



P2P conversations will increase the likelihood that faculty at DU will find new or deeper ways to experience the life-giving elements of their teaching, research, and service. Minimally, it is anticipated that faculty who initiate P2P conversations will acquire resources and new ideas for solving professional challenges, make productive changes in their work, or deepen practices in areas of personal or professional life that matter most to their work at DU. Given the collaborative nature and shared problem-exploring format of P2P conversations it is anticipated that they will foster the cultivation of intentional, collegial networks that stretch across and even beyond campus. As these social networks grow, faculty will likely feel an increased sense of meaningfulness in their work and belonging to the DU community. Their sense that they are valued at the university will also likely increase. These benefits would impact the entire campus ecosystem and ripple through its relational networks, be they faculty-student, faculty-staff, departmental, unit, or interdisciplinary.

During



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As with the P2P conversations, Rumi argues for the importance of paying attention to the heart when the questions of practice are less conceptual (technical) and more social-emotional (heart-felt).



Zajonc (2010), “Awareness of my inner condition informs and inspires my external interactions – with growing knowledge of myself, I am better equipped to serve the world.”

The question can be raised as to why paying attention to the social-emotional elements of faculty career development is important. One intriguing answer lies in the distant history of human development. We know from the work of evolutionary biologist and social scientists that humans have developed two internal systems for making sense of the world. The oldest and most time-tested system dates back over 100,000 years and is primarily an emotional or gut-centered structure. During the long years of human development on the plains of Africa, it was important to act quickly out of instinct in the face of danger. Only in recent human development has the “mind” and rationality come on line and acted as a center of control and direction. But the older system never went away. It runs in the background like a computer operating system that has become buried under lines of code, evident but unseen, influencing how the current rational-update runs. John Haidt (2006) in his book *Happiness Hypothesis*

-I became an academic because I enjoy being alone and researching questions or creating things but I also want to be a member of the community contributing to the success of my department.

-I received tenure based on my research/teaching/creative activity but I'm less energized by my research/teaching/creative activity than I was 7 years ago.

-I love the work I'm doing at DU and find lots of satisfaction there. I also love my personal relationships, friend networks, and family life that exist outside of DU. I spend a lot of time balancing these divergent commitments, which seem to take time and energy away from each other.

-I'm a Full Professor, now what?

-If given a choice I would spend all my time advising students and engaging them in critical conversations about their academic trajectory but my department chair is constantly encouraging me to publish more.

To fully answer any of these questions requires both a deep examination of inner drivers (the roots of the call to the role of professor) and an awareness of institutional considerations/requirements. Good P2P questions combine, instead of separating out the *who* of professional identity from the *how* and *why* of institutional



-What is the essence of the professional question(s) you are examining as you lean forward into your career at DU? How might this question invite collaboration, connection, and expanded community at DU? One way to approach this topic is to write as if you were in an elevator and had only a limited time to express the question to a colleague.

-What have you always wanted to explore or experience as faculty bu

What is it about poetry and wisdom stories that are particularly well-suited companions for writing the kinds of questions worth exploring in a P2P conversation? The poet Emily Dickinson in her poem “*Tell all the truth but tell it slant*” opens with the line “Tell all the truth but tell it slant,” and she ends with the explanation “The truth must dazzle gradually or every man be blind.” T.S. Eliot, when asked about the value of poetry, replied, “The chief use of the “meaning” of a poem, in the ordinary sense, may be to satisfy one habit of the reader, to keep his mind diverted and quiet, while the poem does its work upon him: much as the imaginary burglar is always provided with a bit of nice meat for the house-dog.” An anonymous 18<sup>th</sup> century rabbi tells the following story:

*Naked Truth walked down the street one day. / People turned their eyes away. / Parable arrived, draped in decoration. / People greeted Parable with celebration.*

As these three texts suggest, poetry and wisdom tales are an effective way to introduce core ideas and concepts in a way that is less direct, thus increasing the chance that the listener will hear the main points in a less defensive way. Much of academic discourse is direct and to the point, and as such it can “dazzle” and create a sort of blindness to the deeper purposes of the heart. Poetry allows for the introduction of ideas or ways of being an academic at a “slant” or like the burglar who brings a “bit of nice meat for the house-dog.” The poem opens up the possibilities for thriving by temporarily distracting the academic mind. In this way, poetry can act as a sort of poetic Rorschach test; we see what we most need to see in the story of our academic life.

### **In the second step, the Faculty Convener reaches out to three Committee Members**

The potential CMs (some may decline the invitation to participate for personal or professional reasons) can be faculty of any rank or staff of any position. When inviting the CMs, FCs should consider potential CMs listening ability, capacity to ask questions that open up the investigation instead of closing it with predetermined solutions, previous experience with the question Tmas a sort of si90056

