SHIPWRECK AND SPIRITUALITY:
COLLEGE WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF ENCOUNTERING DEEP CHALLENGE
AND SURFACING WITH RENEWED PURPOSE

A Dissertation
by
HEATHER JO MASHBURN

Submitted to the Graduate School
at Appalachian State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 2021
Educational Leadership Doctoral Program
Reich College of Education

SHIPWRECK AND SPIRITUALITY:
COLLEGE WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF ENCOUNTERING DEEP CHALLENGE AND
SURFACING WITH RENEWED PURPOSE

A Dissertation
by
HEATHER JO MASHBURN
May 2021

APPROVED BY:

Roma Angel, Ed.D.
Chairperson, Dissertation Committee

Vachel Miller, Ed.D.
Member, Dissertation Committee

Greg McClure, Ph.D.
Member, Dissertation Committee

Vachel Miller, Ed.D.
Director, Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Mike McKenzie, Ph.D.
Dean, Cratis D. Williams School of Graduate Studies

Abstract

SHIPWRECK AND SPIRITUALITY:
COLLEGE WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF ENCOUNTERING DEEP CHALLENGE AND
SURFACING WITH RENEWED PURPOSE

Heather Jo Mashburn
B.S., Georgia Southern University
M.Ed., Georgia Southern University
Ed.D., Appalachian State University

Dissertation Committee Chairperson: Roma Angel, Ed.D.

The purpose of this dissertation study was to understand how college women use spirituality

during moments of shipwreck, and how these moments serve as a catalyst for self-discovery,

personal growth, and transformation for college women's spirituality. In particular, the study was

born out of an interest in how college women describe their experience in seeking support from a

higher education professional during and/or following a shipwreck moment. This qualitative

research was conducted using feminist spirituality as the theoretical framework and narrative

inquiry as the methodological approach. The five college women who were selected as

participants completed three individual semi-structured interviews to share about their spiritual

practices, their journeys through shipwreck and resurfacing, and their ideas for the ways in which

Student Affairs professionals can support the spiritual development of college students. The

women shared about how their experiences of deep challenge aided them in finding their purpose

in life and how the experience gave birth to true self. The study provides important and timely

implications for the work of Student Affairs professionals in aiding students in their spiritual

development, especially as a way of working through a shipwreck experience.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to my dissertation committee in support of me throughout this process. A special thanks to Dr. Roma Angel, my committee chair, for believing in me even when I did not believe in myself. Your words always had a way of encouraging my mind and heart to continue pursuing this dream even when I felt like quitting. You taught me so much about the ways of navigating the world of academia as a woman and as a mother, giving me permission to wear each of those hats proudly. To Dr. Vachel Miller, it was your course, *Spirituality and Higher Education*, during my first semester of the program that opened my eyes to new ways of thinking and ultimately laid the groundwork for this research. I appreciate your thoughtfulness, calming demeanor, and ability to inspire hope in all those you come in contact with. To Dr. Greg McClure, thank you for pushing me to be the best possible version of myself as a writer and as student. Your approach to teaching allowed me to think deeper about critical issues and gave me the tools necessary for a more inclusive approach to my life and work. Thanks to each of you for your time, support, and feedback along this journey.

Thank you to my husband, Mark, who has taken on more than his fair share to see that I made it through this journey. I am beyond blessed to have a partner who will walk with me, in unconventional ways, defying the gendered stereotypes of what it means to be a partner. You have supported me during some of life's toughest moments and are always there to celebrate the good times. Without your love and arms to fall into, I would be lost. Thank you for standing by my side every step of the way.

To my sweet James, you were definitely a product of this doctoral and spiritual journey. Your energy and excitement for life certainly served as motivation for me throughout this process. You made me a mother, helped me define and refine my womanhood, and keep me

Dedication

This work is dedicated in memory of Sue Jones Rosso, my Granny.

For instilling in me the value of education and insisting I always fervently pursue my dreams.

I know this work would have made you proud.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Stories Give Rise to Research

One of the many problems we face as a society is that such a large number of people in our current world live fragmented lives, their minds and souls existing as distinct separate pieces of their larger whole. This separation of our minds and souls can often be seen as a reason for the deep turmoil that we face as a people: destruction, divisiveness, discontentment, and disillusionment. A scholar who speaks to me is Parker Palmer, an educator, author, feminist, and activist whose work centers on the nexus of education, leadership, spirituality, and community. Palmer (2004) had the following to say about this fragmentation:

> Afraid that our inner light will be extinguished or our inner darkness exposed, we hide
> our true identities from each other. In the process, we become separated from our souls.
> We end up living divided lives, so far removed from the truth we hold within that we
> cannot know the 'integrity that comes from being what you are.' (p. 4)

This fragmentation, or divided life, affects people of all identities, but likely disproportionately affects those populations, such as college women, who face various oppressive systems based solely on the identities they hold. Of particular interest to me, is how college women are living fragmented lives that inevitably make them less capable of conquering difficult experiences they face.

In my experience as a Student Affairs professional in a higher education setting, I have had the opportunity to work with many students, especially college women, as they face some of the most difficult and challenging experiences of their lives. Abortion, death, divorce, unplanned pregnancy, sexual assault, anxiety, depression, loneliness, uncertainty, suicide, failure, sickness,

roommate conflict, and the list goes on; you name it and I have probably had a conversation with a student about it. The nature of my job has allowed me to connect with students on a deep level, and perhaps my heightened sense of empathy has offered me a deeper opportunity than some of my colleagues to connect with students in some of their most trying times. My work as a Student Affairs professional, while not explicitly defined in my job description, has entailed lots of tears, despair, referrals to counseling, regular check-ins with students, and lots of sleepless nights on account of the weight of the stories of shipwreck that students have shared with me. The weight of these shipwreck experiences, coupled with a life that does not equally value the mind and soul, often sends college women into a spiral of despair and feeling of failure that seems too large to overcome.

However, I believe that this fragmentation can be remedied through deep reflection on one's desires and beliefs, as well as through a connection to and understanding of one's spiritual self through the congruence of the mind and soul. This congruence of the mind and soul can be thought of as a focus on one's spirituality. I resonate with the words of Sherry Hoppe (2007), an author and higher education professional, who stated, "If we dedicate time for reflection and self-examination, if we plunge into the depths at the core of our being, our inner journey will lead us to our desired destination: we will find our soul" (p. 119). Ultimately, a focus on one's spiritual life as a worthy solution for rising above fragmentation to find wholeness can also serve as a step forward in working through challenging moments in life. Bearing in mind that while "wholeness is the goal [of life], wholeness does not mean perfection: it means embracing brokenness as an integral part of life" (Palmer, 2004, p. 5). Through a focus on wholeness, not perfection, a woman can "bring together the fragmented parts of [her life] and weave them into a tapestry that makes sense" (Hoppe, 2007, p. 124). This quest for wholeness allows a woman to overcome "the

oppositions between body and soul, nature and spirit or freedom, rationality and emotion"

(Christ, 1995, p. 26). It is this wholeness and deep reflection as a means of awakening out of

shipwreck that is of interest to me in the realm of research.

My Story

I, too, have experience with living in fragmentation, not fully understanding how my

brokenness can result in wholeness. My life is made up of experiences and relationships, each

one shaping my truth, my beliefs, and my understanding of the world. My understanding of "who

I am" and "my purpose in life" make up my spiritual identity. Yet, these two very important

areas are ones that I, like other women, seek confidently to answer for myself. I long for

wholeness within myself, of a greater spiritual understanding, and greater connection with the

world around me. Palmer (1993) wrote the following passage that speaks to my desire to find a

greater spiritual understanding:

> authentic spirituality wants to open us to truth--whatever truth may be, wherever truth
>
> may take us. Such a spirituality does not dictate where we must go, but trusts that any
>
> path walked with integrity will take us to a place of knowledge. (p. xi)

For me, walking the El Camino de Santiago de Compostela, hereafter referred to as the Camino,

in northern Spain in 2017 was a journey to find authentic spirituality. It was also a way, as Slavin

(2003), an anthropologist who has written extensively about the Camino, writes, to "… engage in

a meditative practice. One focused upon the journey and the self as opposed to the destination"

(p. 3).

My search for authentic spirituality and purpose can best be understood through my

sharing of stories, for "stories give shape to experience, experience gives shape to stories"

(Christ, 1995, p. 5). The telling of stories from my time on the Camino, stories of partnership

with my husband, and stories of the redemptive power of music have guided my understanding

and left me with a greater sense of peace. As Carol Christ (1995), a historian, author, and

theologian, reminds us, the importance of stories, of women's stories especially, in

understanding and healing cannot be overlooked:

> Without stories a woman is lost when she comes to make the important decisions of her
>
> life. She does not learn to value her struggles, to celebrate her strengths, to comprehend
>
> her pain. Without stories she cannot understand herself. Without stories she is alienated
>
> from those deeper experiences of self and world that have been called spiritual or
>
> religious. She is closed in silence. The expression of women's spiritual quest is integrally
>
> related to the telling of women's stories. If women's stories are not told, the depth of
>
> women's souls will not be known. (p. 1)

For me, my journey along the Camino and the stories that make up my life are part of the reason

why I chose to explore the topic of spirituality and shipwreck. Given the nature of this study is

aimed at the telling of women's stories, I believe, before diving into the details of this research, it

is important for me to share a story of my own, and, thereby, to begin to establish my

positionality as a researcher who practices reflexivity through my own experiences. Below is a

story from my journey of walking and understanding along the Camino, a destination of pilgrims

since the early Middle Ages.

My Journey Along the Camino

The pilgrimage along the Camino was born out of a journey that Mark, my husband, and

I had begun together just five years prior. July 9, 2012, is the day when Mark officially began his

thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail down the east coast of the continental United States *and* the

day that he asked me to marry him. That hike marked the beginning of our much larger journey

together through life. Fast forward five years, as I prepared for us to depart for our hike along the Camino, I could not help but wonder if perhaps the start of our journey along the Camino would be the start of our newest chapter and partnership as parents—the beginning of a deeper partnership, strengthened by our mutual struggles and celebrations through more than 400 miles of hiking. In reflecting on that journey, it is evident to me that the Camino aided us in identifying our future goals and plans while also giving us the necessary intimate time together to hone the skills needed to sustain, forever, our partnership.

For me the reason to hike the Camino was two-fold. Not only was it about partnership and the starting of a new journey together as parents, but this ancient religious pilgrimage was also relevant to my interest in spirituality as a topic of exploration and research. While I had a desire to hike the Camino for the above-listed reasons, I had no real inclination as to the depth of the growth and understanding that would come as a result of the experience. For me, the growth and understanding that arose as a result of the experience further confirmed the essential nature of spirituality and spiritual experience for my life. Ultimately, I have learned that the Camino was a spiritual quest, a significant journey for me as a woman. Christ (1995) aptly explains the women's spiritual quest thus:

> Women's spiritual quest concerns a woman's awakening to the depths of her soul and her position in the universe. A woman's spiritual quest includes moments of solitary contemplation, but it is strengthened by being shared. It involves asking basic questions: Who am I? Why am I here? What is my place in the universe? In answering these questions, a woman must listen to her own voice and come to terms with her own experience. She must break long-standing habits of seeking approval, of trying to please parents, lovers, husbands, friends, children, but never herself. (p. 8-9)

As I reflect on my experience of hiking the Camino, I know for certain that I can now answer the bigger questions of life, questions of who I am and who I want to be. I cannot help but wonder what truths and stories will continue to arise for me as time continues to pass. What stories will continue to have an impact and what stories will I share? I also hope that through the claiming of this spiritual experience and through the continual telling of stories of my experience, I will in turn, allow an opportunity for other women to share their stories of awakening and renewal. Christ (1995) reminds us that "when one woman puts her experiences into words, another woman who has kept silent, afraid of what others will think, can find validation" (p. 23). I hope that my narrative on music along the Camino shared below, will illuminate at least part of the shipwreck I faced and the deep wholeness I found within myself along those 400 miles of the Camino. As well, I hope my story experience will serve as encouragement for other women.

Narrative on My Own Spiritual Practices

The decision to forego listening to music while hiking the Camino was an intentional decision on my part. Considering the trek, for me, was about listening to the Camino, living in the moment, and seeking a spiritual experience, I felt as though music would serve as a distraction from my ultimate goals. I wanted to think about every step, every pain, and every experience that brought me to the Camino. I wanted to use the Camino to seek my authentic being and to be truly connected with nature, as is reflected in my journal on June 20:

> How shall we truly find ourselves if we do not put down the technology that has us so desensitized to the world around us? It has caused us to feel invincible and unattached to the Earth and all it offers us. (Mashburn, 2017)

I made a conscious choice to not let music serve as a desensitizing, numbing mechanism in which my life and the Earth operated in dualism.

Although I chose not to listen to music while hiking, music was certainly a large part of my Camino experience. From the synchronicities of John Denver's Country Road uniting us with friends after a long few days apart and then hearing it again at San Fermin in Pamplona to the old hymn *At the Cross* filling my thoughts the morning we would hike to Cruz de Ferro to the feelings of rage permeating every ounce of my being due to the unapologetic nature of pilgrims' use of a Bluetooth speaker, music was inadvertently a significant part of my Camino experience. The most notable story of music for me stretched across several days, and encompassed a song that has had important meaning throughout my entire life; the song was *Amazing Grace*. The lyrics of this song took on new meaning for me on the Camino, pushed me through the darkness, and allowed me to overcome pain in an unforeseen way.

The particular song first manifested itself in my Camino experience on the afternoon of June 20:

> As we departed Los Arcos today we could hear some loud music behind us. It reminded me of being in Uganda in January 2016. There, cars would drive around all day and night with a speaker at the top of their car spewing political propaganda. Eventually over the two weeks, it became like background noise. I thought a similar thing was happening, except that the car was playing awful music. Turns out, it was the two pilgrims behind us playing music on a Bluetooth speaker…Did they have no respect for the ancient ritual and tradition of walking the Camino? Did they even know the history? It seemed to me that they were unaware and unapologetic. Did they consider what their music would do to disturb a pilgrim that had come to find silence? Perhaps someone like me. The music kept

following me and I had to get away from it. So, I set to walking at my own pace to beat

out the music. Before I knew it, I was 100 yards out in front of Mark. I began singing

Amazing Grace, repeatedly. It was a way of me finding a happy place. It became almost

meditative in nature as I sang the three verses over and over and over. I then began to

think about each word and phrase individually. It helped me to reframe, to focus on the

journey ahead and not the music behind me. (Mashburn, 2017)

By singing to myself and then aloud, the lyrics of *Amazing Grace*, I was able to identify a

mechanism to move myself beyond the stress and anger the music from the Bluetooth speaker

was producing in me. That warm sunny afternoon as we left Los Arcos, the lyrics of my favorite

childhood hymn became a mantra for me, aiding me in overcoming anger and frustration.

During our miles on the next day, I began dealing with a great amount of pain. I was

dealing with the pain a little bit the day before, but nothing like today. The pain felt like pressure

between the back of my shoe and my ankle. Not that the shoe was rubbing my ankle and causing

a blister, just pain. It just hurt. I wore mid-high boots for ankle stability but wondered if the

pressure they were putting on my ankle was the cause of the pain. I loosened up my boots, first

the right one and it started to feel a lot better—no more pain there. The left ankle, however, was

still filled with immense pain, but I just walked through it.

There was nothing I could do, but just keep walking. We were only on Day Four of our

trek and had hundreds of miles left to walk. I knew that I needed to keep going and so I just kept

pushing through the pain. Mark eventually gave me the idea of changing my shoes, to see what

walking in my Chacos would feel like on the pain and pressure in my ankle. So, I took my boots

off and I put my Chacos on. It seemed to feel a bit better, but it was not that good and I could

still feel the excruciating pain in my left ankle. At this point, I was determined that the pain was

not being caused by my shoes, rather it was a muscle strain on my Achilles area and I needed to just stretch it. So, I stretched, put my shoes back on and we just kept walking. I simply just had to keep going. We made it about seven more miles—we were almost to Navarrete, a place where I could rest before we continued on to Najera for the night (Mashburn, 2017).

As we were making the ascent up to Alto Grajera, on our way through Navarette, I started singing *Amazing Grace* again, trying to just get through. The following transcription from moments after making the ascent fully embodies the emotion I felt as the words of *Amazing Grace* washed over me:

> The verse I started singing was, (now singing) 'Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come'. And THAT was life-giving to me because I've been through so much--we've already walked so many miles, further than anyone probably ever thought that we would. And we are only on Day Four and this little bit of pain in my Achilles tendon, my ankle, my heel is not going to stop me. I have been through more and I will continue to go. This little danger, little toil, little snare is fine. Having faith and grace that I can get through this and that we are supposed to be here is something I just cannot lose sight of, no matter how hard I try. I still feel the pain, but can think about something else; I can sing this song, meditate on it, sing that verse specifically, and just keep going.
>
> (Mashburn, June 21, 2017)

On June 20, *Amazing Grace* came to mind and it got me out of a dark place. That night, I wrote the lyrics in my journal and even dissected what each of those words can mean, or does mean. On June 21, I began singing *Amazing Grace*, but much to my surprise, I realized that I was singing a different verse. "I soon realized that [the day before] I was not singing the song in its entirety" (Mashburn, June 21, 2017). The verse that came to me about dangers, toils, and snares,

was fitting for the pain I was walking in as we made the ascent up to Navarrate. I became emotional as I sang it and felt the greatest sense of peace. I felt cared for, felt there was hope for the future of this hike, and felt intricately connected to a greater being. Music held power for me on the Camino.

As I reflect on the power that music had for me and my experience along the Camino, the only way that I can describe it is spiritual. Music helped me to achieve a greater sense of spiritual well-being while on the Camino, allowing me to work through hardship, and bringing me a greater sense of connection with something larger than myself. Ultimately, the use of music through the act of walking allowed me to find peace. As Janneke Peelen and Willy Jansen (2007), two academics that completed the Camino stated, "The resulting emotions of feeling in peace with oneself and the world, of experiencing a desired wholeness, are considered by some to be spiritual experiences" (p. 89). Through my journey along the Camino, I learned that I not only needed to attend to my physical wellness but that I also needed to attend to my spiritual wellness. Although I experienced a great deal of pain, I had no choice but to keep walking. Therefore, I had to find a way to put spiritual practices into play to overcome my physical ailments. The strength of my spirit allowed me to begin to see walking with music as meditative in nature. The meditative nature of my singing, combined with the rhythm of my walking gave me the power to overcome any obstacle. While I am calling my singing meditative in nature, another way to define this singing is as Henri Nouwen (1981), a priest and professor, does, as a way of praying; "Whether we call this prayer or meditation makes little difference" (p. 56). Ultimately, I resonate with how Slavin (2003) describes the result of walking:

the practice of walking allowed [me] to understand and explore a nexus between the body, self, and the world. It thus [demonstrated] the many complex ways in which the

body, situated within specific material circumstances, helps to produce experiences that
are profoundly spiritual. (p. 15)

My journey of walking and overcoming shipwreck is only part of my story along the Camino; ultimately, the long-distance walking allowed me to ponder some of life's biggest questions, to begin to truly discover who I am and who I want to be, as well as to give me a vision for my future.

For other women, the journey to find authentic spirituality may not be found through meditative walking. Perhaps they discover what makes them whole after a challenging experience, through writing, time spent in nature, yoga, prayer, the practice of rituals, or simply being in the presence of other spiritual beings. For other women, the journey of shipwreck may not be related to a physical ailment. Perhaps the shipwreck is related to a significant loss, significant change, or exposure to new ideas (Wortmann et al., 2012), or something else. I am interested in knowing and illuminating the stories of how college women find authentic spirituality before, during, or after a crystallized moment of shipwreck

Problem Statement

College is a time of exploration of one's values and proposed life future; it is a time of becoming, personal self-discovery, development, and learning (Bowen, 1999). For many students, this personal exploration and identification of beliefs and values first occur in college. College is the first time in which many students are afforded separation from their immediate families and hometowns, allowing space for students to question the values, beliefs, and faith traditions they were taught growing up. Many of these questions of identity, values, and purpose are essentially spiritual questions (Astin et al., 2011). Hindman (2002) suggests that "college can be the catalyst for intense growth, reflection, and exploration" (p. 166). Considering the

questioning that may take place, students need to be equipped with the tool/s and resources necessary for exploring their spiritual identities and well-being. These tools and resources for exploring their spiritual identities and well-being may also aid students to move through times of great challenge, change, and loss.

A significant role in the development of college students is played by professionals in higher education working in the field of Student Affairs. The overarching role of a Student Affairs professional is to be concerned with the holistic development of individual students, with a particular emphasis placed on Student Affairs practitioners as educators aiding students in personal growth and development (Rentz, 2004). Considering this focus on development, meaning-making, and connectedness, the conclusion can be made that Student Affairs practitioners have the opportunity and responsibility to intentionally guide students in their desire to develop, both emotionally and spiritually. In many ways, Student Affairs professionals are already concerned and working with the spiritual well-being of students. From the incorporation of reflective practices to the execution of service-learning (Love, 2001; Love & Talbot, 2009), much of the practice of Student Affairs can be seen as already centered in spirituality, even if it is not explicitly stated (Rogers & Love, 2007). Although spirituality can be seen as integrated into the work of Student Affairs professionals, there still can exist an adverse relationship between the two (Love & Talbot, 2009). Reticence by Student Affairs professionals to address the topic of spirituality may be due to a lack of the professionals' own exploration of the topic (Dalton, 2006; Seifert & Holman-Harmon, 2009), a lack of training in graduate coursework and/or professional development (Bugenhagen, 2009; Dalton, 2006; Rogers & Love, 2007), and a fear of violating the separation of church and state (Allen & Kellom, 2001). It is clear that the work of Student Affairs professionals is intricately entangled with the spiritual development of

college students; however, the role a Student Affairs professional plays in guiding a student through a challenging time in their life is not clear.

Through my work as a Student Affairs professional in higher education over the last ten years, as well as considering spirituality is not "consistently practiced as a component of holistic student development" (Kiessling, 2011, p. 37), I perceive that students lack the ability to handle "shipwreck" moments (Cady, 2007) as they occur in their everyday lives. Shipwreck moments, a term first coined by Parks (2000), are defined as "[a time when] life's questions become so complex, without the necessary supports to confront the challenge of trying to understand complexity, students face the danger of feeling foreclosed to further exploration or meaning-making processes" (Cady, 2007, p. 98). I would also argue that shipwreck moments include moments of crisis and uncertainty, as well as a conflict between espoused values and actions. When defining shipwreck as "spiritual struggle," shipwreck is negatively associated with mental health and often leads to symptoms such as anxiety and depression (Bryant & Astin, 2008). Based on my experience in higher education, I would agree with the previous statement and confirm that students are consistently ill-prepared to handle moments of uncertainty and lack of control. Whatever the reason for the spiritual struggle, and considering college is chock full of opportunities for shipwreck, the literature leaves much to be desired in the way of understanding the specific outcomes of these moments (Bryant & Astin, 2018; Wortmann et al., 2012).

Research is often conducted from a generalist lens, failing to specifically account for individual populations, rather, generalizing the results of the study as relevant to the generic 'student' in higher education. Research from a generalist lens fails to account for the specific experiences of women in the world, especially in a society that is based on patriarchal dominance; women's stories need to be told to necessitate more women telling their own stories,

each with their own unique lens and opportunity for learning. The necessity for this research, with women, by a woman, in a feminist framework, cannot be stated loudly enough. Women need to be the center and start of the research, especially in a spiritual context. Carol Christ (1995) makes this point crystal clear when she stated:

> Women are hungry for stories that name our experiences and provide us with models of the possible. But I believe there is a deeper reason for the turn to stories in feminist work in religion. Many of us are telling stories because there is no other way for us to express the new visions of the sacred that emerge as we heal the trauma of having been closed in silence for so long. (p. 139)

We can no longer allow women to live in silence; women must be valued for the incredible lives they live that the whole world can learn from.

Speaking specifically about this research, we also know that spirituality and, somewhat shipwreck, have been adequately defined in the literature. However, the idea of identifying the role spirituality plays for college women and the role higher education professionals play in support of these women as they work through shipwreck has not been explored. The literature suggests that a study on spirituality's effects on "predicting being better or thriving after an adverse event" is needed (Morgan Consoli et al., 2018, p. 235), as well as an investigation into the role a Student Affairs professional plays during and after the adverse event. One example of the role I have played as a Student Affairs professional in supporting students' spiritual development, especially during and following a shipwreck journey, is detailed below. It is because of stories like the one I share below that I have such an interest in this area of research.

My Student Affairs Story

It was a warm Spring day; a normal day in the office. I was sitting behind my desk, paying careful attention to breathe into my back for good posture, when one of my students popped her head into my office to say hello. This was a typical behavior of Angeline. As she hung on to the door frame, backpack strapped on and lunchbox in tow, I could sense that something was not right. Angeline always presented with a genuine smile, bouncing bubbly personality, perfectly poised and put together, qualities she was proud of as a prominent student leader on campus. But today, something was different. I asked Angeline if there was anything she'd like to talk about; this is a fairly typical question I ask of my students, a question that elicits various responses. For Angeline, on this day, she flashed me a sheepish smile, unloaded the bags she was carrying, and plopped into the chair across from me. Anticipating the nature of the conversation to be less than sunny, I stood up and gently closed the door to my office.

Angeline and I had a close relationship, one that had been cultivated and strengthened over the course of a few years. Angeline knew that once my door was closed, that the space was supportive but challenging, open for discussion on most any matter, yet confidential. It didn't take more than 5 minutes of Angeline avoiding eye contact and direct answers to my questions before she cracked. She began to tell me about her strained relationship with her father, one she referred to as abusive in more than one instance. He accused her of being selfish and consumed with her own needs. All of these attacks were hard for me to comprehend, considering the value I placed on Angeline, and especially considering the position her father held in the church. As the stories continued, I could begin to see Angeline spiral. She spiraled, like a tornado unable to be leashed, down a path of self-hate and destruction, with an eventual admission of suicidal ideation.

A few months later, I found myself in space with Angeline again. As with every other instance I had interacted with Angeline, on her person was a brown leather journal. This item was significant and relevant to Angeline's spiritual identity, serving as a source of identity and strength for Angeline. The 5x7" brown leather journal was always in Angeline's possession, but never open for anyone to see. This brown leather journal served as a mechanism for allowing for a sense of peace and serenity to flow through her being, as it provided Angeline with an opportunity to reflect on the moments of stress, anxiety, and uncertainty, in turn, refocusing those moments into a positive light. In this time together, Angeline began to tell me of a moment a few weeks back, when she inadvertently picked up her journal and began writing. Angeline recalled telling herself, "Oh, I do not have anything to write about, I'm just going to write." It was this moment of maturity in recognizing the personal value-added when she journals, that I knew something of a great nature was about to be shared.

Trying to remain cognizant of my role as a professional, I inconspicuously braced myself for the big reveal: my eyes made contact with Angeline's and I straightened up in my seat. And that's when she said it--the four most impassioned words of our entire time together: "You are worth it." 13 letters, four simple words that Angeline had scribbled in her journal. As she shared these four words, we were both overcome with great emotion. Angeline had, for the first time in her entire life, believed that she was worth it. She was more than worth her weight in gold, and no one, no matter their title or entitlement, could ever again take her sense of self-worth from her. I knew the value that I placed on Angeline--on her insights as a student leader, on her potential as a budding Student Affairs professional, and on her fierce independence to make it on her own as a woman in this world--but Angeline had to come to the realization of her true value and worth on her own.

To hear Angeline utter the words she had scribbled in her journal, "You are worth it," was truly a moving moment for me. To witness a student move from a place of shambles, contemplating how they may end their life, to a place of knowing their own worth in this world, is ultimately one of the most impactful moments of my entire professional experience. It is this sense of hope, and worth, and purpose, and usefulness that I hope every student one day achieves. To aim to come to a place of peace and serenity is the very least I hope for, and more than I could have ever dreamed for Angeline.

Purpose and Research Questions

My experience with Angeline, and students like her, lays the groundwork for this research. The purpose of this study is to understand how college women use spirituality to work through moments of shipwreck, and how these moments of shipwreck catalyze self-discovery, personal growth, and transformation for college women's spirituality. I am also interested in how college women describe their experience working alongside a higher education professional who acted as a support to the student during and/or following a shipwreck moment. Consequently, participants will offer insight into the practices higher education professionals can implement to support the spiritual development of college women, especially amid a shipwreck moment.

In order to accomplish the goals of this study, the following research questions will guide my inquiry:

1. During moments of shipwreck for college women, what role does spirituality play and how do these moments serve as a catalyst for self-discovery, personal growth, and transformation?

2. During or following a shipwreck, how do college women describe their experience in seeking support from a higher education professional and/or what practices do they describe as supporting their spiritual development during that time?

This study will be qualitative in nature utilizing semi-structured interviews to gather stories to for sharing and meaning making. Specifically, the study will use feminist narrative inquiry as the methodology, with feminist standpoint theory and feminist spirituality employed as the theoretical framework. The narrative nature of the study will allow for women to tell their stories wholly and truthfully, reflecting on their experiences, while simultaneously allowing me, as the researcher, to tell and reflect on my own stories of spirituality and shipwreck. This research will begin from the standpoint of women, value the knowledge of women that is shared, and aim to look critically at the experiences, values, and interests that h shave given shape to the stories shared. The feminist narrative nature of this research will also allow me to personally reflect on my own story, sources of knowledge, and meaning made throughout my experiences as a woman in a patriarchal world.

The implications for this research are particularly important for those professionals working in institutions of higher education, specifically within the field of Student Affairs. Student affairs professionals serve in a front-line capacity with students, often having the privilege to learn about students and their stories in a unique way. This position of intimate knowledge often means that Student Affairs professionals encounter students in shipwreck or are sought out by students during a time of shipwreck. This research can offer a deeper insight into the role spirituality plays in college women overcoming shipwreck, thereby offering higher education professionals an arsenal of spirituality-centered tools to suggest when encountering a student in shipwreck. While prior research shows that spirituality is an important aspect of

college student development, it does not explicitly look at the role spirituality can play to help

students work through challenges in their lives. This study will also aim to offer implications into

the development of specific actions, policies, and best practices that Student Affairs

professionals can adopt to better aid students in a time of need. Perhaps, through this research,

Student Affairs professionals can begin to tangibly grapple with what it means to help students

learn to be more resilient.

Chapter 2: Review and Analysis of Spirituality, Shipwreck, and Feminism

In this chapter, I will aim to define spirituality, a term that is not universally defined in the literature. I will begin by exploring the topic generally, then as distinct from religion and specifically patriarchal religion. I will then investigate the term regarding its meaning through a lens of feminism and finally through the lens of higher education. I will then seek to define shipwreck or spiritual struggle, specifically through the lens of higher education. Considering my goal of this research was to work with college women in their development and understanding of spirituality as it relates to shipwreck, I will continue with an exploration of the relevant studies examining the experiences of college students and women in terms of spirituality. I will then move into identifying the particular theoretical foundations relevant to the study: feminism, feminist standpoint theory, and feminist spirituality. I believe that the most important reason for using this particular framework is the fact that this framework will allow for women's voices to be heard and valued. Through this framework, women will be asked to tell their stories, from their center, from their perspective. It is of the utmost importance that women hear and tell their own stories. This is especially important in working with college women; if stories are significant in healing, understanding self, and in values clarification, then a focus on college women's stories of spiritual experiences is of the utmost importance when considering what is needed and how to help college women navigate their own shipwreck and spiritual journeys.

Defining Spirituality

Defining spirituality is difficult. Love and Talbot (2009) point out that "there is no commonly accepted definition of spirituality" (p. 616), but there is much research in the way of making meaning of the word. Spirituality encompasses a sense of meaning-making (Bugenhagen, 2009; Tisdell, 2003) along with a search for understanding one's identities

(Kiessling, 2011); those practicing spirituality seek meaning in their own lives along with discovering more about themselves as individuals made up of varying identities. Spirituality is often seen as a yearning for connection with something bigger than ourselves (Palmer et al., 2010), an ability to transcend. Spirituality is connected to our sense of community (Love, 2001; Love & Talbot, 2009), "[serving] to strengthen our sense of connectedness…" (Kiessling, 2011, p. 38). Including a sense of connection in the definition of spirituality is important for me; I find that connection to self, others, and elements of the larger universe help to ground individuals in knowing that any problem they face is only one small portion of a much larger puzzle. Those who are spiritual are also often defined as living their lives with a sense of authenticity (Seifert & Holman-Harmon, 2009; Tisdell, 2003). Authenticity matters as we must be true to ourselves in our inward reflection and outward representation if we aim for practicing spirituality. This task of the defining of spirituality is important in the work of my research, as a common grounding in the term must be reached and not assumed. It is important to separate spirituality from religion, especially patriarchal religion, as spirituality has an innate inclusive approach, opposing the sexist domination of patriarchal religion. This research in making meaning of the word is limited when speaking of making meaning of the word for women in particular; thus, the defining done above must also be coupled with the lens of feminism for this particular research project. Also critical to my study is the definition of spirituality in the context of higher education. The lenses of spirituality as different than religion, considered from a feminist perspective, and in the context of higher education are all described below.

Spirituality is Different from Religion

Many novices, and scholars alike, equate the terms *spirituality* and *religion* as synonymous. Often, there is no distinction between one's spirituality and one's religion, allowing

for seamless interchanging of the terms with one another (Gilley, 2005; Kiessling, 2011; Nash, 2001; Nash & Swaby, 2011). This confusion need not exist, as many scholars have worked to clearly define both terms; as far as the difference between *religion* and *spirituality*, it is vital to make a distinction. Marilyn Bugenhagen (2009) went so far as to state, "…One *needs* to separate an understanding of spirituality *from* religion" (p. 71), as spirituality and religion are not the same (Seifert & Holman-Harmon, 2009; Tisdell, 2003). Patrick Love (2001) makes the distinction clear in asserting that religion can be thought of as a "shared system of beliefs, principles, or doctrines related to a belief in and worship of a supernatural power or powers regarded as creator(s) and governor(s) of the universe" (p. 8). Religion, then, is one's outward conduct and practice of doctrine. Whereas, Parks (2000) asserts that spirituality can be seen as "a search for meaning, transcendence, wholeness, purpose, and 'apprehension of spirit (or Spirit) as the animating essence at the core of life', a search more personal than public" (p. 16).

