the lack of support for this idea among most scientists, and (b) that belief in such differences correlates with unwillingness to support policies that promote equality. We may not have the answers, but we know that through the process of inquiring together in these ways we are becoming stronger and more deeply intelligent as a community, more capable of working and thinking together, across categories of supposed difference, toward provisional answers that could result in a more just world.

### **Beyond Law: What Does This Suggest About Ways That Contemplative Inquiry and Pedagogical Commitments can Help All of Us Educate for Justice?**

Many of us have learned from experience that these practices assist students in dealing with these issues, getting through the difficult experiences of reactivity, opening their hearts, and finding common ground. Research is beginning to bear this out, and experts in general education and curriculum development, as well as the specific study of positive intergroup relations, are all recommending mindfulness as one contemplative approach to assist us in creating more inclusive, identity-safe classrooms. Through these practices, we are able to know our subject matter in ways that benefit from the diversity in our midst, and increase the likelihood of developing knowledge and living our values in ways that support greater opportunity for success for all.

### **A Question of Justice, for Each of Us: What Are Some of the Ways That Contemplative Approaches to Our Classrooms can Assist Us in Creating More Inclusive Spaces for Learning and Growing Together?**

As indicated above, research more and more reliably confirms the importance of inclusive, identity-safe communities for effective learning and teaching. So a meta-pedagogical question, regardless of our subjects, is this: how do our particular contemplative pedagogical methods actually assist us in creating more inclusive, effective, and just learning communities? Whatever our particular subject areas, I believe this big question should be a significant part of the focus of our mutual inquiry as we develop ways of incorporating contemplative practices into our courses. Not only will our efforts in this regard deepen all our students learning, but they will have the effect of creating a more just society.

### **How Might We Support One Another in Exploring That Question?**

A growing network of contemplative teachers is committed to helping us think through this question together, as a far-flung but dedicated learning community. We are committed to doing what we can to support one another and our collective in this re-education and re-teaching project. This is a continuation of a long-standing strain in the work of leaders in the contemplative pedagogy movement, and one which we believe deserves ongoing attention and focus.

So my first hope is that this essay offers additional support for you as you reflect on this question. May you ponder and develop ways of reconceptualizing your courses from the standpoint of diversity, richly understood: the valuing of wholeness, equanimity, and inclusivity in our classrooms and the development of sophisticated processes to support it, creating identity-safe classrooms and the capacity to address and heal infractions when and where the need arises.

### **Taking a Good Thing Even Further: Contemplating Curricula, Pedagogy, and New Educational Structures for Changing the World**

My wildest hopes extend even further. Given what we have now learned about the value of these practices in our lives and the lives of others, the time has come to expand our own vision of the potential scope and reach of what we in the contemplative pedagogy movement are really doing in education. I believe that we must expand that vision beyond our efforts in our individual classes, courses, and disciplines *to encompass the reenvisioning of education itself.*

The mounting evidence of the crises facing higher education, broadly, is known to all of us. Contemplative approaches to education provide sound means of responding to these crises, helping us not only to articulate the value of face-to-face, in-person engagement with students, but also to demonstrate the ways that these approaches assist us in the specific and profound challenges facing our world today. These include not only the challenges of working together in ever

more diverse groups and communities, but also, for example, how to make better decisions and collectively govern in effective ways; how to work more effectively with technology; how to help survivors of trauma and vicarious trauma, such as those that may come in greater numbers in the wake of war and global climate change; and so on—all of which have implications for contemplative law and are subjects of ongoing research and inquiry by others in the contemplative pedagogy community.

I see this rich array of contemplative offerings as providing support for these objectives: (a) helping us collaboratively discover how better to address issues of diversity and create identity-safe learning environments in law and across the academy, through contemplative approaches; and (b) helping us reenvision *all* of education for more effective teaching and learning, toward a more just, awe-recognizing world (Schneider, 2004).

### **Conclusion**

In this essay, I've described some of the ways that contemplative approaches to legal education and law practice have begun the slow process of infusing the legal system with a new consciousness, one that may amount to a new birth of freedom by and through law—for lawyers, and for us all. These changes are only just beginning. Like every significant transformation in legal consciousness—from the true meaning of the Equal Protection Clause for Blacks, women, and the LBGQT community to the slow shift away from institutionalized policies of over-policing Brown and Black communities for the sake of “law and order,” and more—they may well take many generations to achieve.

Despite the enormity of the challenge before us, we must do what we can to imagine and work toward the education system a thriving, interconnected human community truly needs. We devote ourselves to thinking about renewing our ways of teaching and working with our students out of a “profound faith that there is meaning to our lives” (Slattery, 2013) and that bringing a contemplative approach to our teaching can assist us in expressing that meaning. This essay and the contemplative pedagogy movement, in law and across the academy, are about “find[ing] ways to affirm that vision for ourselves, for *all* of our students, and for the planet” (Slattery, 2013). These ways may help us all live the sense of diverse oneness that is, for so many of us, the benefit of the contemplative practices that are the heart of our capacity to dwell together, and to feast at this rich and savory banquet we call life, all the while helping to provide true sustenance to others along the way.

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