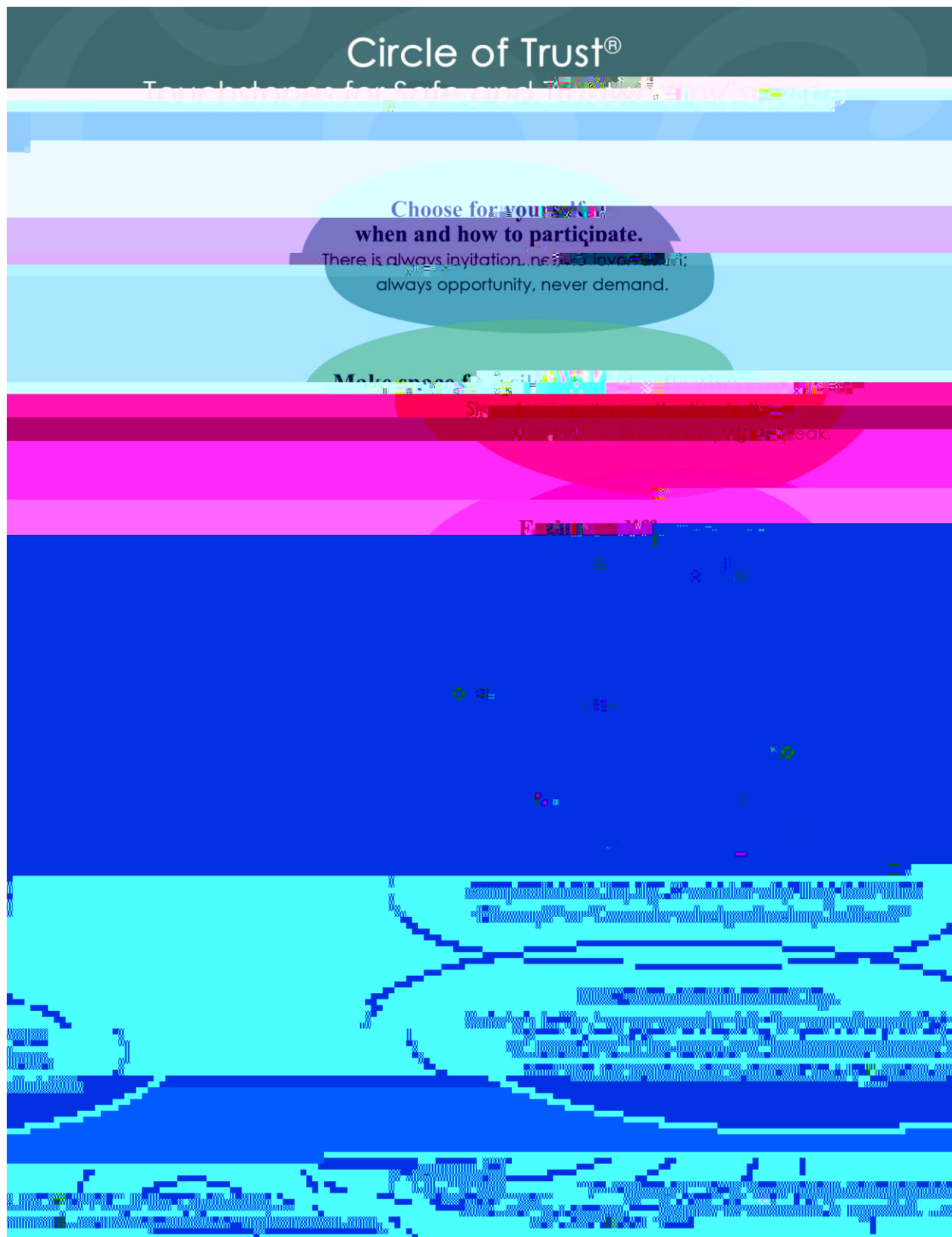
*You might think of the difference between radar that goes out looking for something and a satellite dish with a wide range of pickup capacity that just sits in the backyard, waiting. Be a satellite dish. Stay turned on, but just wait.*

You want to ask colleagues who listen like a satellite dish. Who have a wide capacity to hear what most needs to be heard and can turn down the traditional academic filters and institutional models of success in their head.

A quick strategy for selecting CMs includes:

-Ask your potential CM a question about teaching, scholarship, or service that hits close to the question you are considering for your P2P conversation. Have a frank conversation with potential CMs to see to what extent their interests and expertise (personal or professional) fit with your reason for hosting a P2P conversation.







their own assets, questions and answers. This invites them to discover their own “hidden wholeness.” A person can access this inner teacher by thinking about the situation in a new way, applying past learning and experience to now, and thinking through on their own before/or instead of you giving direction or input. This supports a deeper conversation within one self;

Slow down the pace of our conversation;

Expand and deepen an exploration rather than narrow or restrict possibilities;

Explor

Avoid long storytelling or speech making that may draw attention to yourself.

The best questions are simple: *How does this work for you? What questions do you have? What is the hardest aspect of this situation? What is the easiest aspect of this situation?*

Avoid questions with right/wrong answers. (*Don't you think this is helpful?*)

Use images or metaphors that the person might relate to so as to open things up in ways that more direct questions do not. *If you were writing a book about this experience, how would you name this chapter? If you were using a roadmap to navigate this problem, what would be on your map – the rest stops, the destinations, the detours?*

Avoiding questions that can truncate deep exploration:

The typical conversation pattern in higher education is back and forth, often with the intent of discovering the shortcomings in the other person's point of view. The goal of academic-listening is to discover these weak points so as to "win" the argument. This form of discourse has its place and it is effective at sharpening the intellect and honing debate skills. In the context of P2P conversations there are three categories of questions that tend to shut down the conversation and exploration of a topic: curiosity, agenda, and problem solving.

Curiosity: I just want to know, it does not serve the person talking. *"So what does your wife think of you spending all this extra time here?"*

Agenda: Offering advice, ideas, or suggestions because they serve your needs. *Don't you think you have several issues here that you might need to work with, such as the large amount of anger you seem to carry?*

Problem Solving: Suggesting hidden advice, fixing, healing, saving, or changing that the other person has not asked for. *"Don't you think you might want to deal with your*



*Affirmations, thanks, and encouragements:*

During the last 15-20

P2P conversation is not resolution but rather did the process move the question and the FC closer to a sense of inner-wisdom, calling, and passion for the role of faculty.