Specifically speaking of defining religion, it is a term often implicated with meanings made through cultural, social, economic, and legal realms, and is generally focused on the conduct required of an individual by a supernatural being (Murphy, 2007, p. 35); "religions are specific to particular faiths and ways of believing, whereas spirituality is generic and transcends religion" (Houston, 2008, p. 7). Religion follows a regimented set of tenets (Speck, 2007), whereas spirituality is flexible, allowing individuals to pursue personal quests of understanding, with none rising superior to another. While "spirituality may be a component of many of the world's religions" (Murphy, 2007, p. 35), it can also stand-alone outside the doctrine of a specific religion. In defining religion and spirituality, both have elements of transcendent knowledge and an understanding through non-rational means; the difference then is that religion is validated through a relationship with a supernatural being, and spirituality is validated through

more subjective means (Murphy, 2007, p. 38). Yates (1997, as cited in Dennis, 2007) explains the difference in the two terms as follows: "Spirituality is a journey of the heart, whereas religion is a journey of an established, institutionally patterned system of dogma and beliefs" (p. 70). Those who view spirituality as *only* related to religious doctrine and dogmatic practice often fail to allow other forms of meaning-making and search for wholeness to be considered.

Patriarchal Religion

It is also imperative to make the distinction between spirituality and religion as sexism runs rampant in male-dominated religions. We know that "patriarchal religions and patriarchal paradigms for religions have ruled the world's civilizations for at least 3,500 years" (Fox, 2000 as cited in hooks, 2015, p. 107), yet female-centered myths and the divine feminine have existed for much longer (Plaskow & Christ, 1989). Eller (1993) points out that "…women's oppression in patriarchal religion [occurs] along many axes--theological, biblical, institutional, etc.… [it is an] entire interlocking system of oppressions" (p. 87). When considering the dominance of patriarchal religion in the world, I would argue that the following binaries exist to uphold the power in patriarchal religion: male/female, masculine/feminine, public/private, religion/spirituality. Spirituality is seen as feminine and more private than public, thereby falling subordinate to the power structures which uphold patriarchal religions as mainstream. Patriarchal religion is "inseparably bound up with restrictive social institutions" (Eller, 1993, p. 78), whereas a spirituality infused with feminism makes room for alternate ways of knowing, thinking, and doing spiritual practice. I agree with hooks (2015) who posits that a spirituality infused with feminism "has helped transform patriarchal religious thought so that more women can find a connection to the sacred and commit to spiritual life" (p. 108). The consequences of these traditions and interlocking systems of patriarchal religion are the continual subjugation and

oppression of women and non-dominant ways of thinking. When women, the private lives of women, the divine feminine, and female-centered spiritualities are not valued on the same plane as the tenets of patriarchal religion, then half of the world's population is undervalued and potentially made to feel unworthy, less than, and not whole.

Spirituality and Feminism

When speaking generally about spirituality, the associated literature does not necessarily name the framework upon which the definition or researcher is grounded. The literature does not necessarily consider "looking beyond our either/or conceptualization of what counts as knowledge and what knowledge is legitimated within the discourse" (Hafner & Capper, 2005, p. 630), rather it assumes the defining and quantifying spirituality from an objective point of view. I would suggest that in not naming the framework and claiming neutrality or an objective stance, that the associated literature is thus aligning with the dominant paradigm. In this case, the dominant, yet unspoken, paradigm is the narrative of patriarchy and Christianity. Some work has been done to begin to define the underlying assumptions when talking about spirituality. For starters, Haftner and Capper (2005) discuss the assumptions apparent in talking about spirituality with a lens of leadership, feminism, and social justice. This view of spirituality is informed by the work of Cynthia B. Dillard in coining an "endarkened feminist epistemology," an epistemological perspective that considers data in the context of Black feminist thought, rather than from the hegemonic perspective traditionally used (Dillard, 2000). Spirituality from this epistemological perspective then is a spirituality in which "a split between mind and soul is not required" (Hafner & Capper, 2005, p. 632). This feminist approach to spirituality coincides with my belief that our spiritual well-being is a part of what makes us whole as persons; therefore, a

person's well-being cannot be considered without also considering their spiritual life and development.

For many feminists, the idea of exploring one's spirituality is not a new concept. For many, a feminist approach to life and situations was already bound up in a deeper look at self and values, both common elements in spirituality. Eller (1993) confirmed this approach: ". . . feminism precipitated such deep and comprehensive changes in consciousness that it already functioned as spirituality" (p. 81). Therefore, for many scholars who consider their work to be of a feminist lens, spirituality and feminism go hand-in-hand. This phenomenon is described by hooks (2015) when she makes the following claim: "A feminist vision of spiritual fulfillment is naturally the foundation of authentic spiritual life" (p. 109). An authentic pursuit of spirituality from a feminist perspective allows for the seeking of community with those who seek justice for women and their experiences in the world, allowing women to be more wholly and truly themselves. While spirituality and religion are still often considered to be synonymous with one another, and while much debate still exists regarding a generally recognized definition of the term spirituality across disciplines feminist scholars championing feminist spirituality do make the distinction clear: "Spiritual feminists steer clear of the term 'religion' because for them it is inseparably bound up with restrictive social institutions and the demand to swallow dogma whole" (Eller, 1993, p. 78). Feminist spirituality challenges male-dominated religious views, insisting that "men's experiences are [not] the standard by which to judge all human behaviour" (Ross, 2012, p. 31). Feminist spirituality then is, spirituality expressed uniquely by each individual, is separate from patriarchal religion, and is defined from the perspective of women, not men.

Spirituality and Higher Education

It is commonplace in the context of higher education for spirituality not to be considered; the concept is not seen as important or as a valuable part of education. Higher education has an adverse relationship with spirituality (Shahjahan, 2009), resulting in many university employees not addressing the topic at all. Smith (2001) goes one step further in stating, "The modern university is not agnostic toward religion; it is actively hostile to it" (p. 96). Our inner lives, our exploration of our values and morals, and in turn, our spiritual beliefs have been taken out of education (Bugenhagen, 2009), especially out of higher education. The exclusion of spirituality in higher education has broad impacts, as spirituality is an important element in overall wellness and should be considered when talking about the holistic development of students. Much research recognizes that although students come in expecting the university to aid them in their spiritual development, colleges and universities have neglected the inner-development of their students (Astin et al., 2011; Gilley, 2005; Lindholm, 2007). This exclusion of spirituality from the college experience is largely due to universities' unjustified fear of violating the constitutional guideline of separation of church and state (Dalton, 2006; Kiessling, 2011; Lowery, 2005). While institutions are obligated to respect students' exercising of religious beliefs and simultaneously obligated to not favor a particular religion (Lowery, 2005), behavior in recent years demonstrates that colleges and universities have simply chosen to ignore religion and spirituality altogether. Failure to develop students' spiritual practice and encouragement of exploration of their inner being, is a failure to support college students in their needs and desires. This exclusion of spirituality from the context of higher education is a compelling oversight on part of institutions that leads to further exclusion of spirituality from more specific areas within colleges and universities.

When speaking of spirituality in the way that it relates to college students, there is a need to focus on the attainment and clarity in one's values and beliefs, although today's higher education setting mostly neglects students' development in this area (Burgenhagen, 2009). Astin et al. (2011) note that "spirituality is fundamental to students' lives" (p. 1). Those long pondered questions of meaning centered around one's values, purpose in life, the reason for being in college, and one's ultimate goal of contributing to the world are all questions of spirituality. A focus on spiritual development in college students is also important if we intend for students to increase their levels of equanimity (Astin et al., 2011), or ability to see a silver lining, survive "shipwreck" moments (Cady, 2007), and generally find meaning in life. Inclusion of spirituality in the higher education setting allows the opportunity for students to be more fully supported as they grow, develop their own identities, and faced difficult situations; inclusion of spirituality as a focus for college students will only serve to strengthen their ability to appropriately handle all that life will have in store.

While the literature states that there is an adverse relationship between higher education and spirituality, it is important to know what is implied when using the term spirituality. Defining spirituality, especially in the context of higher education, is difficult. Some understand spirituality as a connection to emotions, as a connection to self, others, nature, and purpose, while others include inventories of hopes, dreams, goals, and values (Dennis, 2007, p. 70-71). Parker Palmer (2003), an author and educator, defines spirituality as "the eternal human yearning to be connected with something larger than one's own ego" (p. 377), taking the focus off self as wholly important; an authentic sense of spirituality allows one to find meaning in one's life, it is an "expression of…the burning desire of the creature to count, to make a difference on the planet because he has lived" (Becker, 1975, as cited in Dennis, 2007). Arthur Chickering (2004), an

educational researcher who was focused on holistic student development, believed that

spirituality in higher education requires a focus on not only students, but also on the souls of

professionals; without spiritually centered professionals leading them, students will not have

what they need for spiritual and life success:

> I believe reclaiming our professional souls is essential if we are to address successfully
>
> the daunting social problems we face. And it is essential if we are to achieve the
>
> transformation of higher education required if our colleges and universities are to
>
> generate graduates who can function at the levels of cognitive and affective complexity to
>
> do so. (p. 11).

Much of the research in the field of higher education points to defining the term spirituality in

the way that Astin et al. (2011) do: "[It] points to our inner, subjective life…and our sense of

connectedness to one another and to the world around us" (p. 4). Spirituality in the context of

higher education, then, is focused on the students' sense of discovering their authentic selves,

who they want to be, and a close examination of the values they claim as their own. Spirituality

in the context of higher education is individual to each person, subjective, related to how

students are connected to others and the world, and is developed through each experience of

meaning-making that a student has in college.

Shipwreck

An important piece of the work of this study is related to exploring shipwreck moments

that college women experience. Before we can explore shipwreck, the term must be clearly

defined. Shipwreck is often referred to as adversity, spiritual struggle, or a 'splintered life' in the

literature (Bryant & Astin, 2008; Hindman, 2002; Morgan Consoli et al., 2018; Pargament et al.,

2005; Wortmann et al., 2012). What we know is that shipwreck "is a fairly common occurrence

in the wake of stressful life events and that it can have a powerful negative impact on concurrent psychological well-being for people from all walks of life" (Wortmann et al., 2012, p. 314). Shipwreck can be caused by many factors: significant loss, moving away from home, changes in a relationship, and bereavement and can also include "…guilt, doubt, feelings of anger, and negative attributions to God" (Wortmann et al., 2012, p. 317). Spiritual struggle is also the result of extreme life stressors, insecure religious affiliation, instances that push people beyond their moral limits, and instances in which there is a lack of social or familial support; essentially, spiritual struggle can be the result of people facing experiences that push them to think, act, and relate to the world in a new way (Pargament et al., 2005). To be clear, spiritual struggle should not be seen as synonymous with secular psychological concerns, as it is "a distinctive form of tension and conflict that holds powerful spiritual meaning as well as significant implications for human functioning" (Pargament et al., 2005, p. 263). Shipwreck can be overcome with a focus on spiritual elements, in fact, spirituality may be a prerequisite; research shows that a reliance on spirituality and meaning making may be critical for some populations in coping with a shipwreck moment (Morgan Consoli et al., 2018). It can also be seen as a resource that "helps orient and sustain people through major life crises and transitions" (Pargament et al., 2005, p. 247), ultimately leading to "spiritual reconciliation and growth" (Pargament et al., 2005, p. 253). No matter what we call it, spiritual struggle, adversity, or 'splintered lives,' shipwreck is a significant opportunity for growth, reflection, and maturity for an individual.

Shipwreck in Higher Education

Specific to higher education, college is a time of great change for many students, in other words, "an experience of liminality" (Hindman, 2002, p. 166), a time of learning, challenge, risk, and great growth. Often, this liminal time for college students can result in shipwreck and long-

term impact for students. The literature states that "experiencing significant losses and struggling spiritually can have lingering impacts on multiple dimensions of students' well-being" (Wortmann et al., 2012, p. 317) and their physical, emotional, and spiritual health (Bryant & Astin, 2008). For college students, this spiritual struggle may be a result of reflection on life and its purpose, as well as on seeking to understand the prevalence of death and suffering (Bryant & Astin, 2008). In one study based on the larger 'Spirituality in Higher Education Project,' the college student's spiritual struggle is defined through a five-item scale dealing with "questioning one's religious/spiritual beliefs; feeling unsettled about spiritual and religious matters; struggling to understand evil, suffering, and death; feeling angry at God; and feeling disillusioned with one's religious upbringing" (Bryant & Astin, 2008, p. 2). Related specifically to women, one study found that women are more likely than men to struggle spiritually (Bryant & Astin, 2008).

Overall, it is suggested in the literature that "spiritual struggles are a double-edged sword" (Pargament et al., 2005, p.257), sometimes resulting in negative impacts, while other times resulting in connectedness and maturity. While shipwreck may present its own set of struggles for college students, shipwreck can also lead to wholeness. For wholeness to be achieved from a 'splintered life,' students "must be able to see themselves as having a place in a larger story which gives meaning and shape to life" (Hindman, 2002, p. 172). Shipwreck can have positive effects like stress-related growth and maturation; however, more research is needed to know if and when positive or negative outcomes will result from a shipwreck moment (Wortmann et al., 2012). Spiritual struggle is also seen as playing a significant role in students being tolerant of those who are different from themselves (Bryant & Astin, 2012). While spiritual struggle may result in some positive outcomes for students, what is clear from the literature is that spiritual struggle is also "negatively associated with psychological health"

(Bryant & Astin, 2008, p. 4) and can result in a host of outcomes to include anxiety and depression. Although shipwreck in college is a topic that has been researched to some extent, the literature states that more research needs to be done in the way in which we understand the "complex and specific dynamics of spiritual struggle in non-clinical, representative samples" (Bryant & Astin, 2008, p. 6), especially related to specific demographics and the events that lead to and follow a shipwreck moment (Bryant & Astin, 2008; Morgan Consoli et al., 2018). This gap in the literature around the events that lead to and follow a shipwreck experience is further evidence supporting the need for this study to be done.

<div align="center">

College Women and Spirituality

</div>

Having just defined spirituality through various lenses, including that of feminism and higher education specifically, it is now time to consider literature related to the intersection of college students, and college women, and spirituality. In the following section, I will consider the landmark study conducted by Astin et al. (2011) related to college students' spirituality. I will then speak of the literature found specifically related to college women and spirituality. While these studies offer some insight into the topic at hand, it is important to note that these studies do not distinguish spirituality from religion.

Relevant Studies on College Students

One particular study of great importance to the recent dialogue around how college can serve to cultivate the spirit of students is that of Astin et al. (2011); the authors provide key findings that help to frame the work of higher education institutions. This particular study evaluated the religious lives of college students using a set of measures for religious lives separate from their measures of spirituality. Ultimately, this study showed that although spirituality and religion are often seen as the same, students' spirituality experiences demonstrate

positive growth in college, but religion does not. This one-of-a-kind study is of significant importance, as it is the only large-scale study that explicitly separates religion and spirituality and evaluates both terms as they relate to the college student population. Specific findings of the study are a starting point for further dialogue around the spiritual development of college students. The study found that equanimity increases significantly during college, especially for those students who engaged in meditation, prayer, and self-reflection. This growth in equanimity is seen as vital for college students as it is a key factor in determining how students will react to stressful experiences and challenges they face. The study also found that students' measures of ethic of caring and ecumenical worldview both increased during the college years, while, surprisingly, charitable involvement decreased. As is true in many of the measures of spirituality in the study, the researchers suggest that the greatest growth in these measures of spirituality in practice takes place in students who participate in meditation, contemplation, and self-reflection (Astin et al., 2011).

In this study, Astin et al. (2011) highlight the importance of opportunities such as interdisciplinary studies, service learning, student organizations, and study abroad as important in aiding in the spiritual development of students. In addition, the authors discuss the importance of faculty members in the spiritual development of students within the classroom; when faculty members invite students to explore questions of meaning and purpose or spiritual matters, students feel a deeper sense of authenticity and a stronger connection to the institution. The study also suggests providing students with opportunities to experience multiple perspectives and diverse people and cultures, for we know that if students increase their interactions with diverse sets of peers and experiences, they will more likely develop a desire and yearning to reflect and develop a spiritual identity (Astin et al., 2011). Lastly, the study confirms that spiritual

development is enhanced by practices that encourage self-reflection, meditation, and contemplation. These practices encourage students to explore their inner lives and help them find a balance between the exterior and interior aspects of their lives. Although there is a clear positive correlation between contemplative practices and spiritual development, the authors share insight into the struggle of infusing these practices into higher education and the discomfort that faculty feel with using the term spirituality. Ultimately, the study identifies universities and colleges as an integral source for providing opportunities to explore spiritual development among students, even though that is not the current common practice in higher education (Astin et al., 2011).

Spiritual Development of College Women

While the Astin et al. (2011) study is of significant importance when considering the spiritual development of college students and what practices in higher education may lend themselves to developing spirituality, it does not consider the spiritual development of college women specifically. The Astin et al. (2011) study is the only study of its kind, leaving much to be desired in the way of making meaning of and understanding the spiritual experiences of college women. While limited studies have been conducted in the way of women and spirituality, this particular body of research is not from a feminist approach or an approach that gets at women defining what spirituality, as separate from religion, means to them.

The literature is limited in terms of studies related to college women, spirituality, and spiritual practices. Of the studies found, the research conducted was centered specifically around African American women (Patton & McClure, 2009), around participants who were not from the United States (Zhang, 2013), related to body image (Cottingham et al., 2014; Zhang, 2013), and were related to support of spiritual practices through counseling services (Soet & Martin, 2007,

p. 95). While each of these studies differed in their primary population of focus, there were some commonalities in the research. For example, the Zhang (2011) and Cottingham et al. (2014) studies highlight the importance of integrating "spiritual and cognitive development" (Zhang, 2014, p. 1251) for college students. More work can be done in the realm of considering how spirituality relates to the overall development and learning college students, especially college women, face while enrolled in institutions of higher education.

Each of the four studies related to spirituality and college women referenced above also asserted the fact that intentional inclusion of spirituality on college campuses "may serve a need not being currently addressed" (Soet & Martin, 2007, p.95). This need is made more apparent in the fact that none of the studies made the same demarcations in spirituality as different and not necessarily related to religion as I have proposed, nor did any of the studies address the specific issues that I will focus on in this research. In the conclusion of the Patton and McClure (2009) study, the authors make the point that more work is needed in the way of helping students to grasp a complete understanding of spirituality and the many elements that comprise it, both personally and socially. The authors went further to claim that a study such as the one I am proposing is needed: students need ". . . an opportunity to learn different ways that spirituality is practiced, [to be allowed] to speak about how they view spirituality, [and] provide an opportunity for deep personal reflection on spirituality and as members of a larger campus community" (Patton & McClure, 2009, p. 51). The lack of literature related to the spiritual experiences, especially their role in shipwreck of college women is frustrating, yet enlightening.

If the research has not been done, specifically as it relates to what college women view as spirituality for themselves, then it is ever more crucial for the stories and spiritual experiences of women to be considered. Through the telling of stories of triumph over shipwreck to include the

role of spirituality in the process, light can begin to be shed on a vital component of the experience of women in college. Based on my interactions with college women, I would argue that this population needs and is seeking guidance in defining spirituality and finding spiritual elements to help them handle the ups and downs of life and the college experience.

Theoretical Framework

For this study, I chose to use feminist concepts and understandings to frame my research and analyze the stories shared. A framework based on feminism puts women at the center of the research, validating their experiences in the world, thereby resisting the normalization of a male-centered society. Generally speaking, feminism is a theory grounded in resisting normalization, in giving voice to the voiceless, and in the sharing of women's stories from the perspective of women themselves. As bell hooks (2015) defines it, feminism "is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (p. xii); it is not "women seeking to be equal to men" and is not "anti-male" (p. 1). Rather, feminism seeks to overcome the oppression of women, seeking a just and equitable experience for and representation of women in all instances. Feminist theory was born during the time of second wave feminism, when women were advocating for rights and representation. It was during this time that women in research "became increasingly aware of glaring contradictions between their lived experiences as women and mainstream research models, studies, and findings" (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 5). Women's experiences were not reflected in the theories and research they were being taught; therefore, women sought to advocate for a research practice that would right these omissions. This initial analysis of research was an active critique against positivism and its "claim to universal knowledge" (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 7). Feminist theory aims to expose positivist research as coming from a

"privileged location within a historical, material, and social set of patriarchal power relations" (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 7) in which the experiences of women do not matter.

Although "gender categories are in a very important sense arbitrary social constructs" (Arnot, 2013, p. 33), our world has been structured through androcentric assumptions, making it even more important to bring women to the forefront of research practice. Feminist theory claims that knowledge is political and therefore posits that women must be intentionally included in research rather than made to fit as is the tendency in traditional research practices: "…they distort the female according to the male image of her; and they deny the feminine by forcing women into a masculine mold" (Martin, 2013, p. 41). Feminist theory also asserts the claim that positivist research is not value-neutral, resisting the idea that researchers and research instruments are neutral and objective (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007). This resistance also includes interrogating the dominant binary as objective knowledge, aiming to give voice to those in the margins. Feminist theory does not have to be about gender per se, rather how research practices can push and react against how society views and approaches what is considered to be normal. Feminist theory, then, offers a way to resist normalization, a way to work against binary thought, and a way to challenge universalism and difference.

Feminist Standpoint Theory

An important distinction related to feminist theory "emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as a feminist critical theory about relations between the production of knowledge and practices of power" (Harding, 2004a, p. 1). This particular branch of feminist research focused on "[seeing] and [understanding] the world through the eyes and experiences of oppressed women" (Brooks, 2007, p. 55) and then applying this new knowledge for social change; this research agenda was coined feminist standpoint theory by Sandra Harding (2004a). If positivism is the study of nature

versus culture, then this demarcation in feminist theory insists that culture can still be studied, but not from a disembodied view. Feminist standpoint theory brings the idea that we all enter research with preconceived notions; therefore, the observer is never really outside. Considering this, feminist standpoint theory "carries a liberatory potential" (Hartsock, 2004, p. 40), as it "…seeks to bring together subjective and objective ways of knowing the world" (Rose, 2004, p. 76), especially as it relates to the experiences of women. Brooks (2007) drives this point home in stating:

> Feminist standpoint epistemology requires us to place women at the center of the research process: Women's concrete experiences provide the starting point from which to build knowledge…feminist standpoint scholars emphasize the need to begin with women's lives, as they themselves experience them, in order to achieve an accurate and authentic understanding of what life is like for women today. (p. 56)

This focus on women as the center of research allows for an understanding of society through the lens of women. Before feminist research, and outside feminist research, women have been subject to oppressive ways of research, often misrepresented in objective research conducted by men, for men. Therefore, for research to start from women claims that a standpoint is something that is earned: "A standpoint [is not] an ascribed position with its different perspective that oppressed groups can claim automatically. Rather, a standpoint is an achievement, something for which oppressed groups must struggle, something that requires both science and politics" (Harding, 2004a, p. 8). A standpoint is made when the research "[reveals] the ideological strategies used to design and justify the sex-gender system and its intersections with other systems of oppression" (Harding, 2004a, p. 6). Considering this, a standpoint is radical in its illumination of the oppressive systems in play in traditional research. Another

feature of a standpoint is that a standpoint is reflexive. The reflexivity of a standpoint is important as it preserves the "presence, concerns, and experience of the sociologist as knower and discover" (Smith, 2004, p. 29). A standpoint affirms that the researcher can be objective while also being the object of knowledge. Research that puts women at the center, thereby creating a standpoint, is a political move by researchers, an intentional move and one that allows women to rise above.

Key Tenets

Specifically, feminist standpoint theory offers three key concepts to examine the role of theory in framing the research process: knowledge, starting point, and strong objectivity. Each concept is discussed below.

Knowledge. First, it is important to understand that knowledge is socially situated, as "claims of any sort only have meaning in some particular cultural context" (Harding, 2004a, p. 11). When making any claim, feminist standpoint theorists always assert that knowledge is not universal and understood the same by all; rather, direct experience by individuals is the base of knowledge (Harding, 2004a). It is from this experience within that knowledge is acquired. Those who are outside the socially constructed place can never gain the knowledge of those from within. For example, although men may conduct research related to spirituality, men will never truly understand spirituality from the perspective and standpoint of a woman. It is this need to focus on knowledge as "[starting] from lives that are socially determined" (Harding, 2004b, p. 128), that begets a standpoint. Knowledge must be gathered and evaluated, considering the lived experiences of those individuals reporting and asserting such knowledge.

Starting Point. Another key tenet of feminist standpoint theory is related to the starting point of research. It is of monumental significance to state exactly where the research begins, for

"men and women do not inhabit two empirically separated worlds, but pass through the same institutions in different relations and on different trajectories" (Arnot, 2003, p. 35). Harding (2004a) argues that "thought and research [should start] from women's experiences, lives, and activities (or labor) and from the emerging feminist discourses" (p. 6). While there is not a specific group of women or specific women's lives that women claim as the best starting point for research, feminist standpoint theory argues to just use women as the starting point: "There is no single, ideal woman's life from which standpoint theories recommend that thought start. Instead, one must turn to all of the lives that are marginalized in different ways by the operative systems of social stratification" (Harding, 2004b, p. 131). By using women's experiences as the starting point, feminist standpoint theory is starting from marginalized lives, lives that are "multiple, heterogeneous, and contradictory or incoherent" (Harding, 2004b, p. 134), resisting the power in patriarchal dominated binaries. Considering women as a starting point for research is revolutionary in the sense that it disrupts the research paradigm of positivism. It is through this evolution of research in which starting with women is valued, that has allowed for the voices of women in society to be more fully considered as a starting point, resisting the implicit bias of men always as the starting point of knowledge gathering.

Strong Objectivity. In positivist research, the researcher aims to be objective, aligning with a patriarchal method of objectification of objects of knowledge through a value-neutral stance. Feminist standpoint theory believes that this "conventional notion of objectivity has been too narrow, or too weak, to achieve its goals" (Harding, 2012, p. 56). Instead, feminist standpoint theory calls for "strong objectivity." Strong objectivity refers to research in which the researcher commits to "certain social values" (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 8), a set of social values that reacts against "…the androcentric assumptions of the conceptual schemes…" of positivist

research (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 200, p. 9). Feminist standpoint theory argues for research from an embodied perspective in which a standpoint is claimed and made clear, as opposed to trying to remain neutral and value-free. We must not forget that "the full reality of 'women's experience' is contained not in any one voice but in the rising chorus that speaks from many standpoints, pressing toward the creation of a society in which all can be heard" (Plaskow & Christ, 1989, p. 4). A strong objectivity requires a critical look at who and what has shaped the values, interests, and research agendas in society, paying careful attention to the power of the dominant binary in traditional research. Thus, a strong objectivity in feminist standpoint research requires the researcher to reject value-free knowledge and objectivism for objectivity's sake. Instead, the researcher must focus on how the particular lenses they wear impact their objectivity and influence the knowledge produced, as well as the social constructs that others in society may place on them. A strong objectivity requires the researcher to claim their standpoint, owning how their lived experiences may impact the research.

Critique of Feminist Standpoint Theory

When using feminist standpoint theory, starting from the place of women, it is important to know the elements of controversy that surround this particular theory. To begin, we must not overlook the fact that any feminist theory is a political statement, a set of theories that are often misunderstood, judged, and rejected from the onset for being too liberal, too angry, and unnecessary. When speaking specifically about feminist standpoint theory, the theory has its origins in Marxist roots and therefore, is often opposed by those that oppose or discredit Marxist theory (Harding, 2004a). Feminist standpoint theory is also criticized for "assuming an 'essence'" (Harding, 2012, p. 58) of women, thereby failing to take into account "important differences in the conditions of women (and of men) in different ethnicities, races, classes, and

other social and cultural contexts" (Harding, 2012, p. 58). However, I would argue that through the intentional sharing of women's stories using a narrative approach, my research will consider the differences in the participants of this study; in fact, these differences are what make the stories of spirituality, shipwreck, and resurfacing so unique. The biggest critique of feminist standpoint theory from those who do not truly understand the theory is that by allowing standpoints to exist, then the theory supports relativism. Opponents of feminist standpoint theory view the theory as a way to totalize knowledge, situating the world from the context of women. This particular conceptualization of feminist standpoint theory then posits that the theory is an attempt to totalize knowledge from the perspective of women, rather than from a value-neutral perspective, thus claiming that the theory seeks objectivity in the same way it claims to reject said objectivity. While I understand the critique of the objective nature of feminist standpoint theory, I would argue that if women, in their oppressed nature, have never been the dominant or centered population in research, never assumed as the value-neutral perspective, then this fear of totalizing knowledge from the perspective of women is short-sided; perhaps that critique is written from the perspective of those who support the dominant belief that male knowledge should be totalized. Feminist standpoint theory is an appropriate theory to use for educational inquiry, yet the critiques of the theory must be considered for the research to be done with integrity. Even considering the critiques, I feel confident in the use of feminist standpoint theory in this research.

Feminist Spirituality

It is this lens of feminist standpoint theory, together with the history and evolution of feminism, that eventually led to the conceptualization of feminist spirituality.

Although not always articulated in such words, "feminism has been and continues to be a resistance movement which valorizes spiritual practice" (hooks, 2015, p. 105). Long before feminism was established as a research paradigm, women found strength and purpose through spirituality (Christ, 1995; Eller, 1993; Plaskow & Christ, 1989). As feminism gained ground, the movement began to critique religion as patriarchal, thereby causing a re-visioning of what was meant by spirituality. Those in the West began to look towards the East for answers, exploring various other spiritual traditions. Spirituality, for feminists, began to be viewed from a lens of creation spirituality and for others returned to a goddess-centered spirituality (hooks, 2015). This take on religion and spirituality in the feminist movement sparked a large debate, as many feminist theorists argued that feminism should "stick to politics and take no stand on religion" (hooks, 2015, p. 106).

This variance within feminism was short-lived as "more women began to see the link between challenging patriarchal religion and liberatory spirituality" (hooks, 2015, p. 106). A shift has occurred in which "feminist activists now acknowledge fully the necessity of attending to the needs of the spirit--of spiritual life" (hooks, 2015, p. 108). hooks (2015) makes the bold claim that "there can be no feminist transformation of our culture without a transformation in our religious beliefs" (p. 106); Eller (1993) confirms this claim. Therefore, a feminist spirituality and understanding of religion will act as a precursor to any actual social change allowing for a more just and equitable world for all. I would argue that a feminist spirituality is embodied by "living a life in the spirit, living faith, [meaning] that I must be ever vigilant, critically interrogating my actions, my words" (hooks, 1993); we must act as individuals if we are to ever affect change as a whole.

Feminist Spirituality as a Framework

Researchers using a theoretical framework of feminist spirituality seek to define spirituality in a way that is inclusive of goddess centered beliefs and femininity, as well as resisting the tendency to operate in the dualism of binaries. Feminist spirituality is grounded in consciousness raising and is a natural outcome of women as they begin to ask questions about their role in this world (Eller, 1993; hooks, 2015). This questioning as part of the spiritual process is paramount to feminist spirituality; it is through this questioning and critical assessment that women often find connection with one another, find sisterhood. This consciousness-raising also allows for a deeper dive into one's inner journey, another key element in feminist spirituality (Eller, 1993). Other key elements in a feminist spirituality are a "deep sense of connection to nature," "the affirmation of the female body," "social activism," "and women's personal growth" (Yakushko, 2011, p. 195). Each of the tenets listed above should be considered when speaking of a feminist spirituality. It is this focus on self and connection to other women that begins to differentiate a feminist spirituality from a patriarchal view of spirituality as tied to religion.

Critique of Feminist Spirituality

When considering the critique of feminist spirituality as a framework for educational inquiry, there are many points to consider. To begin, as noted above, there is general confusion and lack of understanding of the term spirituality. This term is not clearly defined in the literature; thus, the general understanding of the term is often based on societal norms and related to religion. This lack of understanding of how spirituality is different than religion can create a polarizing stance in the field of educational inquiry. Those in education are taught of the separation of church and state, and without clearly defining spirituality, the term could be seen as

a conflict to be included in educational inquiry. The other side of that same coin in separating spirituality from religion draws another issue: "There are crossroads where paths meet and diverge…[thus] religion and spirituality are united in essence even if deemed distinct or different" (Murphy, 2007, p. 48). While the two terms are distinct, overlap exists. This need for a distinction in the terms, yet natural overlap, has the potential to be confusing for the layperson, thereby causing an abandonment or disinterest in using the theory. The preceding literature review aims to make this distinction, minimize the confusion, and allow for overlap as it is necessary.

Perhaps one of the most salient critiques of using feminist spirituality as a theory for exploring educational inquiry is the fact that spirituality does not fit into the current positivist, scientific, quantitative, and evaluative approach to education. The argument has been made that spirituality is "…immaterial and, therefore, beyond the senses" (Dennis, 2007, p. 73), making it hard to study using the current positivistic approach typically employed in education. When speaking of measuring spirituality, it can be hard to measure especially from a "scientific" approach because "…spiritual tenets are subjective and cannot be directly observed and replicated" (Dennis, 2007, p. 73). The ambiguity and individual meaning-making done by individuals practicing spirituality make the theory more difficult to replicate and be evaluated. Our current education system is rooted in objectivity, thereby leaving a subjective theory more difficult to integrate into educational inquiry: "Objectivism is institutionalized in our educational practices, in the ways we teach and learn… objectivism is conveyed to our students; our conventional methods of teaching form students in the objectivist world-view" (Palmer, 1993, p. 29). The unique nature of spirituality being defined through terms that make a particular individual feel whole and centered makes it distinct for each individual and, therefore, rejects the

scientific need for objectivity. Understanding the root of each of these critiques for using feminist spirituality in educational inquiry allows for the research to be more effective in its approach, seeking to provide a greater foundation of knowledge for those in opposition.

Tying Feminist Standpoint and Feminist Spirituality Together

Combining the key tenets and assumptions of standpoint theory with feminist spirituality leaves space for seeking stories of women's spiritual experiences as told from their perspective. This combination allows for women to tell the story of how they have enacted their spirituality in a male-centered world as well as how they have struggled with defining spirituality and overcoming shipwreck for themselves outside of a gendered expectation. While women's experiences have traditionally been left out of research, Yakushko (2011) reminds us of the importance of their inclusion: "Women's ways of understanding the Ultimate, and practicing within spiritual communities, must be acknowledged by all those who work with and study women's lives" (p. 198). I believe that a feminist spirituality from the standpoint of women allows women to talk about the moments in their lives, as women and as members of a myriad of oppressed identities, that have pushed them into a spiritual awakening; those moments of renewal, clarity, and transcendence within a male-dominated world are best told from the perspective of women, those women who are living and breathing through these experiences. It is time for women to be in the center of their own spirituality.

In summary, despite the critiques of the theories, a framework grounded in feminist standpoint theory and feminist spirituality allows for an exploration of the role of spirituality in moments of shipwreck from a standpoint that truly honors the experiences of women. Women's stories are important and need to be told; these stories do not have to be grounded in science to prove their worth and their weight in the literature—we must believe women. Women have been

subjugated for long enough in life and the academy; therefore, I would argue that there is no time like the present to begin to make women the focus and the starting point of research related to spirituality. The need to focus on spirituality from a lens of wholeness, as separate from patriarchal religion, and as a way of finding true self is apparent; this view of spirituality also allows for the inclusion of spirituality through the lens of feminism and higher education.

Specific to spirituality in college students, we know that they seek inner-development and crave a way to find answers to some of life's biggest questions. While a landmark study has been conducted, the literature leaves a giant hole in the ways of understanding how college women make meaning in their lives. This lack of focus on the spiritual development of college women parallels the lack of focus in the literature on how spirituality plays a role in the spiritual struggles that college women face, struggles that often derail them to a point of defeat and despair. Although the literature is not clear as to the exact outcomes of college women's spiritual struggles, these crucial events can serve as transforming moments in the lives of college women. In this study, I hope to be able to demonstrate that institutions of higher education should do more, see more, and exist more in the realm of support of spiritual development of college women, in order to aid college women in finding success post shipwreck.

Definitions of Key Terms

In this section, I will provide definitions for terms that are frequently used in this research. These definitions of terms will serve to give context and understanding of how I use and ascribe meaning to key words throughout this research.

College Woman. A college woman is a person who attends a particular university and identifies as a woman. In the case of this research, all women were cisgender women and all were from one university located in the southeast.

Deep Challenge. A challenge that a participant experienced that had the potential of being life-

changing, usually with origins of an academic, social, or personal nature; also referred to

interchangeably with the term shipwreck.

Feminist. A lens of conducting research that claims that knowledge is political, resisting the idea

that research is neutral and objective; research from a feminist lens seeks to overcome the

oppression of women, offers a way to resist normalization, challenge universalism, and

seeks a just and equitable experience for and representation of women in all instances.

Feminist Spirituality. A lens of viewing spirituality as expressed uniquely by each individual,

as separate from patriarchal religion, and is defined from the perspective of women, not

men.

Feminist Standpoint. A theory for conducting research, originally coined by Sandra Harding

(2012) that argues for research from an embodied perspective in which a standpoint is

claimed and made clear, as opposed to trying to remain neutral and value-free;

specifically, this theory of research focuses on understanding the world through the lens

of women's experiences and making positive social change with the information

gathered.

Knowledge. Specifically, as one of three key concepts of feminist standpoint theory, knowledge

is not universal nor understood the same by all; instead, knowledge is the result of the

direct lived experience of individuals.

Leadership Position. Each of the participants was named to a formal leadership position, not

simply acting as a leader among their peers in an informal capacity. The range of

positions held by participants varies greatly, but are listed in this research projected by

the more generic terms of "student employee" or "president of a student organization" to

maintain the confidentiality of participants. The leadership positions of each of the

participants are detailed in Table 1.

Patriarchal Religion. A religion (not any in particular) in which men often hold predominant

power and are seen as the heroes of the religion, while women are subject to varying

degrees of oppression in the formal practice of the religion.

Reflexivity. A practice used to improve the quality of research, prompting the researcher to not

only reflect on the study but to reflect on their role in the research process in addressing

the question "How do I know what I know?"

Religion. The belief in a supernatural being, accompanied by regimented, dogmatic practices

that are influenced by cultural and social norms (i.e., the practice of Christianity,

Buddhism, etc.). Religion can be spiritual in nature, but spirituality does not have to tie to

a religion.

Shipwreck. Known in some contexts as 'spiritual struggle' or adversity, shipwreck is a

challenge that a participant experienced that was academic, social, or personal; shipwreck

is a common occurrence during stressful life events and can impact, negatively or

positively, the physical and psychological well-being of an individual. Shipwreck can be

brought on by struggling to understand the bigger questions of life, death, changes in

relationships, significant life stressors, lack of social or familial support, and so much

more.

As a result of the findings of this research, shipwreck is now understood not as an

event with a catastrophic end, but rather, as an opportunity for a re-creation of self.

Specific to this study, positions of leadership seemed to make participants more

vulnerable to shipwreck experiences. Through the findings of this research, shipwreck

experiences may now also be thought to be part of a larger arc of a woman's lifelong development, with each new shipwreck experience adding to the last, always moving forward and capturing a deeper understanding of life with each new shipwreck experience.

Spirituality. An individual, more private than public, search for authentic self and connection to others and elements of the larger universe; a search for wholeness, purpose, and peace within oneself; it is also a woman's search for her place in and connection to the world

Spiritual Development. Expansion and growth in a student's spirituality and spiritual practices. In the case of this research project, the area of interest is how Student Affairs professionals can aid students in strengthening their spiritual practices, especially during or after a shipwreck experience.

Starting Point. The place from which research begins, distinguishing the fact that men and women do not have the same experiences in the world. Specifically, as one of the three key concepts of feminist standpoint theory, the starting point is always women's experiences and lives.

Strong Objectivity. Specifically, as one of three key concepts of feminist standpoint theory, strong objectivity requires the researcher to reject value-free knowledge and to consider their own values, experiences, and interests that may impact their objectivity within the research and impact the knowledge that is produced from the research.

Chapter 3: Feminist Narrative as Methodology

In this chapter, I will outline the research methodology used to complete this study. This chapter will include an in-depth description of the research design, participant selection, data generation procedures, and analysis details relevant to the methodology chosen. As conveyed throughout the literature review, it is paramount that college women understand how they define and make meaning of their spirituality and spiritual experiences. Through this development, college women are also inevitably faced with trials and tribulations, shipwreck moments that they must work through. Therefore, the main questions that I hope to answer through this research are as follows: 1) During moments of shipwreck for college women, what role does spirituality play and how do these moments serve as a catalyst for self-discovery, personal growth, and transformation? 2) During or following a shipwreck, how do college women describe their experience in seeking support from a higher education professional and/or what practices do they describe as supporting their spiritual development during that time?

Design Rationale

Considering the purpose of my study was to explore the role spirituality plays when college women navigate or negotiate personal, social, and academic challenges, I posit that narrative inquiry is the best choice in methodology. Considering the feminist perspective in my research serves to call to light the "oft-ignored power relationships that can affect the findings of a research study" (Yin, 2016, p. 336). At the heart of a feminist methodology is the relationships between researcher and participants; it is researchers of the feminist persuasion who have advocated for relationships with participants that include "reciprocity, empathy, equality, and friendship" (Glesne, 2011, p. 147). I believe that research through the telling of stories would allow me the best opportunity to investigate the role of spiritual elements in effectively aiding

students, and more specifically college women, in moments of crisis to begin to better

understand the relationship between moments of shipwreck and college women's spirituality, as

well as the role of higher education professionals in supporting college women through their

experiences of shipwreck. Kim (2016) reminds us that "…narrative is appropriate for

understanding the actions of others" (p. 8); thus, using narrative inquiry would allow me an

opportunity to ask students about their ways of defining spirituality, their moments of shipwreck,

and to further explore the practices higher education professionals can implement to support the

spiritual development of college women, especially following a shipwreck moment.

      As I continue to think through a narrative lens, I am fascinated by the potential for

positive change I know I can make through research, through the cultivation and recording of

stories. Not only are the stories shared by participants important to this work, but so are the

stories that I bring to this research. The stories that I bring to this research through the use of

scholarly personal narrative allow me to draw implications from my own experience (Nash,

2019). The use of narrative inquiry, coupled with the use of scholarly personal narrative, will

allow for me to glean meaning from stories, including gathering meaning from the what stories

are told, the ways in which stories are told, and the reasons why certain stories are told. Through

the sharing of stories, of my stories with participants and their stories with me, we will both be

able to understand something deeper than simply the actions of one another; we will begin to be

able to understand what makes us as women and individuals. Stories allow for understanding to

be had and meaning to be made in order to affect positive change.

      I ponder the idea of what we have done as a society to create a generation of college

students who lack the skills necessary to handle the shipwreck moments they find themselves in.

I wonder what practices I could put in place in my job to continue to challenge the notion of the

status quo and cultivate a greater sense of spiritual wellness in the world's next generation of women leaders. I theorize that "…the gentle flame of [an individual student] story could merge into a collective flame with the flames of others' stories. This collective flame could shine through the dark corners of our lives" (Kim, 2016, p. 23), further illuminating the need to begin to change the focus and practice of higher education to better support the spiritual lives of our students, especially our college women.

For me, I know that the writing and sharing of my own story of journey and becoming along the Camino served as a tool to find strength in difficult times. While I was on that journey, I was intentional to write in my journal or use my voice recorder every day. This story creation was not always fluid, but somehow always managed to be therapeutic for me, especially on days when I felt like quitting. When faced with a challenging or trying time during that hike, I was able to flip back in my journal or listen to old recordings that helped me to remember the determination I set out with to complete that journey. I was able to see the hardships, both physical and mental, that I had overcome that allowed me to continue to move one foot in front of the other. Then, upon my return to work and my routine life, those stories of strength and perseverance have kept me grounded. The verbal sharing of my stories with others allows me to harken back to days when I had to use every ounce of energy I had left to make it to the next town for the night, reminding me that I am capable of doing anything I set my mind to. My stories of my time on the Camino serves as a foundation for moving forward through future challenging experiences.

Narrative Inquiry as Methodology

Narrative inquiry as a methodology can be used with many theories. Jeong-Hee Kim (2016) highlights its use with critical theory, critical race theory, feminist theory,

phenomenology, pragmatism, and with the postmodern, post-structural theorists. For this

particular research, using a feminist theoretical framework, narrative inquiry was a suitable

methodology; this is especially important considering that spirituality is individual, more private

than public (Parks, 2000). Integrity in the research is maintained by using a methodological

approach that accounts for the use of spirituality that does not conform to male-dominated

religions. This congruency and natural association between spirituality and a feminist research

approach allow for a view of spiritual practices that is inclusive in nature and defined by the

discretion of the person speaking. This discretion to default to non-dominant binaries and

subjective interpretation rather than a set definition of spiritual practice thus lends itself to a

theoretical framework best supported by narrative inquiry. Through this research, participants

were asked to share their stories: stories of shipwreck, stories of engaging with higher education

professionals, stories of hope and overcoming. This approach of storytelling as a means of

research is a "way of honoring lived experience as a source of important knowledge and

understanding" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 17); it is through this storytelling that we can truly learn

from the lived, relived, told, and retold experiences of the participants.

When speaking of spiritual development and practices of spirituality, the common

understanding of the layperson is that there is no distinction between one's spirituality and one's

religion, allowing for seamless interchanging of the terms with one another (Gilley, 2005;

Kiessling, 2011; Nash & Swaby, 2011). In this same vein, education systems in the United States

are generally structured around the Christian religion. Bearing this in mind, it was ever more

important to utilize a methodological approach for this study that allows for individual stories to

be heard and told, so as not to privilege the dominant binary of the practice of Christian religion

as the sole focus of spiritual practice. The use of narrative inquiry as the methodological

approach for this research allows for a complete discovery of spirituality from a standpoint that is not tied to a specific religion, rather from a standpoint that gets at meaning-making, wholeness, a sense of something bigger than self, connectedness, and fulfillment. Narrative inquiry permits for stories to be told, reflected upon and learned from because "narrative inquiry begins and ends with a respect for ordinary lived experience" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 18). There is truth in stories and the telling of everyday lived experiences. The everyday lived experiences of the participants of my study, experiences of navigating and negotiating shipwreck moments, are best told through narrative inquiry as the methodological approach.

Main Features

While I have justified the use of narrative inquiry as the methodological approach to my study in the above section, the following section will detail the main features and tenets of narrative inquiry as an approach to conducting research. The goal of narrative inquiry as a research methodology is based on its use of storytelling: "Using narrative as a phenomenon to understand multidimensional meanings of society, culture, human actions, and life, it attempts to access participants' life experiences and engage in a process of storytelling" (Kim, 2016, p. 6). Narrative inquiry can aid in the meaning-making process, especially through the inclusion of telling stories of ordinary events in the lives of ordinary people. Narrative inquiry, then, "…presumes the importance of the everyday, the ordinary, the quotidian stories that have frequently gone unnoticed" (Kim, 2016, p. 23), while paying less attention to larger events (Hegde et al., 2016). This is relevant to the spiritual lives and practices of college women as spiritual elements are generally small, everyday actions that connect us to a greater sense of being, rather than some large orchestrated event; the daily lives of college women can be made up of small spiritual components and shipwrecks, intertwined with larger meaning-making

processes. This storied fabric of human life, with "experience [as] the starting point" (Kim, 2016, p. 18), is made sense of by using narrative inquiry as a research methodology.

Storytelling is the center of the work of narrative inquiry. Not only are the participants engaged in storytelling with the researcher, but the researcher is involved in sharing stories with the participants. Researchers are encouraged to "…[think] with stories in multiple ways, toward our stories, toward the other's stories, toward all the narratives in which we are embedded as well as toward what begins to emerge in our shared lived and told stories" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 30). This intentional sharing of and thinking about shared stories places the lives of participants and the researcher alongside one another. For example, given the fact that I knew I would be asking participants about the reason why they were interested in participating in this study, I found it relevant to share with the participants why I was interested in engaging with this research. Below is an excerpt from me sharing my initial interest in the topic of this project with Camila:

> My first semester in the doctoral program, I took a course called "Spirituality and Higher
> Education." I mostly took it because I was like, 'Weird, those two things can't go
> together.' And then my world was rocked when I learned that spirituality is different than
> religion and…separation of church and state doesn't have to be an issue [when] talking
> about spirituality…I was also seeing simultaneously in my job that college women, not
> even, but just college students having these difficult moments…and then seeing people
> use [spirituality] to overcome or work through these other moments, I was like 'Whoa!
> This is neat'.

After sharing this story with Camila, she was visibly more at ease. It was as if my naming of my own indiscernibility between religion and spirituality was permission for her to feel confident in

her misunderstandings about the terms as well.

A precursor to any meaningful storytelling is a relationship between the storyteller and the person the story is told to. Therefore, a fundamental aspect of narrative inquiry is a positive relationship between the inquirer and each participant. Through this relationship, built with each of the participants, the storytelling becomes richer and more deeply meaningful on the part of the participant and the narrative inquirer. In the moments in which participants are telling their stories of spirituality and shipwreck, I also considered how their stories compared and contrasted to the stories I have to share about spirituality and shipwreck. For example, at one point as Camila shared about her experience of being in nature allowing her to "just sort of quiet the noise and focus," I verbally responded to Camila and told her about the commonalities between her story any mine. This commonality in stories was apparent with each of my participants—I was able to actively connect my story to some part of the story they shared during our time together. This connection to their stories often happened during the interview sessions with the women as I verbalized the commonalities, but also took place as I re-read and re-listened to each interview during the interview process and analysis. This type of storytelling through narrative inquiry as a methodology is made possible through the application of three main features: "Learning to think narratively" (Kim, 2016, p. 89), developing phronesis through reflexivity, and inclusion of a coda (Kim, 2016). I will discuss each of these main features next.

Learning to Think Narratively

One of the most prominent features of narrative inquiry as a methodology is its focus on the researcher learning to think narratively. Kim (2016) makes the point that narrative inquirers can learn to think narratively through the following actions: imagining the life space, giving credit to the living and telling of stories, investing themselves in the inquiry, and defining

commonplaces. Considering specifically the art of imagining the life space, the researcher must imagine the place the research will occur, where participants live and imagine where the experiences being studied ultimately exist (Kim, 2016). In other words, the researcher must be "self-consciously aware of everything happening within the research space" (Kim, 2016, p. 90). Also important is that a narrative inquirer must understand that stories are from the past, as well as unfolding as the research is happening. This specific element of narrative inquiry is honored through the understanding and appreciation for the living, telling, retelling, and reliving of stories (Clandinin, 2013). This element manifests itself in research when participants "see that [they] are changed as [they] retell [their] lived and told stories, [and then] may begin to relive [their] stories" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 34). Thirdly, the researcher must invest self as part of the inquiry, being consciously aware of their subjectivities and implications of those subjectivities on the data generated with participants. Investment in the inquiry may mean that the researchers find themselves "intimately intertwined with the lives of [their] participants" (Kim, 2016, p. 90). This tenet is a strong reminder of the relational nature of narrative inquiry.

Defining the commonplaces. Finally, and arguably most importantly, when learning to think narratively there is a need for the researcher to define and balance the commonplaces, with each commonplace requiring specific attention drawn to it in the research. The commonplaces of narrative inquiry that a researcher must take into consideration include temporality, sociality, and place. Although Clandinin and Connelly (2000) coined these commonplaces as a "three-dimensional narrative inquiry space" I have found the work of Kim (2016) of most benefit. Specifically related to temporality, "narrative inquiry acknowledges that an event or a person is in temporal transition," meaning that stories are told "in relation to a past and a present, projecting a future if possible" (Kim, 2016, p. 90). Stories that were told during this research

study have meaning at the time they were told. However, the meaning of those same stories may change as time passes, an effect of the situation of narrative inquiry experiences on a continuum of time (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The telling and retelling of stories are full of revisions along the way, with the participants and researcher making meaning in a specific temporal space (Clandinin, 2013). Narrative inquirers should also consider sociality or how stories are impacted by "both personal and social conditions of the participant and/or inquirer" (Kim, 2016, p. 90). Specifically, a narrative inquirer must consider the feelings, dreams, morals, and other personal pieces that comprise a person, the cultural, social, familial, and other narratives that influence a person, and how all of these pieces may be impacting the narrative that is shared by the participant and the researcher (Clandinin, 2013). Finally, narrative inquirers must also consider the impact of each place and environment on the data generated as part of the study. While place was a later addition to the commonplaces, it is not any less relevant. Narrative inquiry must consider the intricate nature in which experience and place are connected; place is always a part of stories, as stories "occur in specific places or sequences of places" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50). In the words of Durdella (2019), "The idea [of defining the commonplaces] is to move beyond a superficial treatment of what folks share…leveraging a structure that accounts for…how people frame their experiences" (p. 112).

The application of the aforementioned points allows the researcher to think narratively, resulting in a more rich and holistic research experience. The intimate nature of the researcher being intertwined with the participants and their stories points to the "relational ontology of narrative inquirers" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 41). This requires an investment of self into the research, alongside participants. To best be an example of the type of storytelling that I hoped to have from my participants, it was important for me to model the way for them; as a researcher,

learning to think narratively means that I must "…start with [myself], with engaging in autobiographical narrative inquiries" (Clandinin et al., 2011, p. 38). I had to do the work that I was asking of my participants; therefore, as part of my research process, I shared some of my journey with participants, telling of my spiritual development and moments of shipwreck and overcoming. Given the fact that I began setting out to learn more about spirituality, both broadly and personally, as I hiked the Camino, I most often shared stories with participants from that journey as they pertained to my own shipwreck and spiritual growth. My experiences through shipwreck were not off-limits simply because I was the one labeled as researcher. To attend to the commonplaces in my research, I made specific notes of the time, place, and setting of each of the interviews. I asked each participant about their past, to get an idea of the personal and social implications and influences related to the stories they were retelling and reliving with me. I was actively in story with my participants, engaging in a way that honors the nature of narrative inquiry.

Developing Phronesis through Reflexivity

Another important feature of narrative inquiry is the need for the researcher to develop phronesis through reflexivity. Phronesis is a term used in both storytelling and narrative inquiry. As it relates to storytelling, phronesis is defined as "a form of practical wisdom [that] provides knowledge about the world learned from stories" (Kim, 2016, p. 10). Whereas, phronesis, as it relates to narrative inquiry, is considered ethical judgment "[calling] for reflection that is concerned with the particulars of a situation. Thus, it is a capacity that a narrative inquirer can acquire only through reflection, action, practice, and practical experience" (Kim, 2016, p. 105). While reflection is important in the process of narrative inquiry, phronesis calls for one step further--reflexivity. The need for reflexivity arises in any research in which human subjects are

involved, as the presence of the researcher will impact participants and the participants' actions may influence the researcher (Yin, 2016). Yin (2016) defines reflexivity in qualitative research as "describing as best as possible the interactive effects between researcher and participants, including the social roles as they evolve in the field but also covering advocacy positions" (p. 46). The goal of this practice of reflexivity is to "improve the quality and validity of the research and recognize the limitations of the knowledge that is produced" (Kim, 2016, p. 105-6). Reflexivity, then, is exercised through the researcher "[placing] their actions under the same critical scrutiny as the rest of their data" (Kim, 2016, p. 105), to ultimately address how the researcher knows what they know.

Researchers using narrative inquiry as a methodology should aim to be reflexive as "the more we are reflexive, the more phronesis we utilize in everyday ethical situations encountered during research" (Kim, 2016, p. 106). In the instance of this particular research study, reflexivity was of utmost importance given the nature of stories about significant personal issues. I needed to be mindful of choices I made throughout the entire research process to include being critical of such things as: who I selected as participants for my study, the questions I asked participants, my reflections on the process throughout the entire process, and others' perspective on my work. For example, I asked questions of myself and reflected on how I have been influenced to do this work, how my participants in the study affected me, and how I might have hoped for particular conclusions to be made in my analysis. Other practical ways that I aimed to mitigate my role in influencing the research and participants were to ask open-ended questions, to build rapport and trust with participants through spending significant amounts of time with them, to allow participants to read and/or react to the recorded stories and my interpretations of meaning conveyed, and to always be critical of the conclusions I made (Glesne, 2011). Ultimately,

"reflexive thought assists in understanding ways in which [my] personal characteristics, values, and positions interact[ed] with others in the research situation to influence the methodological approach [I] t[ook], the methods [I] use[d], and the interpretations [I] ma[d]e" (Glesne, 2011, p. 159).

Inclusion of a Coda

A final, main feature of narrative inquiry is the inclusion of a coda, or the researcher's personal signature (Durdella, 2019; Kim, 2016). Once the researcher has completed analyzing and interpreting the data generated with the participants, the researcher must provide their insights about the phenomena under study, based on existing theories, literature, and knowledge. The coda can be seen as a bow that ties all of the pieces of the research together for the reader. Kim (2016) talks of coda as "[finding] a way to give the reader some sort of catharsis, reverberation, 'oomph,' or new understandings of the field that should be made available through implications" (p. 229). As the stories are analyzed and written into final form, the researcher is still learning and inquiring about the stories shared (Clandinin, 2013). The inclusion of a coda is simply the researcher's final attempt at making meaning of the information gathered at a given point in time. When including the research signature, the researcher must be careful to find balance in how lively their signature is: if the signature is too vivid, the researcher risks obscuring data, while if it is too subtle, the researcher seems to lack voice (Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Kim, 2016); the researcher must be cognizant of the role taken on when writing up the stories that were shared as part of the research (Durdella, 2019).

The final purpose of the inclusion of a coda relates to its function to justify the importance of the study. This justification is necessary to address in the realm of personal, practical, and social, as it allows the researcher to fully attend to the importance of the research.

Ultimately, the inclusion of a coda in narrative inquiry allows the researcher to "reflect [their] ongoing quest for truth and knowledge as a way to examine [their] established field in order to enhance it" (Kim, 2016, pp. 235-6). My goal with this research was to justify the need for higher education professionals, specifically in the field of Student Affairs, to aid in the development of spirituality and in overcoming shipwreck moments. Therefore, my signature functions to justify the need for this research study. I hope that through the sharing and telling of stories that I will be able to support the profession I have spent my career in. While all research projects must end, the meaning made from the stories shared is never over; my personal signature on this research will be final due to the nature of this research project being complete, but could always be reinvestigated for a different meaning in a new place and time.

Feminist Narrative Methodology

Considering the feminist approach to my work, I include some implications on how I will incorporate a feminist lens in this work. While the aim for the relationship between researcher and participant in feminist work is to be intimate in nature, it is also important to note that a hierarchical relationship may still exist, influenced by the particular roles of each person involved, and should be broken down (Bloom, 1998; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Glesne, 2011). This breaking down of hierarchy can be done through the nature of feminist narrative inquiry, which requires me to share some of my stories of shipwreck and spirituality with participants; this reciprocal sharing of and reflecting on stories naturally strengthened the relationship between me, the researcher, and the participants, and provided for a more nuanced relationship than normally exists in a traditional research relationship. A feminist narrative methodology also requires the researcher to give clearly focused attention, to refrain from any judgment of the stories shared, and to assume that the stories shared are true. A feminist narrative

interview should be open-ended, interactive, and conversational. This methodology also required me to listen more than I spoke; for this to be a reality in practice, I developed interview questions that required and allowed participants to narrate stories (Bloom, 1998). The intimate nature of a feminist research approach certainly requires more time and thought from the researcher; however, the collapsing of the power differential certainly proved to be beneficial for the participants and me as we moved through this work.

One such example of how the feminist narrative methodology played out during my time spent with each of the participants was a reciprocal storytelling session that Riley and I engaged in related to the complexities of the coupling of progressive feminist thought with traditional conservative Christian values often taught in churches in the southern region of the United States. Riley shared about an experience that happened during her childhood that impacted her life long after it occurred. She described a time when she and her brother were hanging out at the church as her family was cleaning up after a church service her grandfather had preached:

> We went up to the pulpit and were just playing, like pretending that we were the preachers. And my grandpa came running down the aisle and ripped me off of there and was like, 'Women are not allowed up here, you are never to be behind [the pulpit]'. And I just remember I was like seven years old and my grandpa, who I love, is telling me this. And I was like, that seems weird, but okay. So, having that [experience] I always felt confined in a sense.

After this defining experience of being told what a woman was or was not allowed to do, Riley shared that this experience impacted her practice of her faith. It was not until college, when Riley felt connected to her faith again, in large part due to a mentor in her life affirming for her the concepts of justice and leadership for women in the church.

Following Riley's sharing of this story, I shared the following:

That's even why I want to do this research…I identify as a Christian and come from that background. But it's challenging to think about the feminist mindset that I have, and I was not raised with, but how that can be different than what I was taught in the church. And then feeling like I'm doing something wrong if I believe [in feminism]. And so, I'm really conflicted…it's fascinating how religion is so tied to culture. Maybe the neat thing about spirituality [is that] it can be this sort of almost ambiguous thing that people define for themselves. And it's a little bit more accessible because religion has such a negative connotation to it.

Riley then shared in hypothesizing what her life and spiritual practices may have looked like if she were raised in a different setting, one in which women were valued, allowed to be involved in and lead in the church. Our common experiences around the oppression and exclusion of women from the church allowed for our time together to be conversational, interactive, and opposing of the power dynamics that may be present in a more traditional approach to research.

Methodological Framework

Ethical Concerns

Before diving straight into the specific details of my study, it is paramount for me to address the ethical issues I must consider as part of this work. First, I found myself wanting to engage in this specific research because I have seen and personally benefited from spiritual practice in difficult times. I have worked with students, college women in particular, who were able to make it through challenging personal, social, and academic situations largely because of a reliance on their spiritual practice; I have witnessed students use prayer, meditation, and journaling to eventually move through moments of shipwreck in their lives. I firmly believe that

a focus on oneself as a small piece in a grander picture, a focus on something bigger than oneself, a focus on connectedness and making meaning, is a means for surviving trying times. Therefore, I had a desire to conduct research in a way that would support my belief that a focus on the spiritual development of students will greatly aid in students' ability to conquer shipwreck moments. Ultimately, I hoped that the research would lead to confidence in women telling their own stories, which in turn begets more stories being told. This telling of stories could then force universities "to see the issue of spirituality as an issue of student welfare" (Dalton, 2006, p. 164), in turn creating more dialogue and resources for spirituality practices on campuses. I believe that if Student Affairs professionals are to continue to claim to be focused on the holistic development of students, then it is their obligation and responsibility to focus on the spiritual needs of their students, especially those who are in the margins.

Secondly, considering my deep knowledge and interest in the topic of spiritual development in a college setting, I am aware of the outcomes and answers I might have *hoped* to achieve through interviewing students. Therefore, during interviews I had to be ever more cognizant of the potential for me "…to impose upon the interview which [could prevent] the interviewees raising the concerns of their own lives" (Barbour & Schostak, 2011, p.63). While I may have had certain phrases or practices in mind that I wanted the interviewees to speak about, it would have been unethical for me to impose my desires on the interview simply to obtain the answers I hoped for. My deep knowledge and interest in the spiritual lives of college women also had the capacity to inform what I see in my interactions with students. I recognize that my interest in spiritual practices and development can color the lens through which I see the world, finding elements of spirituality in unassuming places. The same can be said for my deep knowledge and experience in supporting college women during shipwreck experiences—it was

possible that I could impose the identification of a shipwreck experience when a participant may be in denial about that experience, or simply not classify it as a shipwreck. As was made clear earlier, utilizing reflexivity in my work aided in my ability to maintain ethical research practices.

Thirdly, given the nature of my research topic, I needed to consider the sensitivities around the topic of my study. While the topic and research are interesting to me, it was important that I "…remember that what is a 'research project' for [me] is always, to some degree, an intrusion into the lives of the participants in [my] study" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 92). The topic of spirituality, in general, is an intimate topic for many; therefore, mindfulness related to the sensitivity of this topic was important throughout my process. The moments of shipwreck I asked participants to share required sensitivity on my part as these experiences often elicited many emotions and memories for participants. For some participants, the shipwreck moments shared were of traumatic experiences, experiences that are difficult to put into words, or experiences that the participant had not fully processed. In the case of this type of shipwreck moment shared, one with which the participant struggles to deal, I made sure not to act in the way of a counselor to the participant. Rather, it was my aim, if needed, to direct participants to the appropriate resources to aid in their reconciliation of the experiences shared. It is important to note that I did not push participants to reveal anything beyond their comfort level or to share more than what they felt compelled. In no way did I force my interests related to this study as I did not want to cause harm to any participants.

Maintaining Anonymity

Finally, as an ethical safeguard in maintaining the anonymity of my participants and the anonymity of the specific people and campus resources participants mentioned during their interviews, the use of pseudonyms and generic position names were used in the discussion. For

example, when students referenced specific individuals on campus that they sought out for

support during a shipwreck experience, I used generic terms, such as, supervisor, advisor, and

mentor, to describe those individuals. The professional staff person's specific job title and or

office of employment on campus were not used in the discussion of the findings. The specific

campus resources that were named in the interviews were all given a pseudonym, making the

title of that particular office more generic and less specific to the university where this research

was conducted. Also, to maintain anonymity for participants in specific leadership positions on

campus, no specific organization or title was listed for the student participants. Rather, the

leadership positions the participants held were classified as "student employee" or "president of

a student organization." This particular ethical consideration was important considering my

desire to use this research to inform and advocate for the change in the practice of Student

Affairs professionals to incorporate a greater focus on the spiritual development of college

students. These ethical steps were also of utmost importance in this research, especially

considering my employment at the university; by no means am I interested in this research

creating a negative outcome or perception for any of my colleagues.

Participants and Selection

For this qualitative study, I selected individuals for participation based on certain criteria

determined to be most beneficial in answering my research questions. The selection of

participants was not random; rather, I employed purposeful selection and thoughtfully and

intentionally selected participants for my study. Purposeful selection allows for "particular

settings, persons, or activities [to be] selected deliberately to provide information that is

particularly relevant to [my] questions and goals, and that can't be gotten as well from other

choices" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 97). Purposeful selection is beneficial in small-scale qualitative

studies such as mine, as well as in studies that are seeking "information-rich cases for study in depth" (Glesne, 2011, p. 44) over breadth. This type of participant selection also complements a feminist research approach. The purpose of my study was not to make large sweeping generalizations, rather to tell the stories of college women who have found themselves through spiritual practice after dealing with a shipwreck moment. The specifics of the participants I recruited are detailed below.

The participants were a select small group of college women, five in total, identified by the researcher to participate in the study. The participants either currently attend a particular university in the southeast and hold senior status or had recently graduated from the university just prior to engaging in this research. Electronic flyers (Appendix B) were used to garner interest in the study. Once participants demonstrated interest in participating, they were asked to complete a screening questionnaire (Appendix C) before a final selection was made to be included in the study. My experience as a staff member at the university means I had significant access to students for participation; my time spent at the university over the last eight years meant that I have a deep relationship with the place and people. Once participants were selected and consent forms obtained, each participant was assigned a pseudonym that was known only by the researcher and the individual participant. This assigning of pseudonyms was an attempt at maintaining confidentiality for each of the participants.

For the purposes of this study, I sought to work specifically with college women. The purpose of using college-age women for this research was two-fold. First, the stories of women needed to be told and celebrated, for "lifting up" of women's stories is imperative in the sharing and telling of other women's stories (Christ, 1995). Secondly, college women needed to be examined specifically, as we know that college can be a time of self-discovery, spiritual

awakening, and a time in which women often face big challenges. As we live in a world that continues to progress towards the full manifestation of what it means to be a woman, living in a male-centric society, stories must be told and shared; it is important for the feeling of inclusion and belonging, for the confidence of others to share their own stories, and for healing to take place from shipwreck moments.

Participants all experienced moments of shipwreck and used spirituality as a way to navigate the challenge. Specifically, throughout the recruitment process for participants, I sought to recruit those individuals who resonated with the notion that they had been challenged academically, socially, or personally *and* found a way to continue afterward with a heightened understanding of self, emanating from having found meaning through the experience. The relationships I have built with university students, faculty, and staff meant there was built-in trust that others have with me, allowing me to reach a certain depth and richness in the interviews. I aimed to work with participants who had shared those moments of shipwreck and ways of overcoming with me prior to conducting the research. However, in order to gain an appropriate number of qualified participants, it was necessary that I simply work with participants who self-identified as interested in my research topic upon seeing my flyer through referral from colleagues. Based on my career in Student Affairs in Higher Education, I aimed to make this research applicable to my field; therefore, I pursued students who have sought support and/or consulted with a university staff member either during or after the shipwreck moment.

For participants with whom I had a prior relationship, there existed a foundation of basic trust and willingness to share with me, which aided in the collection of stories. For those with whom I did not have a preexisting relationship, my goal was to build trust and rapport throughout our time spent together. This trust and rapport allowed participants to share the

particulars of their stories as related to spirituality and shipwreck. I knew that I needed to reach an optimal level of rapport with each participant, had to be willing to share some of my own stories, as well as demonstrate a genuine sense of caring and interest in each of the stories shared (Maxwell, 2013, Kim, 2016). Each of these opportunities for building rapport and trust with my participants aided in the efficacy and meaning made from my study.

Impact of COVID-19 on Participant Recruitment

Based on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic my recruitment efforts moved into a completely virtual format, meaning I had to rely on colleagues in my professional life to aid in spreading the message about recruitment for my dissertation. The resulting effect was that colleagues sent my recruitment materials to students with whom they had worked and had conversations related to deep struggle. Based on their deep connection and knowledge of participants' stories, these professionals referred specific students, assuming that the participants would be a good fit for the study. By happenstance, all five participants held significant leadership roles on campus; I would even go so far as to say that each participant was known for her leadership position.

Sources of Stories

Data for this study were generated through three semi-structured interviews with each participant; these interviews in social science research can also be referred to as "qualitative interviews" (Yin, 2016). Interviews are a widely used and accepted method of completing narrative research, especially when combined with field notes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). There are several reasons that conducting interviews was a good source for answering my research questions; conducting interviews aided in my "search of opinions, perceptions, and attitudes toward [spirituality]" (Glesne, 2011, p. 104) that the participants hold. First, interviews

can be a tool to "understand the perspectives and goals of the [interviewees]" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 102); by asking the interviewees how they defined spirituality, shipwreck, and the spiritual practices of their lives, the interview ultimately proved to be "an efficient and valid way of understanding [their] perspective…" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 103) regarding spirituality and shipwreck. Interviewing around this topic also allowed me to see a different perspective on my research question than observation would have allowed. Conducting interviews permitted me to gain a deeper understanding of exactly how students define spirituality and what spiritual practices they used, if any, to work through moments of uncertainty and shipwreck in their lives.

The goal of the narrative interview was to allow for the questions to guide the interviewee to share their story, with the interviewer "sympathetically listening and holding questions back so that the person being interviewed can shape stories in his or her own way" (Narayan & George, 2012, p. 522). The format of semi-structured interviews helped me to listen to the interviewee and adapt future questions to cull the most meaningful stories; semi-structured interviews authorize pre-written questions to be a guide to the interview "helping [the researcher] to maintain focus rather than dictate [the] direction" (Kim, 2016, p. 163). The use of semi-structured interviews allows for the researcher to balance the need to ask specific questions alongside questions that may arise due to the dynamics of each interview. As participants shared their stories, they inevitably shared unexpected responses. In this case, through the use of semi-structured interviews, I was able to probe and ask follow-up questions. This interview format allowed for conversation and probing to get at meaning-making and aided me as the researcher to follow my intuition in the process (Durdella, 2019).

Interview Protocol

Due to the restrictions brought forward related to COVID-19, all interviews were conducted via Zoom interface. All interviews were audio-recorded to allow for transcription at a later date. Each participant was interviewed a total of three times, with the interview sessions lasting for a combined total of no more than 180 minutes of interview time per participant. In the case that a fourth interview was needed for clarification or a follow-up conversation with a participant, I left the door open to seek permission from the participant to participate in an additional interview.

Considering the goal of interviews in narrative inquiry is for each interview session to build upon the last, moving seamlessly from the narration to conversation phase of the interview (Kim, 2016), the goal of my participant interview sessions was for each subsequent interview to allow for a deeper dive into the elements of spirituality, shipwreck, and the role of each in the lives of the women interviewed. Specifically, the content for the interview sessions with each participant was as follows: 1) Rapport and foundation building and establishing the context of a participant's experience, 2) Story of shipwreck and its source and seeking support from a higher education professional, and 3) Spirituality before, during, and after the shipwreck and reflection on the meaning of the experience (Seidman, 2013). The goal of the content structure for each of the interviews was intentional to allow for scaffolding to take place across time and space, as well as to allow for rapport and trust to be built before sharing the most intimate stories. A copy of the interview questions and prompts can be found in Appendix E.

After each interview with a participant, the interview was transcribed. All audio recordings and transcriptions were stored on a password-protected computer and a secured online server to ensure confidentiality throughout the process. I read the transcription and re-listened to

the audio several times prior to conducting the next interview with the participant. By reading,

listening, re-reading, and re-listening to the interview, I was better able to pinpoint what I may

have wanted or needed to draw out of the participant in the subsequent interviews. The

intentional read and re-read of the interview sessions with participants throughout the various

interviews conducted, allowed for a possible narrative thread to be recognized. This

intentionality with the review of stories shared helped me, as the researcher, to better understand

the people, places, experiences, and stories that were important to the participant (Clandinin,

2013). After the interviews were conducted and transcribed, each participant was given a copy of

their specific interview transcript to review for accuracy. The interviews were then coded and

analyzed alongside all other interviews conducted.

Participants in the study maintained their right to withdraw from the study at any time,

including before, during, or after all the interviews were conducted. I aimed to complete full

interview sessions with all five participants, so as to reach an optimal point of quality and

saturation. Institutional Review Board approval was obtained prior to conducting any research.

All participants were informed of any associated risks (Appendix D) and potential distribution of

the research findings prior to their commitment of intent to participate.

Working with Collected Stories

Coding and Analysis of Stories

Once the stories of the women in the study were collected, analysis began; this analysis is

considered to be one of the most important steps in the research. Glesne (2011) defines data

analysis as "organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can figure out what you

have learned…" (p. 184). As I think through the vulnerability of the women that was made

apparent through their stories shared in their interviews with me, my goal was to maintain the

integrity of the stories, all the while making sense of the stories shared with me. As part of my analysis, I looked to find common ground in the stories, to determine if the women interviewed have similar definitions for spirituality, for their spiritual practice, for moments in their lives that they consider to be shipwreck, for how they were able to work through the shipwreck, and what it meant for them to connect with a professional in higher education. As part of the beginning stages of my analysis, I kept a reflexive journal and wrote memos to myself; this type of reflection on the data generated as it is being collected allowed for me to "[apply] rudimentary coding schemes, …begin to learn from [the data], create new hunches or new questions, and manage the information [I] am receiving" (Glesne, 2011, p. 189). I know that the thoughts, feelings, and discoveries made along the way would inform my formal analysis.

Formal analysis of the stories shared took place through Polkinghorne's "analysis of narratives, or the paradigmatic mode of analysis" (Kim, 2016, p. 196). Through this analysis, my focus was on "examin[ing] the narrative data to focus on the discovery of common themes or salient constructs in storied data, and organize them under several categories using stories as data" (Kim, 2016, p. 196). This type of analysis encourages me to "make note of the events included in each story, the feelings and reactions expressed, the meanings each woman made of her story, and any explanations" (Glesne, 2011, p. 186). This narrative analysis was included what Clandinin and Connelly (2000) designated as a

> search for patterns, narrative threads, tensions, and themes that shape field texts into research texts [and] is created by [my] experiences as [I] read and reread field texts and lay them alongside one another in different ways, as [I] bring stories of [my] past experiences forward and lay them alongside field texts, and as [I] read the field texts in the context of other research and theoretical works. (p. 133)

My analysis also considered the social implications for what was shared and how it was shared; the context in which the interviewee told the story to me as the researcher may have been different than the same story being told in a different context. I believe that the trust and rapport built with participants allowed for a more complete story to be told. My goal was to consider how experiences and circumstances are related for the interviewee and how they then make meaning for these experiences through the stories shared (Glesne, 2011).

More specifically as it relates to analysis focused on identifying themes and patterns that are made apparent in the stories shared by participants, the interview transcriptions were coded, combined into categories, patterns identified, and then themes built (Kim, 2016). Ultimately, the goal of the thematic analysis was to create and share narrative meaning. This narrative meaning is a "meaning-finding act through which we attempt to elicit implications for a better understanding of human existence" (Kim, 2016, p. 190). Through the process of analysis, I had to maintain my sense of reflexivity, always aware of how the stories that I analyzed have been co-composed between myself and the participants (Clandinin, 2013). Clandinin (2013) reminds us that researchers using a narrative inquiry approach are not objective, rather "we are relational inquirers, attentive to the intersubjective, relational, embedded spaces in which lives are lived out. We do not stand metaphorically outside the inquiry but are part of the phenomenon under study" (p. 24). Ultimately, my goal was to help share the stories of the interviewees, without imposing my own beliefs or biases. I tried to follow the style of Kim (2016) in that I aimed for analysis that "[helps to] excavate stories from our data rather than decontextualize them into bits and pieces" (p. 204).

Trustworthiness

Through my continued research and increased awareness of the language and practices specific to spirituality, I see spirituality as an important element in overall wellness and building resilience. I regularly view spirituality as a tool for helping students to work through crises, shipwreck moments, and times of uncertainty. I interviewed college women concerning their personal spiritual practices and how these spiritual practices may have aided in their resilience and working through hardship. My current role is centered around work with student leaders and I am, also, often the person who encounters students in crisis, in moments when their resilience is not strong. These pieces of my career had the potential to influence me to want to ask specific, leading questions or to find certain phenomena in my research.

My interest in the spiritual development of students coupled with my perception that over the last several years students, especially women, in college *seem* to be less capable of dealing with the tough times they face, could suggest partiality in my research findings; I recognize that my interest in spirituality and in seeking ways to better support students in their efforts, could imply bias in my determination to conduct research that considers what role spirituality may play in the continued positive development of students. In order to address this threat to validity, I wanted to conduct in-depth participant interviews with college women. This great deal of time spent with participants allowed me to "check and confirm [my] observations and inferences," "rule out spurious associations and premature theories," as well as permitted me to "develop and test alternative hypotheses" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 126). Working to build a relationship with each participant that was grounded in trust and rapport while also sharing some of my own story, assisted me in digging deeper into the meanings of particular words and practices.

Another potential threat to validity was that the research was conducted at a particular university in the southeast, where I am presently employed. Considering the research was carried out at the university where I am employed, I knew some of the students participating prior to their inclusion in the study. This prior relationship with some of the student participants meant that these students may have knowledge of my research interests, thus potentially influencing my findings, as students may have aimed to please me in their responses. To deal with this particular threat to validity in my research, I employed respondent validation. I sought to "[solicit] feedback about [my] data and conclusions from the people [I am] studying" (Maxwell, 2013, p.126). By allowing for the interviewees to read and provide feedback on my interpretation of their comments and actions, I eliminated *some* of the misinterpretations that I may have had of their perspectives.

My Subjectivity

It is also important to note my personal roots and beliefs in the practice of Christianity. I grew up in a Christian household and in a small town in the southeast United States, dominated by Christian morals and traditions, largely unexposed to other religions and forms of spirituality until recent years. While in my personal life I have roots in Christianity, in my research, and my professional life, I try to be cognizant of not projecting those beliefs on others. For example, the reason I wanted to study spirituality and how it may improve a student's sense of resilience, was deeply rooted in various spiritual practices outside of the realm of Christianity. I am interested in the art of meditation, mindfulness, the search for meaning and wholeness, and other forms of contemplative practice, but realize many uninformed folks assume that spirituality and religion are synonymous. While my worldview has shifted over the last several years to be more inclusive and accepting of other faith traditions, elements of the Christian faith are still salient in

my personal life. Considering my background and modern Christianity as a salient part of who I am, it was important for me to address the implicit bias that may arise while working with participants and their stories. One such way I did this is through exercising extensive reflection and reflexivity throughout the process. This reflection brought to my attention and awareness when instances of bias surfaced. By owning and being aware of my bias through selection, interviewing, and analysis, this threat to validity was minimized.

Similarly, it would be an oversight on my part to not make mention of my experiences with college women in shipwreck, as it is these experiences that have shaped me as a professional and also given shape to this research. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the array of shipwreck topics that I have worked with students on is too abundant a list to detail. As a professional in the field and with maintaining professional boundaries with students, I am often limited in the physical, tangible, and emotional support that I can provide to students during a shipwreck experience. I am equipped and not afraid to refer students to resources available on campus; however, I believe that something is missing in simply referring students to resources on campus. I cannot help but believe that as a university, or perhaps as a society, that we are missing the boat on supporting our students. Why is there so much deep despair in our college students? Why has the trend, even just anecdotally, increased exponentially in the last ten years? Why are students less resilient and less able to handle deep challenges within themselves? Why are the big questions of life, questions that students are not equipped to answer? I firmly believe there is more we could and should be doing in order to support the whole student and their spiritual development.

Finally, part of my subjectivity in this research also lies in the fact that I have experienced shipwreck myself. For me, bringing it back to the Camino and some of my

experiences along that journey are a way to articulate my shipwreck experiences. For example, the following "poem ramblings" from my journal describe the wearing on my body as the winds relentlessly blew as we trekked 37.5 miles over two days from Itero de la Vega to Terradillos de los Templarios:

Pounding of feet in the soles of my shoes

Pounding of my shoes on the ground

Pounding of my poles into the soil

Pounding of the wind on my face

Pounding of my weight on my ankles, knees, and hips

Pounding of my boot on my Achilles

Pounding day after day and week after week

Pounding of my soul yearning for more

Yet the rocks in the field next to me are unfettered by the wind

The dust of the road laying unmoved until an occasional car, bike, or tractor passes

Flowers naturally stand firm and the crops in the field swaying to the wind passing over

them (Mashburn, 2017)

This experience of shipwreck helps me to have empathy and understanding when speaking to the women about their experience of deep challenge. By naming my experience with shipwreck, I was more equipped to empathize with the stories that the women shared with me, having been on a multi-day journey of shipwreck and feeling of defeat. However, it is also important to note my shipwreck experience and the possible impact or influence it might have had on my desires for the participants' stories to mirror a similar kind of struggle. How might my visual and poetic

depictions of shipwreck have influenced the way in which the women felt compelled to share their own stories? Might my observations about the things not being affected by the wind symbolize some desire in me to help the woman find solace in their journey?

Other Considerations

When conducting research, it is important to remember that the researcher has the "responsibility to do the best [they] can under certain circumstances" (Glesne, 2011, p. 212). These circumstances under which the research is conducted are often referred to as the limitations of the study. In light of the nature of the feminist approach to this research, I am choosing to view these supposed limitations as simply considerations that must be understand in the context of the work; each consideration adds to the story told in the research. One such consideration for this particular study is the often-ambiguous understanding of the terms spirituality and spiritual development. The concept of spiritual development can be a challenging one to address, especially if one is not familiar with the language often used in the discourse. Some suggest changing the discourse from a focus on spirituality to a focus on inner-development; this change in discourse allows the conversation to be more inclusive of students who do not resonate with the term spirituality (Seifert & Holman-Harmon, 2009). We must understand the students we are working with, and how they perceive the term spirituality; "Some students gravitate toward conversations on faith and spirituality; others may feel that religion has played an oppressive role in society and view the S word with disdain" (Rockenbach, 2011, p. 344). The lack of consistency in comfortability and defining of the terms spiritual development and spirituality could lead to different findings if the term is interpreted differently than I have defined it for this particular study.

Presentation of Findings

In the next chapter, I present the findings from my study. Specifically, Chapter 4 will share the themes and stories shared by and generated with participants as they relate to answering my established research questions. In Chapter 5, I will connect the stories shared to the existing literature. Further, due to my interest in how this research can inform the practice of Student Affairs professionals, I will provide implications for the field, and as well, make suggestions for future research.

Chapter 4: Participant Stories of Shipwreck and Resurfacing

The goal of this chapter is to present the research findings of this study. I will share the story of each participant, their understanding and experiences of spirituality, their shipwreck journeys, and how they moved through those shipwreck experiences. The stories shared are also filled with recommendations from participants for higher education moving forward in the support of the spiritual development of college students. Ultimately, it is these participant stories that will paint the picture of how we move forward to make sense of the significance of spirituality and shipwreck in the lives of college women.

As I began my analysis, one of the most interesting observations of my material was the fact that all of these women were student leaders on campus and these leadership positions held significant meaning in their lives and in the stories that they shared with me. These leadership positions impacted and were impacted by the shipwreck experiences of the women, as well, made up a significant part of the identity of the women. And considering my role and work with students, this additional finding related to all of the participants identifying as student leaders mattered to me. Based on the significance of this additional finding I have added an additional question to guide the presentation and analysis of the findings of this study. The reflective nature of qualitative research often necessitates the addition of research questions; Agee (2009) notes that this "development of new questions…often occurs during the inquiry process, sometimes during data collection and analysis" (p. 436). Therefore, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1. During moments of shipwreck for college women, what role does spirituality play and how do these moments serve as a catalyst for self-discovery, personal growth, and transformation?

2. During or following a shipwreck, how do college women describe their experience in seeking support from a higher education professional and/or what practices do they describe as supporting their spiritual development during that time?

3. What impact does the shipwreck experience have on college women who are serving in student leadership positions and in what way does the leadership position impact their passage through shipwreck?

I generated data with five college women through three one-hour long interviews with each woman, designed to explore the stories of deep personal, social, and academic challenges and how these women sorted through the shipwreck experience through employing spiritual practices. The participants in the study were college-age women, each of whom had just ended or were about to begin their senior year of college; three of the participants had graduated in May 2020 and were in transition to graduate or professional school and two participants were preparing to begin their final year of college. The participants shared many similar identities, a phenomenon to be expected based on the setting of the study. Four of the women identified as white and one as Asian. Three of the women identified as Christian, one as Buddhist, and one as Agnostic. All participants were involved in engagement opportunities on campus, held various leadership positions throughout their time on campus, and each has an intention to enter a helping profession as a career.

In the following section, I will offer a brief sketch of each participant; in each sketch, I will include biographical information that was shared, their religious origin, leadership positions held on campus, a brief synopsis of their shipwreck journey, and an overview of the elements that helped each participant to move through the shipwreck. These participant sketches are also presented in a consolidated version in Table 1 below. Following the participant sketches, I will

then talk about the major themes in the stories shared, including shipwreck journey, resurfacing as a result of breaking through the shipwreck, the behaviors, traits, and practices of Student Affairs professionals when sought during a shipwreck, participants' recommended practices for moving forward, and the role that the student leadership position each participant held played on the stories they shared. Each theme was developed based on information shared by each of the participants, in hopes that the themes shared represent a holistic overview of the data generated with the women.

Participants

Riley

Riley is a white woman who identifies as a Christian. Riley is a May 2020 graduate and is now in professional school. Riley held many leadership positions while on campus, but most notably served as the president of a student organization. Riley's shipwreck journey was a culmination of many things in her life, including supporting multiple members of her student organization as they navigated sexual assaults, making decisions about what path she would take after completing her degree, and hormonal and physical changes in her body after completing training for and running a marathon. Riley talked about her spiritual practices and moments of finding wholeness as related to an overarching theme of movement; it was through running, yoga, or the movement of her fingers as she played the violin that she felt most connected, centered, and whole.

Camila

Camila is a white woman who does not identify or practice any religion; she most closely relates to the label of agnostic. Camila also shared in our last interview that she is intrigued by witchery, but has just begun related research after an experience with a witch. Camila is now a

senior in college. Camila has served as a volunteer in the local community, is a member of many clubs, and is a student employee on campus. Camila's shipwreck began with the ending of a long-term relationship and was then compounded by a sexual assault and being verbally threatened by a colleague in her leadership position. Camila talked about her spiritual practices and moments of finding wholeness as related to the overarching themes of nature and community with others. Camila often found solace while journaling out in nature, and in particular on the Blueridge Parkway. She often found great comfort and peace in community with others, including volunteering in the local community, serving as a support for those in her life, and spending time with those she cared about.

Khloe

Khloe is an Asian woman who identifies as a Buddhist; Khloe's identification with Buddhism is centered in the spiritual and moral teachings of Buddhism and not in the dogmatic practice of the rituals and religion. Khloe is a May 2020 graduate and is now in graduate school for Student Affairs. Khloe served many roles in a particular student organization on campus, and in her last year served as the president of that student organization. Khloe's shipwreck journey mostly centered around the leadership position(s) that she held within a student organization. Khloe's experience learning about and navigating social justice issues and conversations with her peers led to dissonance in what Khloe felt she had to do versus how she wanted to pursue these issues. Khloe's shipwreck journey was also magnified through the disapproval her parents held regarding Khloe being named president of the student organization. Khloe talked about her spiritual practices and moments of finding wholeness as related to the overarching theme of doing her own inner work and setting intentions for herself; this inner work included being mindful of her energy and how her body responds in particular situations.

Bailey

Bailey is a white woman who identifies as a Christian. Bailey is a May 2020 graduate and is now in graduate school for Student Affairs. Bailey held volunteer roles on campus, was a member of a student organization, and worked as a student employee on campus. Bailey's shipwreck journey was a culmination of many things in her life, including failing a class, conflict within her family, health concerns, and being sexually assaulted. Bailey talked about her spiritual practices and moments of finding wholeness as centered around the themes of mentorship and finding community with others. Bailey found great support in confiding in her mentors after her personal reflections, as well as in identifying others in her life that have had similar experiences. This identification of similar experiences as others helped Bailey feel part of a larger community.

London

London is a white woman who identifies as a Christian. London is now a senior in college; it is important to note that London is completing the rest of her coursework in a virtual format from her hometown as a direct result of the shipwreck she experienced. Prior to London leaving campus to complete her senior year, she was a member of student organizations and worked as a student employee on campus in two different departments. London's shipwreck began with the suicide of someone she had responsibility over in her role as a student employee. This was compounded by additional suicides and attempts in her extended community as part of her campus leadership position, the ending of a long-term relationship, parental conflict, and her own suicidal ideation. London talked about her spiritual practices and moments of finding wholeness as centered around water, the smell, sight, and activities associated with water.

London also used the act of praying, specifically talking to God, as a way of finding peace and understanding.

Table 1

Participant Sketches

Participant	Religious Identification	Manifestation of Spirituality	Bio Sketch	Shipwreck
Khloe	Buddhist	Setting intentions; inner work	• May 2020 Graduate; Headed to Graduate School • Student Org President • Asian Female • First Gen College Student	• Parental Conflict • Social Justice Learning • Leadership Position
Riley	Christian	Movement (running, yoga, playing instrument)	• May 2020 Graduate; Headed to Professional School • Student Org President; Student Employee • White Female	• Sexual assault (others) • Decisions for Future • Change in Activity
London	Christian	Water (smelling, seeing, activities near); Praying	• Current Student: Senior • Student Employee • White Female • First Gen College Student	• Suicide (self and others) • Ending of Relationship • Leadership Position • Parental Conflict
Bailey	Christian/ Spiritual	Mentorship, Community with Others	• May 2020 Graduate; Headed to Graduate School • Student Employee • White Female	• Sexual assault • Failing class • Family Conflict • Health Concerns
Camila	Spiritual - not practicing any religion, closest to agnostic	Nature, Community with Others	• Current Student: Senior • Student Employee • White Female	• Sexual assault • Verbal threat by colleague • Ending of relationship

Themes

Shipwreck

When I began this work, I had an extremely narrow view of the meaning of the term "shipwreck". My understanding of shipwreck has evolved after generating data with the participants of this dissertation research. While it was not a difficult term to understand, as even outside of the literature it is easy to infer the meaning of this particular analogy, I have grown to understand that it is certainly more complex than I could have ever imagined. I have learned that a shipwreck experience is most likely not isolated to a single event or moment in time. Rather, shipwreck can be seen as a series of events, as a journey, a journey of many crashing waves, incident upon incident compounding upon one another. Compounding factors leading to feelings of uncertainty, defeat, and denial serve to amplify any barriers present for moving past the shipwreck. Feelings that are so heavy they feel like they are never going away and leading to the bottom of the shipwreck experience. This rock bottom, or deepest, darkest place, is then followed by a breaking point, a point of looking up, a point of resurfacing through the shipwreck. It is in this resurfacing after diving deep into and through the shipwreck that wholeness can be found. The shipwreck journey is not simply an event; instead, it is a time of feeling battered and broken. It is not until we own and come to terms with the brokenness of ourselves as beings that we can truly begin to understand ourselves as whole people, reinvest in ourselves, and move forward. Shipwreck is a journey of discovery, of identity development and confirmation, and great reckoning with one's greater purpose and connection in life. I hope that the stories below help paint a picture of the complexity of the shipwreck journey for each participant.

Onset and Length of Shipwreck

The shipwreck experience for each of the participants was unique. However, the shipwreck experiences did have some commonalities across participants, including the time frame of the shipwreck experience, compounding factors that contributed to the shipwreck experience, and the presence of barriers for all of the women in moving through the shipwreck experience. The following section of the findings expands upon the literature related to shipwreck experiences in college women; this section of the research is also when the women shared some of the most intimate, vulnerable, and personal information with me. For reference on some of the details of the shipwreck experiences for participants, please refer to the participant sketches at the beginning of this chapter and in Table 1. I am thankful the participants felt comfortable to share these experiences of shipwreck with me; it is through the sharing of these stories, that the work of understanding the experiences of college women can truly begin.

Riley. Riley's shipwreck began during her term as president of her student organization, in a semester when "there was a lot of sexual assault that happened to some of [the] girls in [her] organization." Those members disclosed those sexual assaults to Riley "knowing that if they went and told a staff member at the university [the staff member] would have to report what happened"; so, Riley became the default holder of this information because of her leadership position within the organization. This heavy news entrusted to her was followed by other compounding factors that served to magnify the shipwreck experience, including: "Coming off of marathon training…affecting [her] body… [causing her] to gain some weight" and "trying to figure out what [she] wanted [her] next step to be after graduation." Riley talked about these compounding factors and shipwreck as a reason why her "mental health became a factor all of a sudden." The timeframe for Riley's shipwreck journey was February through April of 2019.

London. London's shipwreck began with the suicide of a person for whom she had direct responsibility in her role as a student employee. Other factors in her position as a student leader that compounded the shipwreck experience for London included an overdose and two additional suicides in her extended community within three weeks. London also experienced other compounding factors related to her shipwreck experience, including her parents "being difficult," her finding out that her "boyfriend of five years had been cheating on [her]," being threatened, and ultimately experiencing suicidal ideation herself. London shared that she had "severe PTSD from everything" she experienced during her shipwreck. She stated the following about how the experience still fills her thoughts: "I still think about it almost every day, I don't think it'll ever go away." She also felt that she had to continue to relive the experience time after time, as professors and future employers inquired about the experience and its effects on her GPA. The timeframe for London's shipwreck journey was January through September of 2019.

Camila. Camila's shipwreck was comprised of three parts with each subsequent part compounding the impact of the last. To begin, "right before [the] spring semester of sophomore year of college, [her four and a half year] relationship ended" and her ex-partner immediately began dating another person. Camila stated that the experience "definitely started to impact school and work and lots of other aspects of [her] life." The following Fall semester, Camila was verbally threatened by a colleague and then that colleague asserted his dominance over her in her apartment. The following Spring semester Camila shared that she "was sexually assaulted by a guy that [she] had known through mutual friends." Camila's shipwreck experience lasted for approximately 12-15 months.

Bailey. Bailey indicated that her shipwreck included elements that were academic, social, *and* personal. Bailey's shipwreck culminated when she was informed of a newly diagnosed

health concern. This news came on top of parental conflict that Bailey was in the middle of, a sexual assault that she was the victim of, and her failing a class. All of these situations seemed to be fine in isolation, but when compounded together, they sent Bailey into a spiral that was hard for her to handle. She expressed its impact this way: "I add on top general anxiety and depression and being treated for it and I'm feeling like the world is just crashing on top of [me]." Bailey talked about the significance of shipwreck moments: "[They] aren't easy, they're not easy to clean up, they're not easy to deal with in the moment, they're not easy to expect…and people don't get closure…it affects your whole life." Bailey's whole life was affected by this shipwreck moment that lasted for several months during her first year of college.

Khloe. Khloe's shipwreck began as a result of her new engagement and interest with a particular form of dialogue on campus. As part of the work of the student organization that she was a part of, Khloe "got exposed to this idea of doing dialogue work as a means of social justice work." She stated that

> at the time that [she] had started, it was all about radical movement, you know, making sure your voice is loud and clear on campus and that you are standing for what you believe in and you stand firmly for what you believe in.

This was hard for Khloe because she is a person who does not like conflict. So, discovering a new way of doing social justice work, that was different than what she had previously been taught was challenging. The shipwreck for Khloe was especially an internal struggle: "it was a struggle in [her]self to hold [her] own integrity and hold [her] own beliefs without lashing out at other people" and instead, learning to dialogue with others. This experience, coupled with her recognizing the practice of cancel culture within herself and her parents' disapproval of her being named the president of her organization, compounded for Khloe, sending her into shipwreck, a

very personal inner struggle. Khloe did not put an explicit timeline on her shipwreck experience, but through what she shared, I would posit that it lasted the better part of a year.

Barriers

Each participant talked about salient barriers that prevented them from moving forward through the shipwreck experience. These barriers included people, systems, previous negative experiences, and even the participants themselves. While each participant listed barriers when asked about them, I do think that future research could also be conducted to explore further additional unintended or unmentioned individual and institutional barriers. In the section that follows, I detail some barriers, both on an internal and external level that the women experienced as they moved through the shipwreck experience.

Internal. As far as internal barriers to moving through the shipwreck experience, most participants listed issues that related to them and their experiences as a person as a reason for the delay in moving through the shipwreck. For Riley, these factors included such things as other responsibilities she had related to her role as a student and prioritizing to make time for herself and her spiritual practices. Camila shared some past negative experiences that made her internally question her self-worth and value as a barrier to her moving through the shipwreck. Khloe's most salient barrier to moving through the experience of shipwreck was herself, referencing "battling with [her] own thoughts" and long-ingrained familial as internal barriers to moving forward.

External. As far as external barriers to moving through the shipwreck experience, most participants discussed factors outside of their control that inhibited their ability to move through the shipwreck. London talked about the words, actions, and imposed guilt from others in her life as a barrier for moving forward through the shipwreck. Specifically, London talked about her ex-

boyfriend and father as "the most unsupportive people ever…[and] blamed [her] for everything

that happened even when [she] was…in the middle of a crisis." Another huge barrier for London

was her employer on campus, as an organization, not a specific individual; it was London's

opinion that her employer mishandled the situation and "definitely delayed a lot of [her]

progress." Camila, as a student leader moving through her shipwreck, talked about a negative

initial experience with the Student Resources Office and the awkwardness of utilizing the Center

for Student Support as a reason to be hesitant to seek support from those resources. Bailey's

biggest identified barrier for moving through centered around the complexities of reporting

sexual assault: mandatory reporting, victim-blaming, and anticipated overreactions by others.

Use of Spirituality During Shipwreck

The ways college women use spirituality during periods of deep challenge is one of the

primary inquiries I set out to explore in this research. What I did not anticipate is that while all of

the women in the study met these criteria, they each came about the use of spirituality in their

own time and on their own terms. Some participants relied on and clung to their spirituality to

move through the shipwreck. Some participants rejected the spiritual practices they had known

and practiced before the shipwreck, at least for some time during the shipwreck. Some

participants fostered and further developed their spiritual practices as a result of the shipwreck,

only recognizing that this had happened as they looked back on the incident. Just as the spiritual

practices of each participant are individual to them, so are the ways they engaged with their

spirituality throughout the shipwreck journey.

Reliance. Reliance on spirituality to navigate the shipwreck journey was a common

theme for many participants. This reliance on spirituality to work through the challenge waivered

for some participants, steadfast in their spiritual practices and then rejecting it at a later point along the journey; many of them flirted with this ebb and flow of reliance and rejection.

London was the participant who appeared the most reliant on and committed to her spiritual practices throughout her shipwreck. This steadfastness was described by London as follows: "I've definitely struggled with my religion, but like, for me, that was one of the biggest things that got me through [the shipwreck]." An important note is that for London, her spirituality was deeply and intricately tied to her religious beliefs, often meaning an interchanging of the terms as she spoke. Even when London did not know where to turn for further help, she kept trying, kept seeking to have time with God through reading, going to church, and clinging to her faith. She described one of the toughest parts of her journey as when she was "laying in the hospital," as the "strongest point" in her faith and spiritual journey because it "could have been very easy to say 'I don't believe in a god after what you just put me through.'"

Khloe seemed to be firmly grounded in Buddhist practices, "on a morality level," to aid her in moving through a shipwreck moment. She described her need to "retract" and "get in touch with [her] five senses" so as not to spiral during the shipwreck. She talked about reviewing Buddhist teachings and pondering how to "apply [those] to [her] everyday modern 21st-century life," even referencing times in which she would practice Buddhist prayers and chants. In all that she was doing to rely on her spiritual practice during the shipwreck, her ultimate goal was to "find comfort in something." Bailey also talked about her reliance on spirituality as "finding something to believe in and something to have hope in." She stated that her spirituality was strong throughout her shipwreck, that her spirituality "helped her get through [tough times]."

Throughout her shipwreck experience, Bailey sought a place to practice her spirituality, sought community in that spiritual practice, and spent time journaling.

Rejection. Rejection of spirituality came in many forms, both explicit and unintentional. Again, this rejection was personal to each participant, no two participants rejecting in the same way or for the same reasons.

For London, her Christian faith was how she most connected with spirituality, and she relied heavily on her relationship with God to see her through the shipwreck. The rejection surfaces for London in the way of her rejecting how others defined her relationship with God. London's religious beliefs and understandings were challenged and tried throughout her life, but once she began to make them her own, she was able to feel more at peace with how her religion manifested itself. She felt deeply that "the church" was judgmental and had turned their back on her during her toughest time. London's rejection of spiritual practice also manifested as she described how she had stopped praying. She described her lack of praying as a direct result of her shipwreck:

> Now I hardly pray. I think a lot of that came from when I was having a lot of the panic attacks…I was sick of being in pain. And it's like every time I started to pray, it was to get out of pain. And…that is kind of my memories of it now.

London rejected spiritual elements that had once brought her peace because of how those spiritual elements were impacted by her shipwreck. Khloe was similar to London in her rejection of her spiritual practice during the shipwreck in that she had to reject the external parameters she felt obligated to uphold in the Buddhist tradition.

In the sense of rejection of spiritual practices during shipwreck, Riley's was centered around a perceived lack of time and forgetfulness to engage in spiritual practice. Bailey, on the

other hand, talked about rejecting her spirituality when she "felt like everything was so good," almost as if when things were good, she didn't need to lean on her spiritual practices as much. However, these stents of rejection for Bailey lasted only minimal amounts of time; it was as if the rejection was momentary, soon again relying on her spiritual practices of praying, journaling, and community to assist her through the shipwreck.

Hindsight. Up to this point, Camila's use of spirituality throughout her shipwreck has only been briefly mentioned. Based on Camila's background and influence growing up, she was not exposed to many spiritual practices so she did not have a baseline of spiritual practice before her shipwreck. However, she stated that during the shipwreck is when her spiritual practices came about. Specifically, looking back she can see that her drives on the Blueridge Parkway, her hikes, and journaling in nature were practices that she figured out worked for her to get through the shipwreck. She stated that after the shipwreck she "started to recognize those things that worked for [her] and the bigger picture of her life and how to process things and understand why stuff happens and how to deal with [shipwreck]." It was hindsight that allowed Camila to have this realization and knowledge that many of her strategies for navigating her shipwreck were in fact spiritual practices. Khloe shared that some of the Buddhist teachings she relies on in her spiritual practice "ended up helping [her] in ways that [she] didn't even realize it could." It was upon reflection on the shipwreck that she was able to see how the spiritual practices helped her navigate the challenging time. While upon reflection most participants gained insight into the role of spirituality through their shipwreck moment, *all* of the participants were at a point of seeing their reliance on spiritual practices as a failsafe for working through future shipwrecks.

Failsafe. Since her shipwreck experience and after some of London's darkest moments, she is now able to articulate the need to cling to her spiritual practice as a fail-safe way of

surviving. Khloe described a similar newfound personal understanding of her spiritual practice when she stated, "The more I do Buddhism the ways that I want to, that brings out the best spiritual side of me." Khloe also talked about her belief that "with truth comes suffering" and that the shipwreck moment is certainly something that she came out of as a better person. Although the shipwreck experience presented her with many challenges, she came out better and more confident in her spiritual practice. Riley described her motivation to make her spiritual practice automatic when things get hard, reiterating the fact that deep down her spiritual practice, and in particular her belief in God, is a "safe haven" during difficult times. Bailey had similar beliefs in the failsafe effects of spiritual practice, believing that she was "put on this earth for a reason" and that there is a "bigger plan" for her life.

I think that part of this reliance on spiritual practices to move through future shipwrecks as a failsafe option is part of a larger understanding and resurfacing that each participant went through after the shipwreck. This understanding and acceptance will be addressed in greater detail in the next theme, resurfacing. However, before getting to a point of resurfacing, each participant had to hit a breaking point, a lowest of low, a bottom point of the shipwreck experience. Those experiences of breaking through shipwreck are detailed below.

Rock Bottom of Shipwreck and Breaking Through

Each participant talked about their shipwreck as culminating at a "rock bottom," "breaking point," or "waking moment." It was after reaching this bottom point that they were able to move forward and begin to make meaning of the shipwreck experience. The point, reason, and way of breaking through were different for each of the participants. Each of these experiences was so monumental for each of the participants, that I feel it is necessary to keep

those experiences as important individual expressions and to use many of the words of the

participants to describe these points of breakthrough.

Riley. Riley described that,

one night towards the end of all of [the shipwreck], almost like right at rock bottom…at

least in my mind it was…but I was lying in bed playing on my phone before I fell asleep.

And I just got like this sense that like came over me…I just started crying and got on my

knees and it was like one of the best spiritual moments I've ever had. It just felt like God

was trying to talk to me. And so, I know I looked so stupid, but I was just jamming to

worship music in my room at 2:00 am by myself, and just talking to God am opening up

about everything. And I felt every emotion that I had built up for like the past four

months, came just spewing out of me that night. And so, after that, then it was like, okay,

like I knew I needed to redirect with this.

She described that night as "the turning point in that hardness…and what made things get better

from that point on." It is after that night that Riley described a feeling of God being in control

and a stronger reliance on her spiritual practices for moving forward. It is this experience of

awakening to a new way of living that threw Riley into her resurfacing through the shipwreck,

which is described in further detail in the section that follows.

London. London's experience of breakthrough also happened several months into her

shipwreck experience. For London, the shipwreck experience impacted her in physical ways to

include not sleeping, panic attacks, and throwing up. It was these physical side effects of the

shipwreck experience that made London seek help in moving through the experience:

So, my doctor finally put me on medication…but that's how I finally started calming

down…it took that for me to finally start sleeping. And then by the end of the summer I

went and did my internship…and they put me in their housing and so being away from

school and where [the shipwreck] happened, I was finally able to decompress…And so it

took me to the summer, so it took me about four or five months before I ever developed

any [coping] skills.

It was this seeking of professional help, development of coping skills, and ultimately the owning

of her spiritual life as her own that allowed London to move through the shipwreck and to begin

to resurface out of the shipwreck experience.

Bailey. Bailey's experience with breaking through also took her spending some time

away from campus. Bailey's rock bottom experience included journaling through much of it as

described below:

I was journaling through [the shipwreck] … there were really dark, scary hard thoughts.

And to be very honest with you there was not a will to really be alive at that point. And

that was really hard and really scary. And even looking back, there was, there's been a lot

of repression of those thoughts, of those times.

Once Bailey moved away from campus for the summer, she felt she was finally able to "process

truly how [she] was feeling, where [she] was feeling, [and] what to do." It was upon her return to

campus in the Fall, after having spent some personal time reflecting and journaling that she was

able to seek the resources and support she needed to truly begin to reconcile the shipwreck

experience.

Camila. Camila's experience with a breakthrough came after a period of time of her

pushing down a "spiral of emotions." On the particular day of her reaching the rock bottom of

shipwreck, she saw her co-worker who had verbally threatened her and "that day in class

somebody had also given a presentation on sexual assault on college campuses"; that particular

day Camila described as a "breaking point." Camila felt like there was no other option than to

reach out to her boss for help on that day:

It also just felt like there was no other option because we had a staff meeting. At that

point, I couldn't sit in that staff meeting because it was like a 45-minute window and I

was like, I don't think I can get it together in time to sit through a two-hour staff meeting.

From that point, after talking to her boss, Camila also accessed other resources available to her

on campus, including the Student Resources Office. It was after talking with someone in the

Student Resources Office and seeking necessary accommodations based on her shipwreck

experiences that Camila was able to begin to resurface out of the shipwreck into a newfound

sense of self.

Khloe. Finally, Khloe described her rock bottom of shipwreck as a "waking moment of

not just to [her]self but the environment around [her]." Specifically, for Khloe, considering that

her shipwreck was more personal concerning how she handles communicating with others

especially around topics of social justice, naturally, her breakthrough experience involved

dialogue around such issues:

People had very left and right opinions, and it was just like a huge wave of cancel culture.

And I remember specifically my second year of dialogue…and they were discussing so

many things in regards to well, this person, this student, like, I don't talk to them at all

anymore, and I don't think they should even be at the university. And part of that

reasoning was that you know, they have these opinions that that person didn't agree with,

and were just talking about they're canceled. But then it was funny because they were

talking so much value on their friendship prior to these opinions kind of coming out…and

I was like, you know, I feel like these opinions should not have gotten in the way of your

relationship…and that was something that kind of stuck with me that also very, like a

large part that contributed to my inner work.

Khloe's bottom point of shipwreck played out in a different context than the rest of the

participants. However, the learning and reconciling of the cognitive dissonance Khloe had

around cancel culture and advocating for her own beliefs, provided the same opportunity for

Khloe to surface through her shipwreck.

Change in Understanding of Overcoming Shipwreck. Not only did my concept of the

term shipwreck evolve throughout this research, my understanding of what it means to overcome

or work through that shipwreck experience also evolved. After talking with each participant and

considering my own shipwreck experiences, I would now argue that a shipwreck experience is

not something that you truly ever *overcome*. Instead, the shipwreck experience becomes a part of

you, shaping you as a person and the way that you move forward in life. It is this kind of

experience that allows a person, a woman, to discover truths about herself, about her strength for

moving forward, and about how she intends to use that shipwreck as a stepping stone for further

growth, fulfillment, and understanding of her place in the world. A shipwreck experience allows

a woman to build on her true self at the core, knowing the places she has been only strengthen

her for the places she is going. Bailey described this sentiment during our final interview:

And [my realizations after shipwreck] helped me, I wouldn't say find closure because

there's never going to be complete closure from this situation, I think it stays with you for

your whole life. And [in] a lot of shipwreck situations…the boat is still ruined, the people

are still gone, like in a metaphorical sense, the shipwrecks still happened and you can't

just pretend it didn't, but you can find a reason for it happening. And for me, it was like

to find out who I am, who I want to be, and what I want to be.

I would argue that women should be open to the idea that a shipwreck experience is never truly over, that one must be open to always find learning from that experience and how to deal with it. The shipwreck experience can be moved through, but never completely overcome. It is this ability to move through the shipwreck, after such a deep challenge that allows a woman to resurface, arise out of the shipwreck as a better version of herself.

My Reflections and Standpoint

These stories of shipwreck have totally rocked me. Given my empathic nature by default, it is no wonder that I have been impacted by the stories that the women have shared with me about some of the most challenging and difficult experiences of their life. I am honored to have been privy to this information and also feel the weight of the stories shared each time I engage in the writing and review process related to this project. Since the sharing of these stories of shipwreck, I find myself more inclined to wonder about the shipwreck experiences of other women in my life. The shipwreck seems to be a collective journey of sorts, that each woman may be navigating on her own, afraid or apprehensive to speak up. This hypothesis of isolation during the shipwreck is grounded in the stories shared by each of the women as well as in my own experiences of shipwreck. This idea of suffering through shipwreck alone seems to follow some arbitrary social constraint that women must not crumble, that we must stand tall so as to be seen equal in the light of a man's world. I cannot help but wonder how the trajectory of shipwreck and moving through that experience might be impacted if women were allowed to be unapologetically themselves, through good times and bad.

Resurfacing

It is the practice of resurfacing that gives me the most hope in this research. The art of awakening (Christ, 1995) and arising out of shipwreck as a more whole person, a person with an

understanding of the purpose of her life, one who has made her spiritual practices her one, and one filled with peace and acceptance of her circumstances. Upon reflection on the in-depth stories that the women shared with me, I believe that true peace, acceptance, and wholeness can be achieved after facing a deep challenge. It is the challenge and the triumph through the shipwreck that ultimately equips women with a deeper understanding of self and their role on this earth. The words of Carol Christ (1995) speak to this sentiment:

> Because she can no longer accept conventional answers to her questions, she opens
>
> herself to the radically new—possibly to the revelation of powers or forces of being
>
> larger than herself that can ground her in a new understanding of herself and her position
>
> in the world. (p. 9)

This next thematic section on resurfacing fills me with a great sense of pride and joy. To be privy to the stories of deep struggle each of these women faced and to then know the ways in which these shipwrecks were moved through, in a positive, affirming, hopeful way, is truly an honor.

Spiritual Practice After Resurfacing

Once the women had resurfaced through their shipwreck experience, they were able to articulate the affect that experience had on their spiritual practice moving forward. As a consistent theme throughout my time with the women, I found that these women aimed to have a more consistent, sustainable, and automatic practice of their spiritual beliefs. The shipwreck experiences also allowed the participants to hone their spiritual practices to prepare for future shipwrecks that they may face.

Riley speaks of being more consistent in her spiritual practice, making her spiritual practice a more consistent part of her life. Specifically, she described her spiritual practice as more connected now, more than just "making [her] schedule look like [she] was doing [spiritual

practices].” Riley spoke about intentionally connecting with people who would hold her accountable to her spiritual practices. Similar to Riley, London has found that connecting with people who are similar to her and have similar beliefs has been a positive change for her spiritual practice. She is no longer comparing herself and her spiritual practice to other people rather is just content with the ways she finds fulfillment and wholeness in her relationship with God. As part of the impact of the shipwreck on Khloe’s spiritual practice, she stated that “when [I] feel certain shipwreck moments coming or just anxiety or a mental health kind of concern for myself, [I] go back, retract, and kind of go through all those things within my own spirituality and moral journey.” Through this retraction and focus on her own needs, Khloe has also found more “compassion when [she] communicate[s] with people…with herself and how [she] practice[s] self-care and self-love.” The shipwreck experience opened many doors for Camila to explore in the realm of spiritual practice. Camila talked about her newfound interest and curiosity related to crystals, energy, and witchery. It was not until the third interview that Camila opened up about these things to me, for fear that it would “make [me] feel weird.” However, once she finally became comfortable with me to share, due to the relational and conversational nature of narrative inquiry, she really lit up about this topic. I think that the shipwreck experience has allowed Camila to find a positive outlet for her spiritual practices; however, she is so new to that practice that she is not yet confident in it.

Based on the conversations held with the participants, I posit that the shipwreck experience catapulted the participants into more self-confidence as individual women, thereby also increasing the confidence that each of the them had in the way they practiced spirituality. They have found a way to let go of familial, societal, or personal pressure they felt regarding their spiritual practices, allowing them to have more peace within themselves. While each of the

women talked about individually owning her spirituality, another theme among them all is that none of them claim to have it all figured out. Although the participants felt more comfortable in their individual spiritual practice, they did not feel final in that destination, as they were still growing in their journeys. Perhaps through further work, growth, struggling through future shipwreck, and continued life maturation, these women will move past this feeling of inadequacy. Perhaps, as they move on to further defining and realizing their purpose in their lives, that they will begin to feel more confident about their spiritual practices.

Purpose

Each participant came out of the shipwreck feeling a new and revived or newly discovered sense of purpose for their lives. From graduate school and career trajectories to recognized visions of how they want to help people in the future to ultimately deciding to be sad no longer and instead to find peace in their lives, each of the participants talked about the purpose of their lives. This purpose, perhaps, would not have been recognized without their experience moving through the shipwreck; as such, many of the participants talked about their assuredness in the belief of a plan for their life with the shipwreck being part of that greater plan.

Riley talked a great deal about her purpose as related to God's greater purpose for her life, describing God's purpose for her life as bigger than her actions and as "[making] everything more doable and easier to bear." Riley saw this as a point of hope and assurance in her desire to aid victims of human trafficking and other injustices of the world:

> Because it's like these injustices aren't going to stop. They're just not, no matter how
> hard people fight, they're never going to 100% go away while we're on this Earth. But
> it's like, if I can do something to help one person then that brings me joy, you know. And
> it's like, you can't get bogged down in, like, if I don't cure human trafficking completely

you know, like, that's not a wasted life, but if I can fight for individuals to help get them

out of it, then that's a life worth living…if God can use me for good in the moments

where he puts me there, then it'll all be worth it.

Khloe matched this sentiment finding purpose and hope in that doing her small part in the world

will make a difference: "…You can do all you can, I don't think we'll ever reach complete

peace, but I think there will be bits and pieces that will make the world better."

Bailey, Camila, and London all believed that everything happens for a reason and that the

shipwreck journey is but a small piece of their bigger life. For London, the purpose she has in her

life after the shipwreck was crystallized when she finished reading the book *It's Not Supposed to

Be This Way: Finding Unexpected Strength When Disappointments Leave You Shattered* by Lysa

TerKeurst. London shared the passage from the book with me that sent her into tears as it

affirmed for her that her shipwreck experience has answers now:

Perfection intimidates and compassion inspires. And in that, you will finally find the

why. Why did this happen? Because there's someone else in the world who would drown

in their own tears if not for seeing yours. And when you make one other human simply

seen, that they aren't alone, you make the world a better place.

Chills ran up and down my body as she read this quote to me. It was as if we had been on this

journey together over our time spent in the interviews and I could see the transformative power

this quote had on London's outlook on life. Perhaps these sentiments of finding purpose in their

shipwreck is a way of Bailey, Camila, and London truly working through the trauma of their

experiences.

Career Calling. Concerning a purpose in life through a career calling, both Khloe and

Bailey talked about their shipwreck experiences as revealing their career path in higher education

and Student Affairs. Given the fact that they both were highly involved student leaders and consulted a Student Affairs professional during their shipwreck, I am not surprised. London's career dreams are related to wanting to work with folks in crisis. Again, this is not surprising, considering the enormous shipwreck that London faced, involving many facets of university crisis protocol. Through finding purpose in life and a career path, these participants are better equipped to accept their truths, their experiences, their lives and give birth to their true, authentic self.

Acceptance and Birth of True Self

It was after their shipwreck, awakening, and newfound purpose that each woman finally talked about acceptance of themselves and their experiences. For many of the women, our conversations about these topics were their first times for putting their experiences of shipwreck, suffering, and breakthrough into words. Christ (1995) talks about the importance of this when she wrote, "After a woman experiences the grounding of her quest in the powers of being, it is important for her to name her experiences in words" (p. 23); for when you name a thing, you truly begin to own it. I believe, as Christ (1995) states, that "…a woman must listen to her own voice and come to terms with her own experience. She must break long-standing habits of seeking approval" (p. 9). Breaking through the shipwreck into a newfound purpose and acceptance of self was a significant experience for each of the participants in moving forward, a birth of true self. Just as each of the shipwreck experiences was unique to the participants, so too were their experiences of acceptance of self.

London talked about the fact that "[her] life will never be the same as it was before." She commented that the shipwreck experience is "a big part of [her]" and that there is a need to "accept it and then understanding it will get easier, but it's never going to go away." She further

distilled learning from this point when she stated that "just because your life isn't perfect doesn't mean you're still not influencing people around you." Regarding her birth of true self, she stated that the biggest learning piece from the shipwreck was as follows: "I think the biggest thing really was just accepting me. For the longest time, I kept trying to be somebody that everybody wanted me to be. And it was never going to happen." Khloe's biggest learning lesson and acceptance of self comes in the form of assigning deep value to dialogue over issues: "And now moving into this realm of trying to be more open to challenging, but also being more open to listening, definitely changed a lot of my perspectives." I believe Khloe's ultimate manifestation and birth of true self comes in the form of now having the "courage to speak out against [her] parents." She is finally to a place of acceptance of self and her opinions and beliefs that she feels comfortable with standing firm in those beliefs to her parents, even when they disagree. For Camila, the shipwreck "changed [her] life and maybe even how [she] treat[s] other people or treat[s] [her]self and definitely gave [her] new perspective and ways to think about things and do things." She feels in control and "very present instead of worrying and being anxious about everything…[feeling] really present and centered." Camila's experience resulted in lots of growth in herself and the way that she approaches life and conversations with others about the experiences of her life.

My Reflections and Standpoint

My heart ached as the women shared their stories with me. But then through the natural waves of despair and hope, I found myself filled with great joy as each of the women talked about how they were able to move through these difficult experiences. The women were able to find purpose and peace in their story, further assisting them in becoming their best selves. As I have spent the time on this project, I, too, have found myself reflecting on what it has meant for

me to resurface through my own shipwreck experiences. Whether that shipwreck was an experience on the Camino, the loss of loved ones, or the inexplicable trials of parenthood, I have been nothing short of amazed at my ability to pull through that shipwreck experience. I am grateful that I have the tools and necessary supports to be able to continue to face and conquer difficult experiences. However, I am aware that not all women are privileged to have the same kind of network, mental capacity, or ability to move through challenging experiences. If anything, this research has shined a light on the positive ways in which I have been able to engage and pull through some of the most challenging times of my life. My ability to do this time and time again makes me search for something in myself that allows me to encourage other women to do the same thing. How might my learnings from this project influence the ways in which I engage with college women and other women in my life to be a better support network to them when they find themselves amidst a shipwreck experience? How might I encourage others to find ways to keep persevering without further oppressing those women that do not have the desire or capability of moving past a shipwreck?

Behaviors, Traits, and Practices of Student Affairs Professionals

The stories shared by the women are ripe with recommendations for higher education moving forward in the support of the spiritual development of college students. However, before moving through to those recommendations and participants' suggested practices for implementation, it is important to detail how the participants described their experience in seeking support from a higher education professional before, during, and following a shipwreck experience. Below I will outline specific behaviors, traits, and practices of Student Affairs professionals that aided participants as they were seeking support during a shipwreck. These actions by the professionals aided the participants in feeling comfortable approaching them

during their time of deep challenge. I will then share findings related to the importance of trust

and the strength of a relationship that participants shared were important as they sought support

from a Student Affairs professional during their shipwreck experience.

Casual Conversation and Affirmation

Riley talked about confiding in various supervisors in student employment/leadership

positions that she held on campus. She noted that one supervisor, in particular, made it easy to

talk about her deep challenge because that supervisor "would always just stop by and be like,

'Hey, how are things going?'" when she was working her shift. In particular, Riley felt that this

consistent casual conversation over several months allowed her to share more when things were

tough, to "get things off [her] chest to another adult who wasn't going to judge [her] or wasn't

going to think of [her] in a different light." Khloe mimicked these sentiments as she recalled

sharing about her struggles with multiple advisors in her leadership position. Both Riley and

Khloe also talked in great detail about the affirmation they felt when they were addressed as

people first, before the problem or issue at hand was addressed by their respective advisors.

While both were serving as presidents of a student organization, they each sought support from

their advisors as it related to problems affecting the organization and in turn causing shipwrecks

within themselves. While the advisor's job is to be concerned with the organization, each of the

advisors *first* addressed how Khloe and Riley were personally doing at that moment. Khloe noted

that "this verbal affirmation of somebody wanting to listen and telling [her] that they want to

listen" was crucial in seeking support during a shipwreck moment. An even greater affirmation

for Khloe came when a particular advisor pulled her aside because they could "tell that

something was wrong."

Additional Resources

Another important practice that participants talked about when discussing the support they sought from a university staff member during their shipwreck was the practice of guiding students to additional resources. Riley shared the following on the topic: "I think it's helpful that even while [Student Affairs professionals] are giving us advice, [they]'re also pointing us to other resources on campus who could help as well." Camila and London both shared experiences of their advisors on campus advocating on their behalf to resolve certain situations related to their shipwreck journeys. In these particular instances, both advisors advocated that necessary accommodations through the Student Resources Office or the Office of Access Service be made so that Camila and London could begin to move through the shipwreck experience. Whether guiding the participant to seek out additional resources or advocating on behalf of the students, participants recalled that those behaviors were particularly helpful practices of the Student Affairs professionals from who they sought support during a time of great need.

Asking Questions

Several participants detailed accounts of Student Affairs professionals asking them thought-provoking questions that aided them in moving through the shipwreck experience. Riley shared that her supervisor in her employment position would always ask her, "'What's something that you do that kind of just helps you get your mind off things?'" Riley explained that this helped her connect to her spirituality, even if her supervisor did not intentionally mean for that to occur:

> She may have not even thought that that was a spiritual kind of talk we were having, but
> by her taking the time to try to get me to help connect with something that was going to
> let me just become freer, in a sense, she was helping me with my spirituality.

Khloe talked about a similar experience with one of her advisors, recalling that he asked her a series of questions as they talked about her shipwreck: "'What are you doing to calm yourself down?' 'What are you learning from this?' and 'What are you teaching yourself from this?'" Khloe stated that those questions in particular "helped [her] gather [her] own thoughts…[and] teach [her]self within [her] spiritual side." Each of these questions, although different in the wording and timing, allowed for the respective participants to reflect and truly consider how they would garner the strength and endurance to continue to persevere through their shipwreck experience, an experience that will have an impact on them for the rest of their lives.

Sharing Personal Stories

Several participants talked about how they felt more comfortable reaching out to their particular advisors and mentors during a moment of shipwreck because those professionals had at some point shared a personal or similar story and were vulnerable with the participants. Specifically, Khloe recalled when she was pulled aside by her advisor because he could sense that something was wrong. At that particular time, Khloe's shipwreck involved a family issue. As she began to open up with him about her experience, she stated that "he even shared a personal story with [her] about his own childhood and something that was kind of related to and similar to what [she] was going through…[ultimately] making [her] feel so much more comfortable talking to him." Bailey's supervisor also opened up and shared a personal story that related to the shipwreck experience that Bailey was experiencing. The supervisor was vulnerable with Bailey, ultimately making Bailey more apt to seek her out for support during shipwreck moments: "I think that having a relationship where I can see multiple parts of her life, increased my trust and increased my own vulnerability, again…when [she's] vulnerable with me, I feel like I can be vulnerable with [her]." For each of the participants described here, the fact that a

professional shared about themselves and were vulnerable with the students, made the

participants more ready and able to seek support during times of deep challenge.

General Characteristics

There were several other behaviors, traits, and practices that the participants described as

reasons for seeking out the particular Student Affairs professional(s) that they did during their

shipwreck experience. These professionals who were of particular help to participants while they

were in a shipwreck were described as: "Like a warm soul, [having] a motherly affirmation, can

understand what you're going through, very empathetic," "very opening and welcoming,"

"intentional," "supportive," "good listeners," making time for their students, and showing

"genuine" care. The participants described that these professionals were available and working

with them after hours and often had an "open door" policy. Each of these traits and behaviors

aided the participant in moving forward through their shipwreck experience, as ultimately these

traits and behaviors allowed for stronger relationships and trust to be built between the

participants and the professionals from which they sought support.

Relationships

Throughout my time spent with each of the participants during their interviews, I learned

a great deal about the role that an established relationship and a sense of trust plays in college

women seeking support during a moment of deep challenge. The emphasis on a relationship built

over time and undergirded by deep trust was a theme for most participants in seeking support

from a Student Affairs professional during their shipwreck. Riley talked through her experiences

sharing with her supervisor about her shipwreck; she stated that what helped her feel comfortable

to share was that she "already had an established relationship with her [supervisor] from working

there the past year…so [she] already trusted her and [they] saw each other every day." This daily

interaction and trusted relationship were also important to Riley as she sought support working through her shipwreck experience through a spiritual means, especially since Riley considers it a "personal kind of thing to engage in the spiritual side of yourself." Khloe described the relationship with her advisors as them being like "her parents on campus," relationships that were strengthened through time spent together during occurrences such as bi-weekly coffee get-togethers. Camila's support from a Student Affairs professional was a more long-term consistent relationship based on having the same supervisor in her role as a student employee for three years. The time spent with advisors and supervisors as a result of the leadership position held by participants generally strengthened the relationship between the two parties.

Reason for Relationship. A common theme amongst the participants was that more often than not, their strong relationships with a Student Affairs professional began primarily due to a leadership position that the participant held (reference Table 1 for the positions of each participant). Riley shifted leadership roles over time, thus the support from Student Affairs professionals also shifted. Khloe stated that while her leadership position may have led her to meet those particular advisors, she also "[felt] like [she] would not have opened up as much to they had they not built that personal connection" with her. Bailey had a similar experience to Khloe in that her leadership position as a student leader led her to meet her particular advisor, as well as allowing them to build a personal connection, ultimately allowing Bailey to be more vulnerable with her advisor. London was the outlier participant in that the leadership position she held on campus did not lead her to find a Student Affairs professional to seek support from during her shipwreck experience.

London had much disdain and general negative feelings associated with any Student Affairs professional she met through her leadership position on campus. She used unfavored

language in an often-hostile demeanor when speaking about her superiors in her leadership

position, to include such statements as: "I have no good words for [them]," "I [felt] unsupported

by them," "they delayed a lot of my progress." This negative association with the professionals

above her in her leadership position led London to seek support from different Student Affairs

professionals during her shipwreck experience. Specifically, London found the most support,

although not at first, through her connection with a staff member in the Student Resources

Office. Over time, London was able to connect with a Student Affairs professional and establish

a mutual sense of trust with that person, even if it was not a professional London met as a direct

result of her leadership position on campus.

Trust. Along with specific behaviors and practices and established relationships that

offered the support that the participants needed during a time of deep challenge, trust also played

a factor in participants seeking support from Student Affairs professionals. Trust was integral in

sharing such intimate and personal struggles with someone. This was especially true for the

participants who were less comfortable seeking out generic resources, such as the Center for

Student Support, during a shipwreck experience (more on this in Chapter 5). For Riley, trust in

the person she was speaking to through an established relationship was important in seeking

support. In the statement below, Riley shared the role that trust played in her confiding in her

supervisor during her shipwreck experience:

> You know, it's hard to just sit and talk about the hard things going on in your life [for]
> fear of being judged or looked down upon. So, knowing the relationship is already there,
> you already know who they are, it helps a lot.

London and Camila did not specifically talk about trust as they talked about their

experience with seeking support from a Student Affairs professional. While they did not

specifically mention this exact word, I would argue that trust evident in the relationships they built over time. Specifically, Camila's supervisor was the one that knew the details of each part of her shipwreck experience, thereby, insinuating that she trusted him with that information. Considering London's experience and stated disdain for her superiors, she had to work to build a relationship and trust with another professional on campus. This took a greater amount of time for London to do, as she did not have the built-in relationship with that person through her leadership position. Trust was not a salient quality that London and Camila talked about during their interviews, but perhaps Student Affairs professionals building trust with students would lead to more students seeking support through a deep challenge.

My Reflections and Standpoint

What I have found to be true as I think about the stories shared related to the helpful behaviors, traits, and practices of Student Affairs professionals in regard to helping students move through shipwreck, is that I aim to be the type of professional that students have described. I am self-aware enough to know that I may not exhibit all of those behaviors and traits on a daily basis with every person that I engage with, but many of the behaviors and traits described are practices that I embody in my work in Student Affairs. Perhaps my embodiment of those behaviors and traits described—vulnerability, asking questions, and general connections with student leaders—is the reason why I have, prior to this research, found myself able to engage with students about their spiritual practices and development. Perhaps, also, that is the reason why this research has felt natural for me to engage with, almost feeling not like research at all. Upon further reflection, conceivably my work as a Student Affairs professional is guided by my ability to be authentically and unapologetically me; my search for wholeness and true self through engagement with and through shipwreck experiences have allowed me to be the kind of

Student Affairs professionals that the women in this study are calling for. However, further reflection needs to take place for me on the ways in which I am able to engage in this type of behavior with my colleagues and peers, as I often find that a more challenging space to be truly me.

Recommended Practices

Considering my work is in the field of Student Affairs, it was important to me for this research to be useful for me and my colleagues moving forward in the profession. Therefore, I set out to ask all of the participants to answer questions (see Appendix E) related to their perceptions and recommendations for practices that professionals in higher education can implement to support the spiritual development of college women, especially during and following a shipwreck moment. In the following section, I will detail the relevant information shared with me during the participant interviews. In Chapter 5, I will add to these recommendations and offer my own suggestions for suggested practices for Student Affairs professionals to best support the spiritual development of college students, especially during a shipwreck experience.

Perceived Role of Spirituality on Campus

Before sharing practices that were recommended by participants, I thought it is worth noting that three of five participants felt spirituality did not play a significant role within higher education. Camila made the following statement concerning the role spirituality plays on campus: "Honestly, it feels like none…maybe in individual relationships, but not [the university] as a whole." While Khloe did not say that there was no role of spirituality played on campus, she did have this to say:

I've seen things out in the community of Boone, but on-campus directly, it's been a little

bit harder because again, I think it's one of those areas where people are afraid to tap in

because it's that stereotypical don't talk about religion or politics at the dinner table.

Khloe's description of the often-hostile nature of conversations related to differences of opinions

in social issues is not surprising, as the campus is but a microcosm of the greater world. Bailey's

opinion of the role spirituality played on campus was that it was not "big enough because

spirituality can really help students." I share all of this to paint a picture of the knowledge and

experience that many of the participants had or perceived regarding the practices of spirituality

on campus.

Creating Connections

Riley shared at some point in her interviews that she had at one time considered going

into the field of Student Affairs. While she has since chosen a different path, I think that her lens

and interest in the field gave her some great insight into the work of Student Affairs

professionals and how that work can be enhanced to support the spiritual development of college

students. One insight that Riley shared is that she often found it easier to connect with graduate

students because of their closeness in age. This is not necessarily a recommendation, but a

recognition that a practice to consider could be training graduate student staff to have

conversations with students about spirituality. Riley also talked in great detail about the

importance of the role that Student Affairs professionals play in connecting students with "the

right people, but then taking the time to help them connect to themselves, too." She wanted to

challenge Student Affairs professionals to "seek out more moments [even] when maybe it's not

as convenient" to have conversations with students to help them connect with resources and with

something larger than themselves. Riley placed great value on the work of Student Affairs

professionals in helping students to navigate difficult situations, and thus recommended the need

to "find a way for Student Affairs to be more accessible…a way for it to be more welcoming and

inviting for students even if they're not [in a leadership role]." By finding a way for more

students to get involved, a gap would be bridged in letting students know that Student Affairs

professionals in all offices on campus can be a resource to them.

Diversity Training

Khloe's recommendations for practice are also influenced by her interest in and pursuit of

a career in the field of Student Affairs. To begin, Khloe shared a recommendation to simply ask

questions to students that make them think of the larger questions of life, for example: "What,

who, or where are you looking to for comfort in times of shipwreck?" Aside from this more

intimate one-on-one conversation, Khloe, along with Bailey, also suggested more wide-sweeping

conversations through including spirituality in diversity and inclusion trainings that faculty, staff,

and students already participate in. The fact that a person's spirituality is often an invisible

identity amplifies Khloe's recommendation for the need for training to be conducted on the

topic:

> I think people tend to sweep spirituality and religion under the rug, sometimes in higher
>
> education as we talk about, you know, implicit bias in terms of the physical aspects that
>
> we can see and the visible identities that we can see. But again, those invisible ones, such
>
> as our religious backgrounds, our spiritual backgrounds, like it's not talked about. So, I
>
> feel like those conversations need to be brought into that main conversation and trainings
>
> of like implicit bias or diversity and inclusion trainings and stuff like that.

Khloe also shared about the importance of differentiating conversations about religion and

spirituality away from politics, as she perceives that these two topics are often intertwined (i.e., a

conservative person is assumed to be Christian). She also talked about the opportunities that faculty, staff, and student organizations have to host and facilitate those conversations, having an ability to dismantle stigmas around the topics.

General Education

Camila and London, both participants who are not pursuing a career in Student Affairs, had limited things to say about recommended practices to aid students in their spiritual development. Camila's recommended practices are related to general knowledge sharing. For example, in her work as a student employee, she stated the following about the training she receives on spirituality:

> We'll glaze over religion [and] we push so much with having an inclusive environment, but that's pretty much it…I think it is hard because you imagine spiritual, religious, and they're not necessarily the same. And so, I guess it's interesting to even think about how to open up the doors to that conversation.

London shared the same theme around her employer seeking to create an inclusive environment, stating that, "[they] talk about diversity all day long, but then [are] like, 'No, we're not going to speak about religion.'" Camila talked about her interest in having an undergraduate level course on spirituality generally "because [she's] sure [that] there's lots of students who, might not be religious, but maybe there is something for [them] in those conversations." This course could be a "concrete ways to give students access to learn more and understand more [about spirituality]." London's thoughts on recommended practice also revolved around doing more education around spirituality, as she referred to it as "kind of one of those 'don't talk about' topics." Both participants shared similar leadership positions on campus and provided similar responses to how Student Affairs professionals can aid the spiritual development of college students.

Missed Opportunities

Along with the recommended practices, the participants of this research study also talked about several experiences that I would classify as missed opportunities for Student Affairs professionals to engage with students regarding their spirituality and spiritual development. Riley's extensive leadership roles on campus allowed her to see the often full plates that professionals have in juggling their major job responsibilities alongside caring for students as individuals. Riley shared that this full workload could lead to "missed opportunities [to talk with students about their spirituality] just because life gets busy." Camila shared a related missed opportunity when Student Affairs professionals themselves are not adequately being served, in a spiritual manner or otherwise, by their institution. Camila felt as if Students Affairs professionals are not being served by the university that they work for, that there is then a trickle down to students not feeling heard and supported, which potentially impedes their desire to reach out during hard times.

Another missed opportunity is related to the conversations that Student Affairs professionals are willing and trained (or not) to have with students about their spiritual development. Khloe shared that she felt that "faculty and staff are not challenging themselves to be able to navigate these conversations, but instead, kind of avoiding it." If professionals at the university are avoiding conversations about spirituality altogether, there must be a reason. Bailey speculated that university employees are intimated by the stigma of talking about spirituality with students, especially because "a lot of people think spirituality and religion are the same." Bailey perceives that higher education professionals are then called to question where the line is drawn in terms of appropriate or inappropriate conversations and the associated "trouble" that the professionals can find themselves in for having inappropriate conversations with students.

Center for Student Support. Given the nature of London's interviews, stories riddled with disapproving things to say about her interactions with Student Affairs professionals, she provided the most information related to missed opportunities of Student Affairs professionals to support the spiritual development of college students. Related to the Center for Student Support, one reason London did not feel supported during her experiences there was that she was directed to talk to a figure of authority, a male professional: "I wouldn't talk to him because I don't talk to guys…he was like, 'I am here to help you' and I was like, 'I don't care, you don't fit my description of what I'm looking for'." The opportunity for London to begin to work through her shipwreck experience while at the Center for Student Support was missed because of the identity of the person she was required to speak to. The other reason London shared for not feeling supported at the Center for Student Support was the fact that time and sessions are limited. With limited sessions, it can be challenging to feel supported in working through a challenging experience.

Protocol. The other missed opportunity London shared very passionately about was the fact that a "protocol" is followed in every situation. This protocol was a major point of contention for London, often eliciting great emotions when talking about the need to follow a protocol. London shared that strictly following a protocol can be detrimental for those involved:

> The school doesn't treat the situation for real people. They follow it by protocol, which legally covers them, but they don't care to take in the fact that this is real. And this happened to somebody else. They don't put themselves in the situation…they [follow] a protocol.

Taking the person and individual out of the situation in order to strictly follow a protocol, can be detrimental to the ability of involved persons to move through the shipwreck experience. While

protocols may be efficient and fair, they certainly may not be doing justice to the situation and those involved.

My Reflections and Standpoint

I am proud of the ways in which the women were able to advocate through story to me the practices that they believe would better support their spiritual development on campus. Considering that three of the women have already graduated and two of them are in their senior year, I am disappointed that they will not see any of these recommend practices come to fruition. However, the relationships that I have built with these women instills in me a sense of obligation to help affect and create change on our campus, so that if I have conversations with these women in the future I can share about the foundation of progress they laid for students that came after them. Upon reflection of the women sharing about their perceived lack of spirituality on campus, I feel empowered to be more bold in my stance on the importance of this topic to be addressed on campus. If students lack any perceived role of spiritual development on campus, then the strides that I have made as a professional alongside the areas of campus targeted for this topic are irrelevant. Perhaps through engagement with further training and education on the topic for professionals across campus we may be able to move the dial on the support of the spiritual development of college students. While I have many fears related to a mandated training, I do believe that I can begin to make a small step forward in the training of my direct staff and students, those in my department, and then engaging with conversations with the administration in my division about the topic. Now that I am privy to the stories and insights shared by the participants of this research, it would be irresponsible and unethical of me to do nothing further to change the practice of Student Affairs at my institution.

Leadership Position

I did not explicitly set out to attain and interview only women who also held leadership positions on campus; however, based on the nature of the recruitment of participants during the COVID-19 pandemic, all of my participants were referred to me for participation from my colleagues in Student Affairs. Another important piece to mention is that this study's interview questions did not explicitly ask participants to discuss leadership or their leadership positions specifically. However, in describing themselves and their experiences, it was clear that every participant held a leadership role on campus. What I found was that the women I interviewed were in shipwreck, as were many of those whom they led. I noticed that the participants were experiencing moments of shipwreck, but were holding it together. It was not until the compounding of events, one upon another, that these women could no longer maintain a strong face and uphold their efficacy in leadership without seeking help. Some of the themes related to their specific leadership positions were centered around 1) serving as a support system for others in their leadership role, 2) the experience of seeking support as a student leader, 3) how being a woman played a role in leadership, and 4) how their leadership philosophy and approach has changed after experiencing a shipwreck. These themes are addressed below through highlighting several of the most significant participant conversations in each area.

Support System for Others

Throughout their experiences as human beings and as student leaders, each of the participants described their role, and the subsequent responsibility they felt, in serving as a support system for others in their lives. They also each talked about their future careers, each one aiming to serve in a capacity to ultimately help others and make a positive impact in the world.

In all that they do, especially in their leadership roles, each of the participants aimed to support others, even if it meant they themselves needed support.

Riley described serving as a support system for others in her role as the president of a student organization, especially during a time in which many organization members had shared experiences of sexual assault with her. In these particular instances, Riley felt a strong dissonance between taking a step to report and respecting the wishes of her constituents. It was during this time that Riley's shipwreck began; she stated that "…[she] saw everything spiraling the most for [her] because of what was going on in other people's lives." She described the exhaustion around caring for these people, while also needing to keep that private to herself, ultimately putting the needs of others before herself. Camila and Bailey both described in detail their familiarity with campus resources available to students, largely attributing this to the training they had received as student leaders on campus. They both, though, described that "[they] felt] the need to *help everyone else*, to give those resources to everyone else to do what [they] need to so *[everyone else feels] comfortable*," ultimately pushing aside their needs in the process. Khloe affirmed this sentiment as she described not having time for herself as "people need[ed] [her] here, people need[ed] [her] there." While participants seemed to be well equipped to support others on campus through the knowledge of campus resources and dissemination of that knowledge to their peers, they often struggled to engage in resources in the way they were encouraging their peers to.

Seeking Support as a Student Leader

Most participants articulated their understanding of campus resources available to them and others; in particular, the participants were adamant about the dissemination of this knowledge to their peers during difficult times. What was interesting about all of this was that

the participants had varying levels of comfortability and confidence in seeking support when they needed it, especially when considering the complexities around their role as leaders on campus and the difference in formal and informal resources of support.

Riley felt that seeking support on campus was necessary in order to "figure out how to work through some of [her] harder leadership situations." For Riley, she made the logical connection of feeling challenged as a leader, an integral part of her shipwreck, and seeking support through leadership coaching that was offered on campus. She also regularly sought advice and insight from mentors she had on campus, professionals she was connected to based on the leadership roles she held on campus. For Riley, she hypothesized that it would have been a harder step to seek support and the listening ear of a mentor if she were not involved and connected on campus.

Khloe and Bailey also talked in great detail about their relationship with Student Affairs professionals, due to their leadership positions on campus, as a reason why they felt comfortable to seek support. Bailey placed a great deal of emphasis on mentors she had identified on campus, folks she had met due to her leadership roles. These folks held and made space for Bailey through their own vulnerability, supporting her daily life outside of her leadership role, allowing her to express her emotions, and helping her to reflect and make decisions. The trust Bailey had in each of her three identified mentors on campus was captured when she talked about "…believing your mentor and believing that what they're saying is the best thing for you." In general, Khloe and Bailey felt as though folks on campus had invested time and energy into them, ultimately making the task of seeking support from informal resources an achievable one.

Camila was similar, in that her seeking support from informal resources on campus was directly related to people who she knew because of her leadership position. While Camila was

comfortable with seeking support from those she was connected to through her leadership position, she did also mention that her leadership position "added a weird layer" to using this support system. Camila knew the protocol, knew the ways in which she would be supported, and the impact of 'yes' responses to certain questions when seeking support. This deep knowledge of the procedures impacted Camila's desire to want to seek full formal support. She described this dissonance as follows:

> On the outside of a situation you're very prone to speak up, like I want people who have been through situations like that to get the support they need and the stuff they need, but *when it's you I feel like it's harder*. And so, I was trying to think what would I want my friend to do? … And so, like I was looking at it, like what would I want for somebody? … And so, that I think was part of it, is like, how to handle it the best ways possible. And again, I feel like being a [student leader] adds an extra level of responsibility and like, knowing how things work, and *doing it when it comes to me, too*.

Center for Student Support. When speaking about formal campus resources available to students enduring deep challenge, most often the Center for Student Support was the focal point. There were varying opinions related to seeking support as a student leader at the Center for Student Support. Khloe, Bailey, and London all stated that they had gone to the Center for Student Support on campus once or twice but were all unhappy with their experience. They recounted the limited number of sessions available, the inconsistency in providers they were assigned to, an overall perception of the Center for Student Support running through the motions, and in Khloe's words, even sentiments of "never [feeling] like [the Center for Student Support] genuinely cared."

Camila had a somewhat different experience when speaking about the Center for Student Support as a place to seek support during deep challenge. Specifically, she talked about the challenge of going to the Center for Student Support, describing the specifically as a student leader stating, "Every time I go to the [Center for Student Support], I see somebody I know, which is like, I don't care because we're both here, but like somebody else might really care." Not only was it challenging for Camila to go to the Center for Student Support for fear of seeing someone she may know, it was also challenging when she saw so many of her peers in the space. She recalled a time when she walked into the Center for Student Support and saw four other student leaders in the same role as her waiting to be seen; she said she remembered thinking "this is not good." Camila also talked about the limited resources available to students on campus and her desire to not "take those resources away from somebody else," another barrier that inhibited her from seeking the support she needed.

Leadership as a Woman

Much like I did not explicitly include questions about leadership in my interviews, I also did not pre-script any questions specifically about leadership as a woman. However, included in the conversations around leadership positions on campus, many of the participants described the ways in which their identity as a woman impacted their leadership experience. They talked explicitly about hiding their emotions from others, caring very deeply about others, and fitting the role that society and/or family have for them. It is through viewing leadership through the lens of their identity as a woman, that we can gain a more complete picture of the leadership theme.

Camila talked about the responsibilities she feels and takes on, her identification as an empath, and her general sense of giving and caring for others. She described a conversation with

a female mentor and how that mentor explained to her, from personal experience, how all of that responsibility, care, and empathy while in a leadership role can negatively affect other aspects of one's life. Camila recalled trying to explain this conversation to a male in her life, feeling empowered to begin gaining control of the way that she holds responsibility for other people. In summary, that male friend could not relate, thus leading Camila to draw some conclusions about the societal expectations that she ascribes to as a woman.

Khloe talked most about the impacts of her identity as a woman in her leadership role. Khloe stated that her parents, especially her mom who grew up in a traditional Asian background, did not originally condone or support her in seeking the role as president of her student organization. Even amidst her initial familial disapproval of her in the position, Khloe persisted. She described that she was later able to prove to her mom that "this [leadership position] is not taking a toll on who [she is] as a person or [her mom's] ideals of [her] as a woman. [She doesn't] look uglier." Khloe described this as one of the biggest hurdles she had to overcome: proving to her parents that she was worthy and capable of succeeding in the leadership role. Khloe also exuded great pride as she talked about not only being a woman, but an Asian woman, in a leadership position, something that is "not commonly seen." Ultimately, Khloe went on to describe achieving this position and succeeding in it as part of what made her feel whole.

Leadership after Shipwreck

Riley spoke at greatest length about how the shipwreck impacted her as a woman in a leadership position. This may be in part because much of her shipwreck experience revolved around her position as president of a student organization. Riley's confidence as a leader grew as a result of her shipwreck: "I feel like I can handle stress and, you know, kind of hard, life altering

moments better now… there's been a lot of hard things going on, but I feel a lot stronger as a leader in hard moments." She described wanting to be a strong leader, a leader who others can count on, but also recognized that she cannot carry the whole load by herself. This epiphany was similar to one that London had after her shipwreck. She stated that the shipwreck taught her that holding the weight and burden of deep challenges for other people "hold[s] [her] back from doing what [she] need[s] to do."

The participants' stories teach us that college women in leadership positions are bound to experience shipwreck moments. These shipwreck moments may or may not be tied to their leadership position; regardless, the women's leadership styles going forward are generally impacted by the shipwreck experience. The women of this research have also brought to light that special attention needs to be paid to student leaders and their experiences seeking formal campus resources during times of deep challenge. They have also taught us that, while student leaders may be equipped with the knowledge about campus resources, they often lack the follow through needed to seek support during their shipwreck. All of these campus women, all serving as student leaders, sought support from a Student Affairs professional as a first identified outreach to a campus resource. It is evident from the stories shared that the participants' leadership roles were impacted by and/or played a significant role in their shipwreck experience.

My Reflections and Standpoint

This theme was of significant importance to me, even though I originally did not set out to engage with the women about their leadership positions. In fact, in early iterations of this project, I had planned to engage in this research specifically as it relates to student leaders, but later settled on the inherent need to work with college women. I could not be more proud of the ways in which I was able to work with college women to illuminate their stories of spirituality

and shipwreck. Also, given the stark reality that the leadership role played for each of the women in this project, I am certainly glad that this research unfolded in the way that it did. I cannot move through any experience with a college woman leader without reflecting back on the stories that were shared as part of this project. The challenges faced in a leadership position are magnified for women. From the emotional burden they carry to the seemingly ever looming threat of gender-based violence, college women in leadership roles might need extra support. As they are executing leadership positions, often positions structured from a patriarchal worldview, they must be supported for the needs they have as women. They need to see more people like them in leadership roles across the University and the implementation of practices that support women when they are facing shipwreck. The lessons learned about the role of a college woman in a leadership position can be mirrored to also represent the role of women in leadership positions in Student Affairs. Often, we feel unsupported in our endeavors, told that we are too emotional, not understood when we have to take time away to care for our children, and the list goes on. Again, based on the findings of this study, I feel empowered to find more ways to support myself and my female colleagues as we make our way through a career and system that was founded in patriarchy.

Conclusion

This chapter is full of rich accounts of college women and their experiences of spirituality and triumphs through shipwreck. What the findings teach us, and add to the literature around shipwreck, is that there is an initial event that begins the shipwreck journey. The shipwreck is not limited to this single event, rather compounded by other academic, personal, and/or social challenges that result in a time period that a woman experiences shipwreck. Women often face various barriers, both internal and external, that prevent them from immediately moving through

the experience. However, at some point, the shipwreck bottoms out, and the woman can begin to move past it. After the rock bottom of the shipwreck, the woman experiences an awakening moment, a time in which she resurfaces, having discovered her purpose in life. Generally, a woman, her life, and her spiritual practices are forever marked and impacted by the shipwreck experience. The shipwreck often results in the woman accepting herself, her life, and her experiences as part of her larger story, ultimately allowing the woman to give birth to her full self.

Not only did I share about college women experiencing and resurfacing through shipwreck, but I also addressed aspects of these women's stories that were chock full of behaviors, traits, recommended practices, and missed opportunities that participants experienced as they sought support from a Student Affairs professional during their shipwreck. I will spend more time in Chapter 5 adding my own recommendations for practice in the field, but for now, it is important to note that Student Affairs professionals must be prepared to have conversations with our students about the deep challenges and shipwrecks that they are facing regularly. It is imperative that we establish relationships, build trust with our students, and exhibit behaviors and actions that demonstrate that we are equipped to assist our students during their troubled times.

Finally, another important part of this chapter is the stories that the women shared with me in regard to the various leadership positions that they held on campus. These positions of leadership had significant meaning for the women, impacting their identity, their shipwreck experiences, and their futures. The women shared what it was like to be a student leader on campus and having to serve as a support system for their peers. The women also shared the effects of the reverse of serving as a support system, seeking support themselves as a student

leader and how that is often a challenging experience. The stories of the women also revealed

great insight into what it means to be a leader as a woman; the experience of women in

leadership positions often means that they are carry more weight than their male counterparts.

The theme related to leadership positions also made it clear that many women's experiences as

leaders were shifted as a result of their shipwreck. The experience of women on college

campuses is unique and worth investigating; however, the need to explore and support the role of

women leaders on campus, especially as they face shipwreck experiences, is paramount.

Chapter 5: Making Meaning and Welcoming Change

In this chapter, I will discuss findings from this research and address how this study's findings relate to the research questions that guided this study. In addition, I will link the results of this research to the scholarly literature that informed this study and discuss ways the findings of my research address gaps identified in the rationale for this study. This analysis is followed by a discussion of the implications of my research for the work of Student Affairs professionals. I then make suggestions for future research and conclude with my own final reflections of the study.

To recap, the purpose of this study was first to explore the role spirituality plays when college women navigate or negotiate personal, social, and academic challenges and also to examine the role of professionals in higher education in aiding students through their shipwreck experiences. The study was conducted with a feminist framework, using narrative inquiry to interview participants to learn more about their stories of struggle and triumph through shipwreck. The concepts of spirituality and shipwreck played a significant role for this research, with each term defined as follows. Spirituality is defined as a search for wholeness, purpose, and peace within oneself; and for women, specifically, spirituality can be defined as her search for her place in and connection to the world. Shipwreck is defined as a 'spiritual struggle' or adversity; shipwreck is a series of events of deep challenge, not a catastrophic end, that allows for an opportunity for re-creation of self. The research was framed by the following questions:

1. During moments of shipwreck for college women, what role does spirituality play and how do these moments serve as a catalyst for self-discovery, personal growth, and transformation?

2. During or following a shipwreck, how do college women describe their experience in seeking support from a higher education professional and/or what practices do they describe as supporting their spiritual development during that time?

3. What impact does the shipwreck experience have on college women who are serving in student leadership positions and in what way does the leadership position impact their passage through shipwreck?

Below are the findings of the research as they relate to each of the research questions.

Research Question 1

Role of Spirituality During Shipwreck

One of the primary inquiries of this research was related to discovering the role that spirituality played when college women find themselves facing deep challenge. The findings of this study based on the stories that the women shared with me differentiate various ways that the women used spirituality. The findings also suggest that spirituality played a role in allowing women to clarify their values and beliefs after their shipwreck experience. These findings are detailed below.

Engagement With Spirituality

As was made clear in Chapter 4, the participants described varying ways of employing their spirituality during their shipwreck experiences. The role spirituality played during moments of shipwreck for the college women ranged from a) reliance on their spirituality, b) rejection of their spirituality, c) only in hindsight seeing the use of their spirituality to move through the shipwreck, and d) viewing their spiritual practice as a failsafe option for moving through the shipwreck.

Reliance on Spirituality. The experiences related to the use of spirituality during shipwreck shared by the participants were consistent with much of the research discussed in the review of relevant literature. For example, findings from this study and from studies cited in the literature review suggest that a reliance on spirituality may be critical in moving through a shipwreck experience (Morgan Consoli, 2018). Each of the participants described some reliance on spiritual practice to move through the shipwreck, especially, London, Bailey, and Khloe. This reliance can be equated to religious commitment and engagement as presented in the study by Astin et al. (2011), although this connection does not make the distinction needed as spirituality as separate from religion. However, each of those three participants had some religious background in their upbringing, and often talked about their spirituality in terms of religion. This finding confirms that spiritual practices are and can be helpful practices for college women to move through challenging experiences, showing consistency with the existing literature. These consistent findings continue to point to the need for Student Affairs professionals, and other professionals who work directly with college women and students in general, to make it a priority to address the spiritual development of college students.

Rejection of Spirituality. Though the experiences of the participants showed a reliance on spiritual practice to move through the shipwreck experience, the data generated with participants also expands upon the already existing literature. Specifically, the literature is expanded when considering the data related to the rejection of spiritual practices during shipwreck. As was discussed in the findings in Chapter 4, the rejection of spiritual practices during the shipwreck experience were not the same for each participant. For London and Khloe, their rejection centered around other people's beliefs and understandings about their religion and accompanying spiritual practices. Through their shipwreck experiences, London and Khloe were

able to reject societal beliefs and norms about their practice of Christianity and Buddhism respectively, and begin to truly define those spiritual practices for themselves. Perhaps this rejection, although not explicitly stated by London or Khloe, is a rejection of patriarchal religious practices, practices that have served as oppressive systems to women over time (Eller, 1993). And instead of accepting the male-dominated practices of formal religion, London and Khloe were seeking a religious and spiritual practice infused with feminism, a spiritual practice that honors their voice, story, and value as a woman in the world. London and Khloe found strength and purpose in their newly, self-defined religious practices, a strength that could not have been conceived when operating under the strictly patriarchal understandings of their religious background.

Riley's reason for rejecting spiritual practices during shipwreck was the result of a perceived lack of time, a finding consistent with the literature (Astin et al., 2011). When Riley found herself overwhelmed with the workings of her shipwreck and life, her spiritual practices took a backseat. This rejection of spiritual practices makes me curious about how Riley's shipwreck experience and length of that experience may have been different had she not rejected her spiritual practices for lack of time. Bailey's rejection of spiritual practices resulted from her grappling with understanding why so much pain could be allowed. She rejected the practice that she often drew so much meaning from because of a misunderstanding of the ways in which a deep challenge can actually bring about profound personal truth and understanding; Bailey felt overwhelmed by the pain she was experiencing in the moment, leading her to abandon her spiritual practice. These minor rejections of spiritual practice during moments of deep challenge were superseded by Riley and Bailey's deep commitment and reliance on their spiritual practices, specifically for these participants, their reliance on the tenets of their Christian faith,

demonstrating their level of religious commitment and engagement (Astin et al., 2011). The

rejection of spiritual practices certainly played a role for many of the women, but what I found to

be of the greatest significance was the reliance on spiritual practices that every participant talked

about. Rejection of spiritual practices in the moment or over a period of time certainly has its

role in helping a woman discover which practices are a best fit for her; however, it is the ultimate

reliance on spiritual practice that aided each woman in her success in resurfacing through the

shipwreck experience.

   Spirituality in Hindsight and as a Failsafe. The literature was also expanded when

considering the finding related to a hindsight understanding of the benefit of spiritual practice

and considering spiritual practice as a failsafe option for moving through the shipwreck. The

experience that Camila shared of beginning to recognize *after* her shipwreck experience that the

coping elements that she developed during that time were actually spiritual practices, point to the

lack of knowledge Camila had related to any spiritual practices or beliefs. This is not surprising

based on the way Camila described her spiritual background and upbringing as non-existent;

Camila had no way of putting words around her spiritual practice until those words and concepts

were introduced to her after the shipwreck. However, this finding may also suggest a need for

Student Affairs professionals to specifically teach students about spiritual practices. It is evident

that spirituality had been excluded from Camila's experience in higher education until after her

shipwreck experience, in turn neglecting an important element in Camila's overall wellness. I

posit that this exclusion of spirituality from Camila's experience in higher education is largely

due to institutions' lack of differentiation between religion and spirituality and, therefore,

confirming the fear of violating the guideline of separation of church and state, as Dalton (2006),

Kiessling (2011), and Lowery (2005) all suggest. This point was made more salient for me when

Camila discussed the training she received on religion as a part of her employment, as being "glazed over." Camila also seemed to imply discussion of only formally recognized religions, noting her understanding of the distinction between religion and spirituality. This exclusion of spirituality is in turn a failure to aid students in exploring their inner selves and a compelling oversight on the part of Camila's employer.

  Failsafe. Many of the participants talked about experiencing their shipwreck as an opportunity to see their spiritual practices as a failsafe practice for working through future shipwrecks. This focus on spiritual practices as a failsafe in moving through shipwreck experiences is consistent with the literature; spirituality can be seen as a resource that helps sustain people through challenging experiences (Pargament et al., 2005). When speaking about her shipwreck experiences, London saw her spiritual practices, then and in the future, as a failsafe way of surviving a difficult time. Riley described a similar failsafe attitude when referencing her belief in God as a "safe haven" during difficult times. Khloe talked about her confidence in her own spiritual practice as a result of the shipwreck experience, an experience that helped her to refine and customize her spiritual practices to better sustain her in future shipwreck experiences. The common theme in viewing spiritual practice, whatever and however that is defined for each participant, as a failsafe option during times of deep challenge is that each of the participants have owned their practice for themselves, further allowing them to live with authenticity (Seifert & Holman-Harmon, 2009; Tisdell, 2003) and make meaning of their experiences, both past and future. This honing of spiritual practice and ultimately viewing it as a failsafe option is a consistent theme for each of the participants' clarification of their own values and beliefs.

Clarity of Values and Beliefs

Another important tie to the literature around the use of spirituality during shipwreck is the opportunity that such experiences provide to clarify values and beliefs. We know that questions around values and purpose during college, questions that many participants struggled with, are spiritual questions (Astin et al., 2011). We also know that college is a time to focus on the solidifying of beliefs and values and that the pursuit of spiritual practices can aid in this clarification (Burgenhagen 2009). These spiritual questions about purpose and meaning in life can often lead to shipwreck (Pargament et al., 2005). Many of the participants found and defined their spiritual practices for themselves as a result of their shipwreck experience, as detailed in the preceding section. The shipwreck experiences of the participants provided an opportunity for growth, reflection, and maturity in each of the participants. Thus, one can draw an inference that experiencing a moment of deep challenge can result in the use of spiritual practices to move through the shipwreck, in turn allowing students an opportunity to clarify their own values and beliefs. This study adds to the literature around the spiritual development of college students and to the literature around shipwreck, based on the fact that shipwreck can require the use of spiritual practices to move through the deep challenge, ultimately aiding students in clarifying their beliefs and values. Spiritual questions can lead to shipwreck and shipwreck can be worked through with the help of spiritual practices. Both of these elements taken together, can lead to the clarity of values and beliefs. The use of spiritual practice is intricately tied to the moving through a shipwreck experience to clarify one's own values and beliefs, something that the previous literature does not make abundantly clear.

This new insight, the intricate relationship between shipwreck and spiritual practice in clarifying values and beliefs, can be developed in students by creating opportunities for them to

experience new things and new perspectives. For example, the study by Astin et al. (2011), suggests that by exposing students to diverse peers, cultures, and perspectives that students are more likely to seek out a spiritual practice and identity for themselves. This idea was confirmed by this study, when Khloe talked about her need and desire to retract and focus on her own inner work and spiritual self when faced with situations that required dialogue across difference. Much of Khloe's shipwreck revolved around her learning and navigating social justice issues and conversations with her peers; her shipwreck in turn, led Khloe to own her spiritual practices for herself, to act against long-engrained societal and familial beliefs, and to begin to really clarify who she is, what she believes in, and where her values lie. This *need* for a shipwreck experience to occur as a way for a woman to find her place in a patriarchal and as a way for her to create deeper understanding in her own life, is an addition to the literature on shipwreck. This addition is discussed further in the implications.

Shipwreck as Catalyst for Growth

The findings related to this research question gave me the most hope and satisfaction of any of the other research questions. I was inspired by the participants' stories of triumph through such tough trials and shipwreck experiences, by their optimism in moving forward in their own lives, and by their newfound sense of confidence and poise after surfacing through some of the toughest experiences of their life. The growth in the participants was also evident in their desire to contribute to this research to better serve their peers and those who will follow behind them in college; they were inspired for hope and change in the future. Also, to be noted, while my focus in the section that follows is on the positive growth that happened in participants as a result of shipwreck, I do understand that I am negating the potential negative outcomes that may occur as a result of a shipwreck experience. However, the specific research question to be answered is

related to how shipwreck can serve as a catalyst for personal growth, spiritual transformation, and self-discovery; further research could be conducted on the associated negative outcomes of shipwreck (Wortmann et al., 2012).

Bottom of Shipwreck and Breaking Through

In order to achieve personal growth, self-discovery, and spiritual transformation as a result of their shipwreck, the participants first had to experience the bottom point of their shipwreck experience and break through it. This rock bottom of shipwreck can also be equated to the "nothingness" that Christ (1995) speaks of, a place of anxiety, self-doubt, or even suicidal ideation. This nothingness is exacerbated when a woman feels alone in her stories and experiences (Christ, 1995). Each of the participants experienced a nothingness within themselves, before breaking through and resurfacing out of the shipwreck experience. The bottom point of the shipwreck, or deep dive, was necessary in order for the participants to begin making meaning of the shipwreck experience. For each of the participants, the length of time required and exact mode of breakthrough was unique. The findings related to the length of the shipwreck experience adds a new element to the existing literature. A shipwreck is not a single moment or experience in time, rather a series of events that compound upon one another. A shipwreck is also characterized by a noteworthy low point, or rock bottom in the shipwreck journey, followed by a breakthrough into resurfacing.

Riley's breakthrough happened for her late one night as she listened to worship music—she felt a huge weight lift off as she felt God speaking to her in that moment. London's breakthrough required her seeking help from her doctor due to the physical side effects she was experiencing as a result of her shipwreck experience. Bailey's breakthrough experience came after she took some space away from campus. Camila was finally able to breakthrough her

shipwreck experience as a result of feeling totally overwhelmed by the shipwreck, leading her to finally seek support from a Student Affairs professional. Khloe's breakthrough naturally involved dialogue, as her shipwreck experience revolved around how she communicates with others who have different views. The participants' breakthrough out of the shipwreck experience was partly a result of the reflection that each of them took part in during their shipwreck experience. It is unclear if the reflection was a direct result of the shipwreck, or just a normal part of college serving as a catapult into growth, exploration of self, and reflection (Hindman 2002). Each of the women experienced a deep, dark place as a result of their shipwreck experience and were eventually, with the aid of reflection on their own lives, able to move out of that place and into a place of hope and peace. They were able to use spiritual elements to cope with their shipwreck experience (Morgan Consoli, 2018). The tone that each of the women had as they talked about their reaching bottom and breakthrough of shipwreck was significantly lighter and more cheerful than the tone with which they spoke about their shipwreck. The weight of the shipwreck experiences on these women will never be completely removed, but complementing that difficult experience with purpose and understanding makes the load easier to carry.

Despite the fact that each of the participants were able to move through their shipwreck experience, it should be noted that the stories shared demonstrate evidence that a shipwreck experience is not something that you truly ever overcome. The shift in my thinking around the finality of a shipwreck experience is discussed further in the implications. However, it should be noted here that a shipwreck experience is an experience that forever shapes a woman, impacting who she is and the way in which she moves forward in the world. The shipwreck experience is but only one step in achieving full purpose and meaning in life; a woman cannot know the depths of her soul without making a deep dive from which she then may experience an awakening to her

life's purpose. When a breakthrough or awakening is achieved after a shipwreck experience, it allows a woman a unique opportunity to understand her purpose in life and to truly own those spiritual experiences that provide her with the most comfort and stability in life.

Resurfacing

After an awakening out of shipwreck, the participants were each able to see their experiences from a different perspective. Removed from the immediacy of the experience of deep challenge, each of the participants were able to articulate how the shipwreck experience had impacted them in a positive light. It is my firm belief that through the sharing of stories with me, that these women were able to articulate further understandings and beliefs that they had not previously conceived or communicated to anyone else, further extending their resurfacing. They were able to see more clearly, the shipwreck experience for what it was and how it helped them to find their purpose in life; they were able to "[give] form to their experience through words" (Christ, 1995, p. 24), creating a new naming. The relevant findings related to the topic of participants surfacing through their experience was nuanced into the following categories: impact on spiritual practice, and purpose and birth of true self.

Impact of Shipwreck on Spiritual Practice. Not only did the shipwreck experiences that each of the participants faced impact them as a person forever, the experience also had a deep impact on the spiritual practices of most of the participants. Bailey's spiritual practices seemed to be the least impacted by her shipwreck experience, although she did speak of taking a small break in her spiritual practice. A consistent theme among the participants was that the shipwreck experience allowed them an opportunity to examine and hone their spiritual practices to best suit their own defined needs. Riley described her spiritual practices as more consistent and connected as a result of her shipwreck experience, placing her trust in a being greater than

herself, God. London reported that her spiritual practices after her shipwreck were more authentic to her and for her needs, free from the pressures of organized religion and the opinions of others. As a result of her reliance on her own spiritual practices to navigate her shipwreck experience, Khloe was now comfortable talking about her spiritual practices and the fact that she now steers clear of the religious obligations of Buddhism. Camila follows in the vein of feeling more comfortable with her newly discovered spiritual practices as a result of shipwreck. The participants were able to make meaning of their experiences, consider the spiritual practices that centered them, and then firmly adopt those practices for moving forward.

Each participant claimed their spiritual practices as their own, for the purposes that suit them as individuals, aligns with the literature around spirituality, defined specifically as different than religion. Through discovering what practices worked best for them post-shipwreck, the participants were able to create meaning for themselves (Bugenhagen, 2009; Tisdell, 2003), seek an understanding of their own identities (Kiessling, 2011), and conduct a personal search for meaning inside themselves (Parks, 2000). The individual definitions and adaptations of spiritual practice adds to the claim that there is not a universally accepted way to define spirituality (Love & Talbot, 2009). For each of these women, the fact that spirituality can be defined in a way that is meaningful to them, adds to the importance and value that the spiritual practices will hold for them in the future.

For each of the women, as described above, the shipwreck experience required them to dig deep within themselves to move through that experience, thereby increasing their confidence as women, and in turn increasing their confidence in the spiritual practices that best suit them as individuals. This aligns with the Astin et al. (2011) hallmark study on college students, in that this study showed positive growth of participants' spirituality during college. However, the

literature around the positive growth of spirituality is enhanced by this study, since this study sought to understand specifically the growth of spirituality as a result of shipwreck. It is also important to note that each of the women, while they gained confidence in themselves and their spiritual practices, that confidence in their spiritual journey did not come without some insecurities.

Purpose and Birth of True Self. Based on my own found purpose and birth of true self after my hike and spiritual journey along the Camino, I was particularly interested in the ways that college women could potentially also find their purpose and begin to give birth to true self following a spiritual understanding after shipwreck. Speaking specifically about purpose, many of the participants talked about the belief in a plan for their lives and how the shipwreck experience was simply a part of that greater plan. For three of the five participants, their shipwreck experience allowed them to discover their purpose in life through a career calling. The power of a shipwreck experience to show insight into a career path cannot be neglected; this finding underscores a need for Student Affairs professionals to focus on the learning that can be realized after a shipwreck experience. Other participants surfaced through their shipwreck experience to recognize visions of how they want to help others in the future and to ultimately decide to live in peace and no longer allow sadness to consume them. This finding aligns with the views of Eller (1993) and Plaskow and Christ (1989) in that women find strength and purpose through their spirituality. The resurfacing that these women experienced after their shipwreck can be likened to Christ's (1995) understanding of how awakening gives birth to true self: "A woman's awakening to great powers grounds her in a new sense of self and a new orientation in the world. Through awakening to new powers, women overcome self-negation and self-hatred and refuse to be victims" (p. 13).

The experiences of acceptance of self were unique to the individual participants, just as their shipwreck experiences and spiritual practices were. Through sharing their stories, the women learned more about themselves, and conceivably gave birth to true self as a result. Specifically, London showed acceptance of true self when she talked about the influence that she has on others, no matter who she is; she had begun to accept herself without the pressure of trying to be someone who others wanted of her. In essence, "…in choosing to be who she is—[London is] no longer desperate for the love of others because she loves herself" (Christ, 1995, p. 86). Khloe's acceptance of self was manifested when she found the courage to oppose the views of her parents, standing firmly in her leadership position. Camila's birth of true self meant that she was more comfortable talking with others about her shipwreck experience and how that experience is part of her story. Bailey and Riley both talked about understanding a greater plan for their lives, accepting the fact that their lives have been changed for the better as a result of their shipwreck experience. Considering the participants found purpose in life and gave birth to true self, this study builds on the idea that the shipwreck experiences serve as a way of finding wholeness (Hindman 2002), as participants were able to see themselves and their shipwreck experiences as part of a larger story. By accepting herself for who she is, flawed and all, a woman is able to reach full manifestation of self; what an incredible outcome of such deep challenges faced by each of the women.

Each of the participants found purpose for their life as a result of their shipwreck experience. However, I would contend that this purpose and birth of true self is fleeting in the grand scheme of life and suggest the following scenario as a way in which a woman may continue to seek purpose and true self. If a woman discovers her life's purpose and understanding as a result of a shipwreck experience, then conceivably she finds new purpose and

growth of self after each subsequent shipwreck. As discussed in the implications section that follows, a woman is destined to face many shipwrecks throughout her lifetime. As long as the woman maintains some footing in who she has discovered herself to be, unchained from the binds of patriarchal dominance, she should resurface through each subsequent shipwreck with a deeper understanding of self: "It does not matter where she goes or what she does as long as she maintains contact with that inner core of herself, which is the location of her capacity for insight" (Christ, 1995, p. 69). When faced with a new shipwreck, perhaps a result of straying away from true self, a woman can find her way again because of the insight she gained after her initial shipwreck experience. The initial shipwreck, accompanied by the bottom point and breakthrough, can serve as a catalyst for discovering purpose and true self, time and time again. Then, through the sharing of stories of cyclical shipwreck and resurfacing "women learn to value themselves, to recognize stagnant and destructive patterns in their lives, to name their strengths, and to begin to take responsibility for their lives" (Christ, 1995, p. 98).

Research Question 2

Seeking Support During/Following Shipwreck

My tenure as a professional in the field of Student Affairs is part of the reason for the inclusion of the research questions related to the experience of seeking support from a Student Affairs professional and suggestions for practices to implement to better support the spiritual development of students. I know that my training as a Student Affairs professional, in graduate school or in on-the-job training, did not include any intentional education or training on the spiritual lives and needs of college students, much like the literature suggests (Bugenhagen, 2009; Dalton, 2006; Rogers & Love, 2007). Each of the participants talked about specific behaviors, practices, and actions that Student Affairs professionals enacted to aid the participants

in feeling comfortable to approach them during a time of shipwreck. The practices that I have implemented, and some of the practices that I will share below, are practices that are picked up in the field, but also are often not explicitly named as aiding students in their spiritual development.

Behaviors and Actions

It was Riley's experience of feeling comfortable confiding in a supervisor, that helped me to understand the great impact that small daily actions, such as consistent casual conversation, can have on students. Khloe shared similar sentiments, both of the participants feeling affirmed when they were addressed as people first by the Student Affairs professional, instead of first addressing the problem or issue at hand. Even if the shipwreck concerns the professional's job directly, there is great importance in students being seen as a person first in a shipwreck moment, above any role they serve on campus. The most salient practice that the participants discussed as helpful during a shipwreck experience was their being referred to additional resources available on campus. Resource referral played a great role during the shipwreck experiences, no matter if the resource was self-help in nature or formal in practice. The role of a Student Affairs professional is to aid students in their personal growth and development (Rentz, 2004) and resource referral is a necessary means towards growth and development. Student Affairs professionals are the experts in regard to resources on campus, thus they can also use that knowledge to advocate on the behalf of students, especially during a shipwreck experience. Both Camila and London described a Student Affairs professional playing an advocacy role on campus, a behavior that can aid students in moving through a shipwreck experience. Sharing needed resources and advocating on behalf of students are both behaviors that participants found helpful when seeking support from a Student Affairs professional during a shipwreck experience.

Although the participants may not have specifically mentioned that their struggles were spiritual in nature, it can be assumed that students in college are struggling spiritually (Astin et al., 2011; Bryant & Astin, 2008). Therefore, this resource referral and advocacy could have been strengthened with an intentional focus on referring students to resources that directly supported or explored their spiritual well-being, alongside their mental, physical, and emotional well-being.

Explicit Inclusion. Related to the consistent casual conversation, several participants detailed the importance of asking thought-provoking questions in aiding students to move through their shipwreck. Most often, these questions required students to reflect in the moment about where they were drawing their energy from, what they were learning from the shipwreck experience, and what resources or activities could help the participants get their mind off of the shipwreck experience. These questions required the participants to reflect on their life and experiences, inadvertently driving the participants towards a spiritual practice to move through the shipwreck experience. This lack of explicitly asking students about their spiritual practice and development falls in line with the literature; the literature related to spirituality and higher education shows an adverse relationship between the two (Love & Talbot, 2009). It has been argued that the adverse relationship should not exist, yet it continues to reign in higher education.

The literature also shows that much of the practice of Student Affairs is already grounded in spirituality (Rogers & Love, 2007), but not explicitly identified as such. In my professional experience, I would agree that this sentiment is true. Much of the work in the field of Student Affairs encourages students to think deeply about who they are and who they want to be. We intentionally create experiences for students that push them beyond their comfort zone, hoping that by introducing them to a new idea or way of thinking that they will in turn think deeply about the world and their place in it. These experiences include such things as dialoguing across

difference, the experience that Khloe referenced during her interviews, and simply engaging with students on a personal level, asking them questions about their lives. The simple act of asking questions of students played a significant role for the participants in moving through their deep challenge. As was shown through the women's stories, Student Affairs professionals had conversations with students that get at some of the bigger questions of life. The stories also showed, filling in a gap in the literature, that Student Affairs professionals played a significant role in guiding students through their shipwreck experiences. However, I would still argue that spirituality and spiritual development needs to be more explicitly discussed in the profession and with students; spirituality should be a central piece of conversations that Student Affairs professionals are having with students, especially as they support students through shipwreck experiences.

       Vulnerability. Another significant practice that participants shared that impacted them in a positive manner when seeking support from a Student Affairs professional during a shipwreck experience was when these advisors, mentors, supervisors shared part of their own stories with participants. The vulnerability that these professionals showed with students opened the door for students to feel more comfortable sharing about some of the hardest challenges they have faced in their lifetime. Bailey shared about how the vulnerability that her supervisor had with her allowed a more personal relationship to bloom between them. This relationship was built on trust and included Bailey getting to know her supervisor's family. This level of vulnerability, a helpful practice also talked about by many other participants, opened the door for participants to feel comfortable seeking support during a shipwreck experience. This level of vulnerability around sharing about shipwreck experiences leaves me to wonder what impact there might be if Student Affairs professionals were more vulnerable with students about their own spiritual practices and

questions about deep meaning in life. How might this sort of vulnerability and comfortability talking about a topic that higher education generally disregards, change the landscape of the spiritual development of college students?

Relationships and Trust

What I learned about the experience of students seeking support from a Student Affairs professional during a time of deep challenge is that relationships and trust are important. Given the role of a Student Affairs professional is the holistic development of students, focused specifically on collaboration, proactive approaches to supporting students, and viewing students as adults (Rentz, 2004), one can infer that the stronger the relationship, the more successful the Student Affairs professional is in achieving the goals of their profession. Whether these relationships are "parent" like, long-term, or shifting throughout the college experience, they play a significant role in college women seeking support during a time of deep challenge. These relationships are vital for college women to seek support during a challenging time. Once a relationship is established, the Student Affairs professional can then use that relationship to open a conversation about the spiritual well-being of students, as mentioned above.

Another piece of great importance to note is that all but one of the participants established these trusting relationships as a result of a leadership position that they held on campus. The findings related to the leadership positions that the participants held on campus, a series of unexpected findings, will be discussed in the next chapter. These relationships built as a result of a leadership position, then led to the forming of trust between the participant and the professional. This trust then allowed each participant to eventually feel comfortable seeking out support from a Student Affairs professional. Participants were able to reach out without fear of being judged or their story being shared with others. Relationships built over time and

undergirded by trust played a significant role in the participants seeking support during their shipwreck experience. The exploration of the significance of these relationships and more specifics about the perspective of the Student Affairs professional when they were sought out for support during a shipwreck experience is an area of further needed research.

All of the stories shared by participants about their interactions with a Student Affairs professional can be used to inform the practice of professionals moving forward. While the framework of this study is not meant to be generalizable across all students and populations, the information shared above can be considered in order to improve the practice of Student Affairs professionals in aiding students during times of deep struggle. It is my belief that it is past time for Student Affairs professionals on college campuses to let go of the reticence to engage with the spiritual lives of students. I think that the results detailed above create a clear need for Student Affairs practitioners to seek out opportunities and accept responsibility for guiding students to develop their spiritual understanding and practices. Explicit conversations and incorporation of professional practices that address the spiritual needs of students are areas of great need in the lives of students, especially when they are facing shipwreck experiences.

Practices to Implement to Support Spiritual Development

Again, based on my role and career as a Student Affairs professional, this research question was of particular interest to me. In many ways, Student Affairs professionals are already concerned and working with the spiritual well-being of students. From incorporation of reflective practices to execution of service-learning (Love, 2001: Love & Talbot, 2009; Subbiondo, 2011), much of the practice of Student Affairs can be seen as already centered in spirituality, even if it is not explicitly stated (Rogers & Love, 2007). Students often describe out of classroom experiences as meaningful, having had an impact on their inner-development of self

(Bugenhagen, 2009). However, I was particularly interested in the answer to this question about practices that higher education professionals can implement to support the spiritual development of college women, especially during and following a shipwreck moment, from the perspective of participants, as opposed to simply asserting my own views and the views of the literature.

Perceived Role of Spirituality on Campus

Before sharing insight about the recommended practices that participants described, it is important to address the fact that most participants did not feel spirituality played a significant role on campus, a finding in line with the literature (Bugenhagen, 2009). Three of the five participants, shared that they did not feel spirituality played a significant role within higher education. Khloe described her perception of an often-hostile nature when the topic of religion was brought up on campus, as it was often seen in an oppressive light when referenced in regard to social justice issues, an expected occurrence on a politically liberal campus (Astin et al., 2011). This is in line with the literature as Lindholm (2020b) reminds us that "it is understood and appreciated that spirituality (and religion) remain intensely personal and potentially inflammatory topics" (p. 26). Camila described seeking support of her spiritual development as something that she had not ever pursued on campus.

No matter what the literature says or the behaviors that I claim to practice in support of the spiritual development of students, if the participants do not perceive that spirituality is being addressed on campus, then there is an issue. Based on the observations I made during interviews, students are unfamiliar with the concept of spirituality, especially as different from patriarchal religion, and therefore, are not aware of pockets of unintentional or concealed attempts at addressing spirituality. As I mentioned above, spirituality needs to be explicitly addressed on college campuses. This has been talked about in the literature for the last few decades (Komives

et al., 2020), yet based on the findings of this research, significant progress in this area has not been made. There are plenty of resources and models for incorporating a greater presence of and focus on spirituality on campus (Barbezat & Bush, 2014; Cady, 2007; Goodman, 2013; Hoppe, 2007): some of these resources will be addressed in the implications.

Recommended Practices

The participants of the study shared many thoughtful recommendations for practical ways Student Affairs professionals can support the spiritual development of college students. However, looking back over the stories shared, the recommendations given were not necessarily specific to practices that Student Affairs professionals should implement either during or following a shipwreck experience. Further research should be done to explore the specific practices that Student Affairs professionals can implement when supporting a student through a shipwreck. Instead, the recommendations for practice are more general in nature, thereby the following are suggestions for an overall approach to supporting the spiritual development of college students. However, I would make the argument that if Student Affairs professionals, and higher education as a whole, were more concerned generally with the spiritual development of college students, actively aiding students in their discovery and pursuit of spiritual practices, then the support of spiritual development following a shipwreck moment would come as a natural aftereffect.

Training. The most striking recommendation shared by a majority of participants was the need for a training for faculty, staff, and students on the topic of spirituality. Many of the students speculated an apprehension on the part of Student Affairs professionals to engage directly about spirituality with students due to their lack of knowledge on what is allowed, acceptable, and helpful to students; the literature supports these speculations (Bugenhagen, 2009;

Dalton, 2006; Seifert & Holman-Harmon, 2009). Students talked about the great emphasis that higher education places on diversity, equity, and inclusion training, but suggested that the training lacks a particular emphasis on spiritual practices as a form of diversity. Cady (2007) and Kiessling (2011) make the recommendation to expand the idea of diversity to include spiritual diversity, especially in those programs and trainings that are overseen by multicultural offices on campus. While this may be an important pursuit, the results of my study are calling for a more generalized training across campus, reaching faculty, staff, and students, that will train members of campus on the invisible identity of spirituality, the difference between spirituality and religion, and ways to dismantle stigmas associated with the two. I could not agree more with the recommendations that the participants have for a large-scale, comprehensive training for members of campus on how to best support the spiritual development of college students. Although we have long ignored the spiritual development of college students, we know that college students come into the college setting expecting the university to aid them in their spiritual development (Astin et al., 2011; Gilley, 2005; Lindholm, 2007). Perhaps a large-scale training on spirituality and all it entails is a first step in the intentional pursuit of supporting the spiritual development of college students.

Accessibility and Visibility. Other recommendations for practices to implement to support the spiritual development of college students revolved around accessibility and visibility. Riley yearned for Student Affairs to be a more welcoming and inviting space for all students, not just the students who may be associated with a particular office or staff member due to a leadership position held. Riley believed in the work of Student Affairs professionals and the impact that they can have on the life and well-being of a student, thus wanted more students to be able to access those professionals. This issue of accessibility is also relevant when Riley

talked about the need for Student Affairs professionals to be generally accessible for students to seek them out in times of deep challenge, even if the timing is not necessarily convenient for the student or the professional. In regard to the recommendation related to visibility, Bailey shared that it was always helpful for her when she saw faculty and staff outside of their professional setting, and in this case at church, to feel more connected to that person and in turn comfortable seeking out support from those individuals during a shipwreck experience. This visibility in the greater community, especially when professionals acknowledge students in that setting, can lay the groundwork for conversations to take place once back on campus. Students need to see themselves in the professionals that are serving them, from identity to spiritual practice; to see someone else as similar to you, adds an underlying element of trust, empathy, and understanding. These recommendations around accessibility and visibility add to the literature around the work Student Affairs professionals can do to encourage the spiritual development of college students. These recommendations also offer great insight into practices that the field can adopt generally, rather than being hyper-focused on a particular functional area or program. Students need to see themselves in the professionals that are serving them, from identity to spiritual practice. To see someone else as similar to you, adds an underlying element of trust, empathy, and understanding.

    Identity. The final major recommendations from participants related to the practices Student Affairs professionals can implement to support the spiritual development of students are connected to opportunities that were missed. These holes in the care and support students received during their shipwreck experience allowed them to reflect on the practices that might have been more beneficial to them in the moment. Specifically, recommendations outlined below center on identity. Having been in the field for a decade, I am aware that an overwhelming majority of my colleagues are women, yet most of the upper leadership in any department and in

the division as a whole are made up of male colleagues. London was part of a situation that escalated to her having to speak with a figure of authority of the Center for Student Support. However, due to the identities that person held, London was not comfortable speaking to them. This sentiment was true for London, but is also something that I know to be anecdotally true across campus, especially for students from marginalized populations. It is important for students to see themselves represented on campus and in leadership positions, or else they may never establish the trust and relationships necessary to build the groundwork that allows for a deeper discussion and ultimate support of their spiritual development.

Protocol. The other missed opportunity that led London to make a recommendation related to the support of a student's spiritual development is related to the strict following of a protocol. While protocols can serve a purpose in creating order and consistency across campus, they can also have an unintended consequence on those who fall subject to the protocol. By removing the human aspect of a situation when following a protocol, there is potential to negatively impact the ability for involved individuals to move through the shipwreck experience. The recommendation related to following protocol would be to consider how a protocol might be used as a baseline, but then be altered and adapted in individual situations. To my knowledge, there has not been research done on how the practices of Student Affairs professionals may inhibit spiritual development. Therefore, these recommendations add to the literature around the practices that Student Affairs professionals can implement to support the spiritual development of college students.

Research Question 3

Literature on Spiritual Leadership

Based on the addition of a third research question after the discovery of the rich story

content related to leadership that came as a result of participant experiences, it is imperative that

an exploration of literature on spiritual leadership is shared. This overview of the relevant

literature is necessary to share prior to discussing the ways in which this study's findings answer

the additional research question and tie to the associated literature. I will first share literature

related to defining a leader, distinguishing an emergent style of leadership from a positional form

of leadership. From there, I will briefly share the dimensions of spiritual leadership and define

spirituality in the terms of leadership. This abbreviated literature review will conclude with

findings related to college students, specifically as discussed in the Summer 2020 edition of the

journal, *New Directions for Student Leadership*, which had a special focus on spirituality and

leadership. After the literature review, I will discuss the findings of this study as they relate to

the literature.

Defining Leader

In education specifically, the role of leader can range from teacher to administrator,

depending on exactly how the term "leader" is defined (Bonner, 2008). Leaders can be defined in

various ways: "Some people are leaders because of their formal position in an organization,

whereas others are leaders because of the way other group members respond to them"

(Northouse, 2016, p. 8). The leader named to a formal position of leadership is an assigned

leader; this type of leader may not always be the most influential person in the group, yet holds

positional power (Northouse, 2016). While those in assigned leadership roles are certainly

leaders, it is also important to note that leaders can emerge within a group from those who are

not in any formal leadership role. While this emergent style of leadership is valuable, for the purpose of this study, all participants were named to positional forms of leadership, thus the implications shared are made under the assumption of working with college students in named leadership positions.

Spirituality in the Context of Leadership

Though Bolman and Deal (1995) write about need to lead with soul by recapturing spirit and engaging in an inner search in order to lead more effectively, Dent et al. (2005) posit that research related to the spiritual dimensions of leadership is limited. Sanders et al. (2003), made sense of the term spiritual leadership by tracing it through transactional to transformational to transcendental leadership. Gehrke (2008), writes that spiritual leadership "requires a greater sense of spirituality and leads to greater leader effectiveness as one develops the three dimensions of spirituality (consciousness, moral character, and faith)" (p. 352). These three dimensions of spiritual leadership are certainly of great importance, but are not common across the literature. Bonner (2008) makes the claim that a spiritually oriented leader is loving, embraces inclusion, is self-sacrificing, and not fully concerned with cost-efficiency of decisions. Leaders should be focused on bringing followers to "…full humanness; to full creativity; and to being fully alive physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually" (p. 146). Leaders leading with spirituality are focused on helping others to find themselves, accepting difference, and remembering that each individual under the leader contributes to a greater whole.

The literature is somewhat limited in terms of defining spirituality in the context of leadership, but there are attempts within the literature to define spirituality as it relates to leadership. One explicit definition of spirituality as it relates to spiritual leadership is presented by Thompson (2008): "Spirituality is a state of mind or consciousness that enables one to

perceive deeper levels of experience, meaning, values, and purpose that can be perceived from a strictly materialistic vantage point" (p. 152). Thompson (2008), closely following Hoyle's (2002) definition of spiritual leadership, then identifies the following as dimensions of authentic spiritual leadership: rooted in moral purpose, servant in nature, has humility, considers the wholeness of people, distributes power, promotes trust, and leads from inner peace. Specifically related to spiritual leadership being servant in nature, it is worth noting that service to others is of great significance in effective leading: "Spiritual leading is encouraging others to seek the highest vision, reach for the finest human endeavors and serve before being served" (Hoyle, 2002, p. 19). The spiritual leader is the glue that binds, the promoter of peace and purpose, the one to help followers set and meet high expectations. Houston (2008) sums up leading with the lens of spirituality as requiring the leader to "find wisdom in the midst of chaos" (p. 9), to "bind up the tattered parts of the organization and create healing" (p. 9), and to create and foster a "sense of community" (p. 10). The literature seems to affirm the need for a leader, no matter the official capacity, to aid their followers in making meaning, achieving connection to something beyond self, and to love above all else, all through maintaining a sense of leading through serving.

Spiritual Leadership

There is limited research related to spiritual leadership and college students, especially as it pertains to women specifically. However, the Summer 2020 edition of the journal, *New Directions for Student Leadership*, had a specific focus on spirituality and leadership. In the words of the editor of the publication, Jennifer Lindholm (2020a), the issue has a particular concentration on "the intersections between spirituality and leadership as they pertain, specifically, to the personal growth and development of those how are coming of age in an era of

tremendous opportunity and challenge" (p. 7). This emergent discourse related to leadership and spirituality posits that the two topics are perhaps more connected than ever before imagined (Sligh & Talbot, 2020, p. 33). We also know that, over time, there has been a "moral decline in leadership" leading to an imperative "need for more acceptable approaches to leadership, as well as a sensitivity to spirituality" (Sligh & Talbot, 2020, p. 33). Noghiu (2020) makes this same claim: "It is becoming ever more evident that the traditional leadership paradigms are failing people and planet…[and] organizations, their leadership and individual professionals are all increasingly looking for alternative paradigms" (p. 57). People are now asking the question, "What sort of world do I want to help create? [And] at heart, these are spiritual questions" (Lindholm, 2020a, p. 8). Therefore, perhaps the conversation related to leadership in today's world should focus on that of spiritual leadership.

There are many definitions associated with the terms, spirituality and leadership, thus making the terms hard to define. In accordance, there is also not a universal definition for spiritual leadership. What follows are some examples of attempts in the literature to define spiritual leadership. Lindholm (2020b) argues that leadership that is focused in spirituality is a leadership practice that is "relational, service-driven, change oriented, and based on self-awareness" (p. 24). While Fry (2003), writes about the "ultimate effects" of spiritual leadership when discussing his model of the term:

> Bring[ing] together or creat[ing] a sense of fusion among the four fundamental forces of human existence (body, mind, heart, and spirit) so that people are motivated for high performance, have increased organizational commitment, and personally experience joy, peace, and serenity. (p. 727)

Even still, Sligh and Talbot (2020) suggest a conceptual framework for spiritual leadership as a model that integrates the "five tenets of spiritual development presented by Love and Talbot (1999), and the social change model of leadership development" (p. 39). This framework seeks a focus on "helping students explore their spirituality as they explore their own leadership identity and development" (Sligh & Talbot, 2020, p. 36), calling particular attention to introspection, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, and finding individual purpose. This model furthers the conversation about spiritual leadership, perhaps also "giving more of us *a reason for being*" (Sligh & Talbot, 2020, p. 43). Each of these definitions and understandings of the term spiritual leadership offer their own insights, none preferable to the other. However, in making sense of the three of them together, I would contend that spiritual leadership is a leadership practice that is infused with deep reflection, is focused on discovering purpose and making meaning, and is highly subjective and unique to each individual.

Spiritual Leadership in Higher Education. As it relates to the work of higher education in moving the dial on spiritual leadership, there is great work to be done. Lindholm (2020a) makes the argument that "schools and colleges have a responsibility to graduate transformative leaders" (p. 8). Shannon Nolan-Arañez (2020) talks about the power of the connection between spirituality and leadership for a student's development: "Developing a student's spirituality ultimately sets the foundation for how students bridge their intrapersonal and interpersonal lives, which is a key tenet of leadership" (p. 99). This development in students can happen as a result of Student Affairs professionals, and other professionals in higher education, engaging students in questions about meaning and purpose, especially as it relates to leadership positions (Lindholm, 2020b) and their goals in life. Student Affairs professionals also need to be mindful of where and how they enter the conversation about spiritual leadership with students, as we are

not "enter[ing] the conversation from the same space or place, and definitely not at the same time" as the students we lead (Sligh & Talbot, 2020, p. 42). A focus on spiritual leadership also requires the Student Affairs professional to be willing to engage in their own inward reflection around their own understanding of spirituality and leadership. In the words of Lindholm (2020b), the pursuit of a paradigm shift to spiritual leadership by Student Affairs professionals requires courage:

> As you strive to approach your work with students and colleagues with the open mind and heart that a spiritual approach to leadership requires, trust that many others will be grateful for the courage you are exercising and the opportunities you are offering. (p. 29)

> In concluding the literature review of spiritual leadership, I would make the claim, as Houston (2008) does, that although there may be various thoughts on the subject of spirituality and leadership, nonetheless, "it is an important topic and one worth every leader's concern and deep engagement" (p. 9). Therefore, I contend that spiritual leadership is individual in nature, just as defining leadership is for the leader and defining spirituality is for the individual. The meaning of leadership and the meaning of spirituality, especially as it relates to leadership, is specific to the individual, somewhat subjective in nature, and a topic that deserves further exploration. Ultimately, I resonate with Houston's (2008) idea that "spiritual leaders lead from within…[knowing] themselves and [having] a sense of purpose and connection to the infinite" (p. 12). Leaders must figure out for themselves, and for their followers, what it means to lead with spirit, finding purpose, connection, and meaning in ways that make sense for their position and style.

Discussion of Leadership Findings

In the section that follows, I will discuss the findings of this research as it relates to the leadership positions that each of the participants held, linking my findings to the preceding abbreviated literature review on spiritual leadership. As has been stated, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the recruitment of participants for this study, all participants were referred to me from colleagues in the field of Student Affairs. Thus, all participants held a substantial leadership role on campus as either a student employee or as the president of a student organization. The great depth to which the participants talked about their campus leadership roles and how these roles were impacted by their shipwreck experience were not questions that I aimed to answer as part of this study. In fact, I did not explicitly ask any participants about their leadership roles and did not assume at the start of this research that the shipwreck experiences they would describe would entail their roles as leaders of their peers. However, each participant had significant stories to share about their leadership position and how it was entangled with their spirituality and leadership role.

Giving and Seeking Support

Given that each of the participants served in a leadership capacity on campus, it is not surprising that a theme arose around the giving and seeking of support as a student leader. The participants gave support to those who were under their leadership purview and sought support because of their shipwreck experiences, which were often related to or had an impact on their leadership role. Each of the participants talked about the great sense of responsibility they felt to serve as a support system for other people. I could not help but wonder if the calling to support others was due to their leadership role or the societal norms they faced as women in the world, or perhaps it was a combination of both (Arnot, 2013; Harding, 2004b). The level of support that

many of the women were providing to others during their leadership role, specifically Riley and London, led to their own exhaustion and spiraling further into shipwreck. When it came to offering support to other people, the participants, in large portion due to their roles as campus leaders, were familiar with resources available to students on campus; these women also did all they could to make sure that those they were leading had access to and felt comfortable seeking support during times of deep challenge. Further questions would need to be asked of the participants to confirm the following sentiment, but based on the women's ability to rise through the shipwreck, maintain order in their leadership role, and serve as such a support to those around them, I would propose that the way these women acted was in fact them leading through a lens of spirituality (Houston, 2008; Hoyle, 2002).

Although participants were familiar with the resources available on campus, the knowledge of resources did not necessarily always equate to the participants using said resources when they found themselves in need of support. The participants held varying levels of comfortability and confidence in seeking support, especially as they described how their leadership roles impacted their desire to want to seek formal or informal support. Riley, Khloe, and Bailey felt confident and encouraged to seek support during their shipwreck experiences because of the relationships they built as a result of their leadership roles. Each of these participants talked about the close relationship and mentorship they had with their advisors and supervisors of their leadership position as encouraging them to seek support. These Student Affairs professionals supported these women in their daily lives, outside of the specifics of their leadership role, building trust and comfort for these women to seek support during their shipwreck experiences. This was not the case for all participants; in fact, London vehemently opposed seeking support from her supervisors during shipwreck and instead sought support from

other professionals. London's opposition was based in the behaviors demonstrated by her supervisors as discussed in Chapter 4. Therefore, it is not fair to assume that all students will seek support from the Student Affairs professionals directly connected to them through their leadership position. The simple fact that students have resources available to them does not mean that they will feel comfortable or inclined to seek them out in shipwreck, no matter the level of direct relationship involved.

Considering the realization that support needs to be sought through campus resources and other means when working through a shipwreck experience as a student leader on campus, it is also pertinent that we prepare our campus resources and staff to support these students who are in high-profile leadership positions on campus. There was a disconnect associated with the women of the study seeking resources in general, not because of lack of knowledge, but because of a perceived deficit of resources on campus. Many participants talked about the awkwardness of seeking resources of support on campus because of this underlying feeling that student leaders were supposed to have it all together or that they already knew, based on their leadership role, what the resources might provide to them. Many of the women described an uncomfortable feeling with using the Center for Student Support on campus, especially with the fear of being seen there while holding the title of student leader on campus. The experiences of the women being apprehensive to seek out resources during a time of shipwreck adds to the literature around shipwreck and perhaps student leadership. More research is needed to investigate the fears associated with seeking support as a student leader, whether it be from fear of being seen or fear of taking resources from other students. Student leaders, just like all students on campus, will inevitably face shipwreck during their college experience, therefore, we must create resources of support that appeal to and are accessible to high profile leaders on campus.

Leadership as a Woman

The identities that we hold, whether visible or invisible, are all connected and intersecting at any given point in time. For the participants, they were women and they were student leaders and they were women student leaders. The complexities of these intersecting identities were not fully explored in this research as it was not the focus of this research. However, many of the women shared about their identity as a woman impacting their leadership experience. The participants described the need to hide their emotions, the giving of support as mentioned above, and following societal and familial norms established for them as ways in which their identity as a woman impacted their experience as a student leader on campus. The way in which the women described their so-called need to act as a woman leader fits into the often-unconscious practice of forcing women into a masculine mold of leadership. It was my aim in this research to draw attention to and expose those oppressive ideals (Martin, 2013), allowing for a research project that honors the ethos of college women, giving voice to those in the margins. This research only began to scratch the surface of the complexities involved with being a woman in leadership that experiences shipwreck and uses spiritual practices to move through the shipwreck. Further research could be done to explore this topic more. It would also be valuable for further research to explore the lives and leadership of college women using a framework of spiritual leadership. The importance of telling women's stories cannot be emphasized enough (Christ, 1995).

Impact of Shipwreck on Leadership

Just as the shipwreck experience impacted each of the women and will continue to be with them for the rest of their lives, so too did the shipwreck experience impact the women as leaders. For those participants whose shipwreck revolved around their leadership position, their leadership was impacted to a greater extent than those participants whose shipwreck did not

involve their leadership position. Riley expressed an increase in her confidence as a leader after her shipwreck. She and London both described, that as a result of their shipwreck experiences, a newfound understanding that they cannot carry the whole load by themselves, that they cannot hold the weight and burden of deep challenge for other people. I would contend that the apparent need to carry the load and weight of an issue alone, as many participants discussed, is to some extent a result of socialization that these participants have received based on their identity as a woman in the world. Holding the identity of a woman leader is big, in and of itself. Couple that with a shipwreck experience as a woman leader and it is no wonder that many of the women discussed the shipwreck having a significant impact on their leadership moving forward.

For me, the most interesting facet of the impact that the shipwreck had on the women as leaders centered around the clear evidence that women in leadership positions are bound to experience shipwreck experiences. And when they do, their leadership style, confidence, and efficacy will likely be impacted as a result. This finding shows an obligatory need for Student Affairs professionals to be prepared to work with students in leadership positions as they work through shipwreck experiences, as these student leaders will in many cases reach out to their associated advisor, mentor, or supervisor. Student Affairs professionals need to be equipped to support students when they may not be at their best, when their work as a leader may be suffering, and to provide them with the needed space to engage with helpful resources on campus, to reflect on their experiences, engage with spiritual practices to move through the shipwreck. In fact, I would argue that a shift to incorporating a spiritual approach to leadership education and advising may be the avenue needed to best support student leaders as they inevitably work through experiences of deep challenge.

Implications

At the conclusion of this research, it is glaringly apparent to me that the findings demonstrate many implications for a wide array of audiences. I am encouraged by the research and the suggestions made by the participants for ways in which Student Affairs professionals can make moves to support the spiritual development of college students. I am encouraged by the way this study adds to the literature around shipwreck, as this type of experience can be an important vehicle in moving the dial in college students discovering their own spiritual practices. However, I would be remiss if I did not also mention that I am unsettled by the findings of this research. For the better part of two decades, there has been research to show the importance of a focus on spirituality in college students, although that research has been limited (Komives et al., 2020); yet, here I am completing a dissertation with still further recommendations for the ways in which we can better support the holistic development of students, development that includes attention to their spiritual wellness. While the dial may have been slightly moved and some students are getting the support of their spiritual development that they crave and need, I would tend to assume that the vast majority of students on college campuses across the nation are not being supported in this way.

Recognition of Spirituality on Campus

The participants described that spirituality did not play a significant role on their campus. However, to begin to aid students in the development of their spiritual practices, there must be a recognition of the importance of spirituality and the spiritual development of students across campus. The intentional incorporation of a student's focus on finding wholeness and purpose can be done through the use of a contemplative pedagogy focused on reflection and introspection (Barbezat & Bush, 2014). Contemplative practice in higher education is not an entirely new

concept, but it is one that has seen a resurgence in the last twenty-five years (Barbezat & Bush, 2014). The adoption of these contemplative practices in higher education have the opportunity to provide a "powerful means for a deeper engagement with life and greater insight into ourselves and others" (Barbezat & Bush, 2014, p. 38). I would argue that there is a need for integration of these contemplative practices, in both curricular and co-curricular settings, in order to aid students in the holistic development of self. Holistic development cannot exist if a focus on a students' spirit is left out; we can better develop and educate the whole student, including their spirit, through the re-adoption of contemplative practices in higher education.

One such model of a university using this type of pedagogy in their work with students exists in a close geographical region to the campus that served as the setting for this research. The administrators, faculty, and staff of this university could use the contemplative practices of that other campus as a framework for moving forward with a more intentional focus on the spiritual development of college students. The size and overall institutional foci are different for each of the campuses, but transferable knowledge and practical techniques could be gleaned from a formal observatory and collaborative relationship with that university. Considering that both campuses are part of the state system, it is important to remember the following when applying contemplative practices:

> As we apply these practices to higher education, clearly we must keep them separate
> from ideology or creed' the invitation must be to explore students' own beliefs and views
> so that the first-person, critical inquiry becomes an investigation rather than an
> imposition of particular views. (Barbezat & Bush, 2014, p. xi)

An overall campus attention to recognizing that spirituality is an important piece of students' identity and journey would serve as a progressive step in moving forward with the support of the

spiritual development of college students. This focus could be achieved through the adoption of a campus-wide effort to practice contemplative pedagogy.

Implications for Student Affairs

Specific to the function of Student Affairs professionals on campus, it is clear that establishing a trusted relationship over time is helpful in students seeking support from a Student Affairs professional when the student is navigating a shipwreck experience. There are many ways to build this trusting relationship and a few suggestions follow: 1) ask questions and get to know students on an individual level outside of the particular role that they play within your job function, 2) do not be afraid to engage with students about some of life's biggest questions—students are not always seeking answers, rather hoping to gather perspective on how they might move forward through such a difficult experience, and 3) create a working environment that is accessible to all students and makes room for vulnerability, contemplation, and the exchange of dialogue across difference. Each of these practices can be instituted to build and strengthen a relationship with a student, laying the groundwork for those students to seek support during the toughest moments of their life.

As a Student Affairs practitioner, I hope others will engage with this research and begin to see the possibilities that intentional and focused attention to the spiritual development of college students can benefit those students, the campus, and ourselves as professionals. Student Affairs professionals must courageously begin to think outside of the religious/not religious binary and expand our knowledge and understanding of what it means to care for one's spiritual well-being. We must do this within ourselves (Sligh & Talbot, 2020) if we expect to be able to do this with students, much the same as we expect around the education of social justice issues. Student Affairs practitioners "must discover who we are by looking deep inside ourselves if we

are to set our compass for the search for meaning as individuals and as leaders" (Hoppe, 2005 as cited in Hoppe, 2007, p. 118). Through a personal deep dive into who we are as individuals and as spiritual beings, Student Affairs practitioners will be better equipped to support students as they dive deep themselves in discovery of their own wholeness and peace.

Included Formally in Job Description

I would also argue that this work will continue to be outside the margins of Student Affairs professionals if it is not formally part of a person's role on campus. It needs to be someone's designated role to lead the efforts around engagement that supports the spiritual development of college students. There needs to be the creation of dedicated staff positions and visible space on campus. This new functional area on campus could lead the charge towards the inclusion of spiritual development on campus, especially when students are facing shipwreck, as well as lead training and programming efforts for campus constituents. I know that such functional areas exist on other campuses, just not on all campuses in the nation. I imagine that the work of this new functional unit would be much like the work of multicultural and intercultural offices on campus who take the lead on programming and training related to diversity, equity, and inclusion work on campus. However, just like the work of multicultural offices and professionals, the work toward the broad inclusion of practices that support the spiritual development of college students cannot be limited to just this functional area. Lindholm (2020b) reminds us of this when she made the claim that "facilitating students' spiritual development as a foundation for helping them grow into leaders who work with and through others to create positive change is a community endeavor rather than the purview of a particular individual or office" (p. 26). This work must be embedded in every aspect of campus from pre-

matriculation through graduation, if we truly intend to engage with students about their spirituality and especially its use through a time of deep challenge.

Addressing Gender-Based Violence

Given the significance and prevalence of gender-based violence and sexual assault in this study, and on college campuses in general (Walsh et al., 2020), it is apparent that this topic needs to be addressed. For three of five participants of this study, sexual assault was a significant part of a shipwreck experience. The prevalence of gender-based violence and sexual assault in the stories shared can be seen as a direct result of a patriarchal society that objectifies women; the women that participated in this story are living in a world that often places more value on their bodies than on them as individual humans with a great life to live. Therefore, this phenomenon is also worth addressing, based on the feminist framework of this study. Based on numbers alone, we know that the women, or others the women are close to, will deal with some experience of sexual assault and gender-based violence during their college career. Considering the prevalence of gender-based violence, Student Affairs practitioners need to be ready to support and help women move through this sort of significant shipwreck experience. Considering the gravity of such a shipwreck experience, coupled with the fact that this kind of experience is of a sensitive or intimate nature, there is a certain level of care that is needed to support students who are facing a shipwreck of this kind.

There are certainly numerous means for addressing such issues of gender-based violence on campus, to include both formal and informal reporting avenues, and by no means do I want to detract from the importance of those resources. However, based on the findings of this research, I believe that a focus on spirituality and spiritual development can be an important avenue in the healing that needs to take place after an experience of sexual assault. Just as the honing and

discovery of spiritual practices aided many participants in finding a way to resurface after their shipwreck experience centered around a sexual assault, so too, do I think that the incorporation of spiritual practices could be an effective means of supporting other women who find themselves in a similar situation. The sexual assault may never make sense to the survivor of that experience, but with a focus on spirituality, perhaps she can begin to weave the broken pieces of her life together to begin to make sense of the larger whole of who she is as a woman.

Other Professionals Outside of Student Affairs

The findings of this research may also be helpful to those outside of the field of Student Affairs if they desire or intend to support students in all aspects of their lives. While this research is framed in a perspective of Student Affairs, I think that many of the recommendations are applicable and transferable to my faculty colleagues, colleagues in Academic Affairs, and other professionals on college campuses. The same kinds of relationships can be built through mutual trust and vulnerability, education can occur about spirituality as a facet of identity, and faculty can prepare for students to seek them out for support when they are faced with a challenge. If anything, faculty may also be seen as more accessible, touching a higher percentage of students on campus than any Student Affairs professional. Also, through the employment of students on campus in divisions outside of Student Affairs, students are bound to build relationships and find mentors in professionals in those divisions. This same sentiment is true for the various other ways in which students interact with others on campus and for unaccounted means of building relationships between students and professionals. Therefore, it is even more pressing that faculty are trained and comfortable with addressing the spiritual needs of students, especially following a shipwreck experience. Given the unique nature of college students seeking assistance in answering some of life's biggest questions, all professionals on campus need to feel equipped to

have conversations with students that lead to a combining of mind and soul, ultimately leading to a student discovering a sense of wholeness within themselves.

Expanded Definitions

What this study provides beyond the scope of previous literature is the clear need to adopt a more robust and complex definition of shipwreck and spirituality for college women. As a result of the findings from this research, a more robust definition of shipwreck was included in Chapter 4. Additional thoughts on the totality of the shipwreck experience can be found below. However, the findings from this research do not provide much in the way of defining spirituality and spiritual practice as specific to college women.

Spirituality

The lack of preexisting feminist literature studying the concepts of spirituality and spiritual development in college women has left me and the participants with little to react to in regard to defining spirituality and spiritual development for college women. The data generated with the participants of this research confirms the previous literature in making individual meaning of the word spirituality, specifically in the fact that it confirms that spiritual practice is unique to each person. The findings also demonstrate that perhaps, a focus on defining spirituality and spiritual development as it relates to college women specifically, is needed, as women's experiences are unique. The identity of each of the participants as women on their campus was salient; each of them talked about the impact of their experiences as women as they talked about their past experiences, their shipwreck moments, and about the roles they played on campus. Many of the participants talked about their spiritual practices in relation to their identity, how their previous inability to let go of the patriarchal hold on their spiritual beliefs was perhaps because of gendered societal pressures and expectations. It was the resurfacing after the

shipwreck experience that allowed the women to define for themselves their own individual

spiritual practices. While this research did not allow for a full exploration of the defining of

spirituality and spiritual practices as it relates to college women, the findings do confirm that this

is a gap in the existing literature.

Another piece to this puzzle, is the implementation of a definition of spirituality and

spiritual development that resonates with college women. It remains unsolved, even at the

completion of this work, how to get women interested in their own spirituality and spiritual

development when so many of them equate spirituality with religion. With so many students

having a negative connotation associated with religion (Noghiu, 2020), I fear that getting them

involved in a conversation about their spirituality and spiritual development may be a challenge.

Part of this negative connotation associated with religion is reflective of our current state of

affairs as a nation, as Khloe referenced in her interviews: any mention of religion is fraught with

a minefield of presumed intentions, resulting in a negative intertwining of religion/spirituality

and politics. For example, conservative Christianity is often hijacked and tainted by political

extremists, as was demonstrated most recently at the storming of the United States Capitol. In

order to get women interested in their own spirituality and spiritual development, the negative

connotation associated with religion and politics as a piece of our culture needs to be repaired.

Part of the work of defining spirituality in general, and for college women, lies in a need

to get back to the basics of spirituality. Many are turned off by the politicized nature of religion

and do not understand the difference between religion and spirituality. Therefore, the creation of

an implementation of a definition of spirituality that is focused on well-being, mindfulness,

wholeness, and finding purpose may resonate more with college women. This intentional

defining of spirituality is a first step in moving towards the support of the spiritual development

of college women. While all of the participants understood their own spiritual practice and voluntarily participated in this research, I believe that it would take significant foundation building and social capital on behalf of professionals in higher education for students, and campus partners alike, to engage in meaningful ways to move toward intentionally supporting of the spiritual development of college women.

Shipwreck

As was discussed in Chapter 4, the definition of shipwreck has been reframed outside of what was originally included in the literature review on the topic. This discovery around the shipwreck experience happened because of the interviews I conducted with participants, allowing me to draw the conclusion that the shipwreck experience should be thought of as more than just a moment in time. The shipwreck experience is just that, an experience, a totality of compounding factors that present their own barriers for moving through the experience. The shipwreck experience bottoms out at the deepest place of despair, is followed by a breaking point, and eventually a resurfacing through the shipwreck. Shipwreck leads to self-discovery, hope for the future, and newfound purpose and understanding.

In regard to the totality of the shipwreck experience, the findings of this research have great implications for moving forward in how the term is regarded. Perhaps, when speaking about a shipwreck experience, one should consider that an initial shipwreck experience happens in college, when a woman is afforded the opportunity to leave her family and begin pursuing her own adult life. However, this shipwreck that occurs in college is not a final and climactic event; rather, the shipwreck experience can be viewed as cyclical, or occurring many times over the span of a woman's life. The initial shipwreck that happens in college is but one piece of a much larger arc of lifelong shipwreck. When a shipwreck occurs, the woman moves through this

experience, but that experience never leaves her. The shipwreck is never completely *overcome*, instead, the woman weaves the shipwreck experience into the tapestry of her life experiences moving forward. The woman adds to that shipwreck experience each time she faces a new one. Moving forward, she captures a deeper understanding of her own life with each shipwreck she passes through. Therefore, each shipwreck experience serves as a recreation of self. Perhaps shipwreck should even be thought of as *needing to occur*, serving as one specific tool for a woman to find her place in a patriarchal world. Each time she faces a shipwreck, she can rebuild her ship, each time becoming stronger, and more steadfast in her purpose and meaning in life, ultimately giving birth to true self over and over. This totality of the shipwreck experience, one ultimately building upon the last, serves to inform a new framework for thinking about women's journeys.

Framework for Women's Journey

The stories shared by the participants, individually and as a collective, have taught me a great deal about female development. What I have come to realize is that the journey of a woman throughout her life is vastly different from that of a man. As has been made clear throughout this project, the telling of women's stories is important, for the woman who tells her story, but also for the other women who hear that story. A woman needs to see herself as existing in the world, as having a place in society and in the literature that is representative of her experiences. For a man, his story often follows the trajectory of the well-known hero's journey. A man is seen as going through a set of experiences, ultimately returning with favor to bestow on others. This trajectory of the hero's journey is as follows:

> The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the
> formula represented in the rites of passage: *separation—initiation—return*: which might

be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth. A hero ventures forth from the world of

common day into a region of supernatural wonder (x): fabulous forces are there

encountered and a decisive victory is won (y): the hero comes back from his mysterious

adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man (z). (Campbell, 2008, p. 23)

This hero's journey is about men and it is foolish to consider that a woman might follow this

same trajectory.

A woman's story is different, unique to her, and influenced by the gendered expectations

that women face in a male-dominated world. A woman's story must include some reference to

the emotional labor that a woman exercises in every relationship that she is a part of, whether

platonic or intimate. Women often hold more of the emotional baggage for others, making them

more susceptible to deep suffering through shipwreck experiences. However, after conducting

this research, I would argue that this deep suffering through shipwreck experiences may serve to

launch a woman to attain her full potential, thus my desire to offer a new framework for

women's journeys. I would like to offer the following rites of passage as perhaps serving to help

a woman to achieve her full potential: shipwreck—rock bottom—resurfacing—repeat cycle.

A woman's journey often begins as she faces an initial shipwreck, during her college age

years, whether enrolled in college or not. This shipwreck may be deep and expansive, consuming

all parts of the woman, throwing her into the abyss of despair, defeat, and utter loss of hope. If a

woman experiences a shipwreck, she eventually reaches a bottom point, an experience often

accompanied by many barriers to moving forward. At this rock bottom, or deepest spot of

shipwreck, the woman may eventually be able to begin to move through the shipwreck

experience, up from the abyss of despair and defeat, slowly making strides towards finding

herself again. This finding of herself, through the use of spiritual practices, may result in an

ultimate awakening and resurfacing through the experience and the woman finding a sense of wholeness, serenity, and peace within herself. The resurfacing is characterized by a recreation of self, finding greater purpose and meaning than prior to the shipwreck experience, liberating herself from the patriarchal ties that bind her in a man's world. This cycle is often repeated throughout the woman's life, each conquered shipwreck experience serving as a foundation for moving through the next. It is important to note that this framework does not mean to suggest that a woman always surfaces after a deep dive, but when a woman is able to resurface, she is better able to articulate her place and standing in a world filled with systems that mean to continue to subject her to shipwreck. Also, of note, this framework is specifically written from the lens of women engaging with their spirituality to overcome their shipwreck experience; while this framework explores spirituality as a tool for moving through shipwreck, spirituality is not the only means available for women to move through a shipwreck experience.

For women, shipwreck happens a lot; shipwreck is not a final experience but one that can happen many times throughout a woman's life. So, the question that remains is what does all of this mean for a woman's life? Based on the experiences of the participants, I posit that this framework of a woman's journey, of cyclical shipwreck, means that a woman is bound to always continue to improve her understanding of her spiritual self in order to best support dismantling the patriarchal binds that hold her in place. Through a better understanding of herself, a woman is better equipped to pursue her passions in life, combine mind and soul in all that she does, and to lead from a place of spiritual understanding. This resurfacing through cyclical shipwrecks is a testament to the strength of a woman, and the ability of a woman to reach full manifestation of herself by working through some of the most difficult experiences of her life.

Student Leadership

The development of a new research question during the analysis phase of this study, led to implications that are specific to student leadership and spirituality. These implications are unique to the nature of each of the women serving in a leadership position on campus. Based on the role that each of these women played on campus, the findings suggest a need for professional development for college women leaders on the topic of spirituality and a focus on spiritual leadership in the work of Student Affairs professionals. These implications are discussed below.

Professional Development for Women Leaders

For starters, based on the findings detailed above, it is of paramount importance for college women leaders to be offered professional development on spirituality. This is especially true for women who ten to take on more of the emotional burden for others, making them as leaders more vulnerable to shipwreck experiences. The need for a focus on spirituality as a professional development topic for women leaders is due to the fact that the findings of this study suggest that holding a leadership position may have made the women more vulnerable to shipwreck. A professional development series on spirituality would serve women well, as it is a topic that many women are unfamiliar with, especially as it relates to deep knowledge around spirituality and not as it relates to patriarchal religious understandings. There is evidence that women who are not familiar with the differences between religion and spirituality, often reject both spirituality and religions, based on lack of knowledge and the oppressive nature of patriarchal religion. If a woman is not made aware of the liberating nature of a feminist approach to spiritual practice, a practice that is grounded in her own understanding and meaning making, then she may not be equipped to face some of the toughest moments in her life and her position as a student leader. A focus on spirituality as a topic and as a means of working through

challenging experiences, especially those shipwreck experiences that are entangled in the woman's leadership role, would serve college women well. I think we, as Student Affairs professionals, need to focus on women as spiritual beings first, and then as leaders. I agree with the sentiment that Hoppe (2007) shares: "I believe the answer begins with understanding people where they are—accepting them in the context of their lives rather than just in the context of [their leadership role]" (p. 131). We must understand women for who they are, help them to understand who they are, and this begins with a focus on spirituality and spiritual practices as a topic of professional development for college women leaders.

Focus on Spiritual Leadership in Student Affairs

In addition to the implications outlined in Chapter 5 for the work of Student Affairs professionals, I posit that a focus on *spiritual leadership* may be a needed avenue in the realm of Student Affairs practitioners advising students in various leadership roles on campus. We know that our nation, and thereby our campus as a microcosm of the world, has been described as experiencing a shipwreck over the last several years. Some, including Sligh and Talbot (2020), attribute this condition partly to a "moral decline in leadership." Traditional means of leadership development and practice, as well as the development and practice of Student Affairs professionals, should adapt and change, based on a recognized student leadership need. It is true that the field of Student Affairs has adapted in the last decade to include a greater focus on diversity and inclusion, on mental health and well-being, and on students naming and achieving career related goals. However, I perceive that the change in focus to include these areas has come without a change in the way in which Student Affairs professionals are leading in the field. A shift in leadership focus to one that is spiritually oriented would include a leadership style that is loving, embraces inclusion, and has a focus on followers reaching their full capacity in mental

and physical realms (Bonner, 2008). According to Hoppe (2007), a shift to include spirituality in leadership endeavors will only serve to "amplif[y] and complement the concepts in leadership theories, encompassing and indeed embracing wholeness, meaning, authenticity, and conceptual understanding" (p. 112). Therefore, I would argue that the change in focus of Student Affairs practice, coupled with a change in leadership style would result in greater outcomes for students and staff across campus.

The other obvious reason for a focus on spiritual leadership in the field of Student Affairs is based on best serving the population of students who are now in college. Institutions of higher education are riddled with bureaucracy which leaves them resistant to change, thereby often inhibiting the professionals of those institutions from affecting change at the rate and means some professionals might prefer. This lack of change and adaptation leaves both students and professionals at risk for not fulfilling their potential and finding wholeness and true self. If institutions of higher education and the professionals who make them up allow this trajectory to continue, I fear a continued shipwreck for our students, campuses, and the larger culture. The practice of Student Affairs must adapt to the needs of the students they serve, and on today's college campus those students are members of Generation Z. Lindholm (2020b) suggests that "incorporating a spiritual approach to leadership education and development is likely to resonate well with today's ("Generation Z") students (i.e., those who will be completing high school and college through 2032)" (p. 25). Generation Z is a generation who believes in individual change that then leads to systemic change, in transparency and authenticity, and in themselves to change the world (Lindholm, 2020b). If we continue to lead our students in ways that maintain the status quo, that follow oppressive social norms, and that keep the mind and spirit operating in duality,

then we can continue to expect the same results: unresolved or unexamined shipwreck that paralyzes students from achieving wholeness, purpose, serenity, and peace.

Recommendations for Future Research

Spirituality from Standpoint of College Women

Based on the findings of this research and the limitations that were mentioned, there are several recommendations for future research. First and foremost, to think about the idea of future research from a rudimentary level, I would recommend research that is aimed at defining spirituality and spiritual development from the standpoint of college women. This is a gaping hole in the literature and an idea worth exploring. An exploration could also include the specific insecurities of each of the participants related to their spiritual practices, guided by the following questions: 1) Why are women insecure about claiming full acceptance of their spiritual practices? 2) What factors influence a woman's ability to feel adequate in her spiritual practices? 3) Is it a gendered practice, influenced by culture, societal norms, and oppressive systems, to hold feelings of insecurity in relation to spiritual practice?

Identity

Moving forward, this research could be expanded through the inclusion of women of a variety of different identities. To begin, this research could be expanded through the inclusion of college women who do not identify or were not raised with a Christian background, whether Christianity was formally practiced as a religion or not in the household; no matter if it is practiced or believed in adult life, the presence of a religious upbringing has a huge, if only even unconscious, influence on our beliefs, practices, and values as an adult. In particular, it would be interesting to speak with women who more decisively do not equate their spirituality to any religion in particular, or to work with women who have a clear understanding of the difference in

the two. In this same vein, this same research could be conducted with women who do not identify as white. Cultural differences based on race and ethnicity may play a role in the ways in which college women define spirituality and shipwreck, and the ways in which they are equipped to move through a shipwreck moment. Additional research could also be done to replicate this study with participants who do not identify as a woman. How might the outcomes and the content of the research have changed based on the religious upbringings, race, or gender of participants?

Student Affairs Professionals

While the research with college women is specific and needed, I think that further research could also be conducted to investigate the interest, comfortability, and knowledge of Student Affairs professionals as it relates to spirituality and guiding college students to seek deeper meaning in their lives, through finding wholeness, purpose, serenity, and peace for themselves. I cannot help but consider the fact that if professionals are reticent or ill-prepared for these conversations, then they may not be doing their best in guiding students to find deeper meaning after being challenged academically, socially, or personally. Also specific to the work of Student Affairs professionals, further research should be conducted on Student Affairs professionals who embody and promote a focus on spiritual leadership, especially as it relates to students in leadership positions. How might a focus on spiritual leadership better equip student leaders to move through a shipwreck journey? Also, important to note is that, although college women in positional leadership roles on campus made up my participants for this study, further research could be conducted with the general student on a college campus, not one in a leadership position or connected to a campus professional. How does the familiarity and

comfortability of Student Affairs professionals to hold these conversations with students and leaders impact the outcome of the conversation?

Leadership Position

Based on the findings presented and discussed related to the leadership positions of each of the participants, there are several recommendations for future research. First of all, I recommended that Student Affairs professionals adopt a practice of spiritual leadership, a practice that is certainly a topic for further research. Are there institutions or pockets of professionals who have incorporated a spiritual leadership approach to their work with college students? If so, what does this look like in practice? How have the campus, the students, and the professionals been impacted by this change in practice? What are the best practices, lessons learned, and critiques related to the adoption of a spiritual leadership approach by the field of Student Affairs? This research could greatly influence the field moving forward, helping to develop professionals more comfortable and adept at engaging with students about their spiritual identity, practice, and development. Other possibilities for future research could include the investigation of the spiritual practices of college women who are not in formal roles of positional leadership, but exhibit leadership and influence over a group of their peers. It would also be interesting to investigate the long-term impacts that a shipwreck experience has on a woman's leadership capacity and ensuing practices. How do her practices change through time as she continues to experience shipwreck moments throughout her life? All of this research would help Student Affairs practitioners better understand the intricacies involved in the experience of women leaders facing some sort of shipwreck.

Outside of a Global Pandemic

While the final recommendation is minimal in the grand scheme of the research world, I believe that it would be interesting to repeat this study when our nation and the people in it are not experiencing a massive shipwreck moment in time. This research was conducted during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting the recruitment of participants, ways of interviewing, and clouding the thoughts of myself and the participants. In turn, it might also be interesting to conduct research as it relates to college students who used spirituality to move through a 12+ month shipwreck of limited social interaction, virtual learning, daily wearing of face coverings, and each and every tendril of life being interrupted because of COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic has infiltrated every part of our lives and world and its impact cannot go unnoticed in this research.

<div align="center">

Concluding Thoughts

</div>

The women in this study are different after their shipwreck experience. They were able to find the necessary means for working through those experiences, including relying on spiritual practices and seeking support from a trusted Student Affairs professional. They are more mature, confident, grounded in self, and better prepared to face difficult challenges that will inevitably arise for them in their futures. These women will continue to be transformed by their spiritual practices and future shipwrecks. The piece of their journey that was shared with me is but a small piece of a much larger framework of their past and future lives. The shipwreck experience that they detailed with me will continue to shape who they are as women moving forward, each new experience of shipwreck adding to the last and in turn, making them, their ships, and their understanding of life stronger each time. I hope that they will continue to be true to themselves,

their beliefs, and the practices that bring them joy, meaning, wholeness, purpose, serenity, and peace.

I also believe that these women are different after having participated in this research study. For most of the participants, the interview protocol I followed asked them to go to a much deeper space in thought and reflection on the topic than they had ever been. They were asked to go to a place in which they had not been previously, never before having put words to the experiences that they shared about. These women were asked to reflect on their role as women, their role as humans connected to something larger than themselves, and their role in aiding themselves to triumph through difficult experiences. Khloe, Riley, and Camila specifically shared about how they had never thought so deeply about the topics we discussed. I am hopeful that any small epiphanies that they may have had about themselves and their spiritual practices will continue to serve them well in their futures. I am thankful to have been but a small part in their process of giving words to the ideas and experiences they have kept quiet about for so long.

While my ultimate goal in conducting this research was to change the practice of Student Affairs professionals to incorporate, on a broad scale, the spiritual development of college students, it is unclear at this point if this research will create such change. Change at that level takes an incredible amount of time, energy, and buy-in from both students and administrators. However, I know that my practices as a Student Affairs professional have been changed and changed for the better. I cannot move forward in any part of my career without considering how my actions have implications, positively or negatively, on the spiritual lives of each and every student I come in contact with. And that, is reason and satisfaction enough for me having completed this journey.

What I did not expect as a part of this dissertation journey is a newfound understanding from the stories shared, coupled with my own stories, that deep pain may be necessary for a woman to find her place in a patriarchal world. The thought of a woman fitting the mold of a man in a society dominated by patriarchal norms has always been a bit disheartening to me; I have felt at many points of my life that I just do not fit into that mold, nor do I want to. Perhaps it is in the depths of despair that a woman is able to find her way back to herself and to her place in the world. Through this despair in trudging through oppressive systems meant to hold women back, if women are able to surface through this shipwreck, then perhaps they are able to find wholeness, to tell their true stories, and to resist the binds that hold us captive. Perhaps then, this research and associated findings are a response to structural oppression. The beauty of a woman and her experience in this world is unique and worthy of being sought and shared. The resistance to dominant culture, the triumph through shipwreck, and the sharing of women's stories are important and necessary in the liberation of all women from the oppressive powers that suggest we are anything but worthy.

My spiritual practices have also changed as a result of this research. I know what practices are needed for me to feel whole and at peace, especially during and following a shipwreck experience. I have learned new things about myself, about my role in my field, and about my value and worth in this world. It is also not lost on me that I completed this dissertation journey during the middle of a global pandemic, a deeply troubling lived experience that forced me to reach to my most inner depths to find peace and fulfillment. What a unique opportunity to live through a shipwreck experience and be forced to rely on my own spiritual practices to be able to maintain my head above water while also engaging with five women about the ways in which they used their spiritual practices to move through some of the most challenging moments

of their lives. When I was hiking the Camino, I knew that I was on a spiritual journey and expected to come out of that experience a changed person. When I began this doctoral journey, I had no idea that it would also be a spiritual journey for me, leaving me changed on the other side. I am grateful to have had the experience in this research and with the five women who came alongside me for it. May we all continue on a path towards full manifestation of true self, seeking peace and contentment in all that life brings our way.

While the primary aspects of my research have been presented, I have benefitted from an additional gift, which I present in Chapter 6. Chapter 6, my Epilogue, is where I discuss the importance of seeking out, recording, examining women's stories for issues associated with development that is spiritual in nature. I hope you will find this additional chapter to be informative.

Chapter 6: Epilogue

At the conclusion of this research, I felt that while my closing remarks were an accurate depiction of and ending to this journey, it all still felt incomplete. In considering the impact of this research on my story of shipwreck and triumph, I would be remiss to not share some of the ways this research, and process, has impacted me and my story.

As a result of this research, I have a greater understanding of the need for a woman to tell her story. As I originally wrote about my experience on the Camino, I remember feeling challenged to put into words such a complex experience. The journey along the Camino was about more than just my relationship with my partner before we grew our family. It was about more than just a personal exploration of a spiritual and religious walk that many had taken before me. It was about more than just me. My experience along the Camino was about my connection to the earth, other women, and about discovering a higher calling in my life. To put that connection into a series of narratives upon my return felt as if my experience of learning along the Camino had come to an end. Writing my narratives from that experience felt as if I was putting those experiences into a box and onto a shelf. And while my walking along that path had, indeed, ended, the learning had only just begun at that time.

Since the completion of my hiking the Camino and the subsequent writing of narratives that detailed that experience, I have learned that each day of my life provides an opportunity to draw greater or different meaning from each of those experiences. As each of the participants told about their personal journey through shipwreck and resurfacing, I had many flashbacks to my time on the Camino. As they told about their feelings of hope and despair, I could relate each story to a moment I faced while hiking. The completion of this research has taught me that the sharing of stories is important for a woman's journey. It is a necessary element in her full growth

and development after a particular experience. A woman needs to feel connected to other women, as this connection allows the woman to feel validated in her experience. I have learned that my story and the meaning that I draw from it continues to change as I see and hear the stories of other women. My understanding of the world and my role in it changes with each story I hear. My standpoint changes as my knowledge changes. This research has changed the way I view myself and the way I view women in my career and personal life. I view myself and each woman I interact with as but a small piece of a much larger story, each one influencing the other. My approach to engaging with other women is centered in challenging societal norms, seeking equity in all realms, and in listening fully and reflectively. This research has made me a better woman to myself and to other women.

My experience on the Camino also laid the groundwork for my learning and development as a mother, as Mark and I were blessed with Sweet Baby James during the Spring that followed our time in Spain. Although I did not know while I was hiking what the experience of being a mother would demand of me, there are many things that the Camino taught me that have been beneficial in my role as a mother. The Camino taught me that connection with my partner can serve as a solid foundation for pursuing adventures in life—this holds true in my role as a mother. The more connected I am with my partner, the easier it is for us to parent together and understand the perseverance needed to raise a thoughtful and loving child. The Camino taught me that there will be experiences and people that do not bring out the best in me, but that I have mechanisms in place to help me move past those experiences and people—this can also be said of my role as a mother. Parenting a child is one of the most difficult experiences I have ever embarked on. It is an experience riddled with tears, frustration, sleep deprivation, and tested patience. When I have those difficult moments as a parent, I am reminded of my time on the

Camino—that difficult experiences do not last forever, that meditation can take your mind off of a challenging circumstance, and that sometimes you have to step out and find a new rhythm. Even though I have shared that parenting has been one of the most challenging experiences I have ever faced, much like my journey along the Camino, it has also been one of the most rewarding adventures I have ever been on. My life was changed because of my time on the Camino and my life was also changed when I became a parent. I often find myself daydreaming about my summer spent in Spain or about my life prior to being a mother, but each time I find myself in that place I am reminded that each of those experiences prepared me for the experiences I am faced with now. Each shipwreck and success support the next phase of my life, making me better equipped to face each new day.

What I have learned from Robert Nash's book on scholarly personal narrative (SPN), is that I do not need to "cite dozens of formal research studies in order to validate [my] personal insights" (Nash, 2019, p. 82). I have learned that "draw[ing] larger professional implications from [my] own experiences" (Nash, 2019, p. 82) is a valid research approach. The stories that I have shared in this dissertation and with the participants have served to help me better understand myself: "Our stories get us closer to knowing who we are" (Nash, 2019, p. 2). Through the deep personal connection that I have felt to this research, I am able to glean "genuine wisdom and meaning" to share with others. It is through the storytelling in this research that I already have and continue to change as a professional and as a woman. I can only hope that the more broadscale sharing of these stories, alongside the sharing of my own stories, will serve to create a positive change in the field of Student Affairs and in the lives of students on college campuses.

Finally, as I have been in the final stages of my dissertation, I cannot help but to see the core of my research, shipwreck, reflected in the very world that we are all living in. Our communities, our nation, our world, and all the people that make them up are in a serious time of shipwreck. Specifically, in the United States, 2020 was a truly unimaginable, dare I say unprecedented, year. We saw the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement and accompanying protests and activism after the murder of George Floyd. We witnessed a highly contentious and seemingly unending resolution to the 2020 Presidential Election. We lived through the COVID-19 pandemic, although many lost their lives as a result. Our nation is tired, hurting, emotionally exhausted, burned out, and in desperate need of something hopeful to cling to. I, and many of the participants that I interviewed, are tired, hurting, emotionally exhausted, burned out, and in desperate need of something hopeful to cling to.

What the lens of this research has taught me during this unimaginable shipwreck is that we often must go to those hard places, the darkest places of our lives, in order to find contentment and wholeness within ourselves. The misconception that even through great trials we must stand stoic and unwavering is a result of the patriarchal influence over all aspects of our lives. In resistance to this patriarchal bind that holds, I would offer that there is great worth in making space for vulnerability within our lives and our leadership; the need to "hold it all together" is a fallacy that perpetuates the split between mind and soul. Just as the passage from Parker Palmer (2004) at the beginning of this study reminds us, it is through our brokenness we can find wholeness. When we take the time to own our selves and values as our own, taking the necessary steps towards authenticity in who we are as individuals, then we can truly begin to heal the wounds of our brokenness: "The divided life is a wounded life, and the soul keeps

calling us to heal the wound" (Palmer, 2004, p. 20). The search for wholeness can also lead to finding hope in times of darkness and despair.

I believe that hope can be found through a reframing of our priorities, through respite, and through creating space to heal. Our nation, myself, and many others need healing, a space to rest and refuel. One source of this rest and refuel can be achieved through the sentiments that Lynn Ungar (2020) lays out in the following poem written when our nation shutdown during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. During this shutdown, we were all asked to shelter at home, to help flatten the curve of the intensity of the toll of the pandemic on the United States:

What if you thought of it

as the Jews consider the Sabbath—

the most sacred of times?

Cease from travel.

Cease from buying and selling.

Give up, just for now,

on trying to make the world

different than it is.

Sing. Pray. Touch only those

to whom you commit your life.

Center down.

And when your body has become still,

reach out with your heart.

Know that we are connected

in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.

(You could hardly deny it now.)

Know that our lives

are in one another's hands.

(Surely, that has come clear.)

Do not reach out your hands.

Reach out your heart.

Reach out your words.

Reach out all the tendrils

of compassion that move, invisibly,

where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love–

for better or for worse,

in sickness and in health,

so long as we all shall live. (Ungar, 2020)

I believe that this poem reflects so much of what can serve to heal our broken bodies and spirits—taking time to connect on a deeper level with ourselves and our loved others. We, as humans, have a level of connection with each other unlike any other connection in the world. It is hopeful to think about the rest and healing that might come out of us heeding Ungar's advice to slow down, center, and repurpose our intentions for our lives. I plan to heed this advice as I carry forth through the shipwreck our nation is in and as I trudge through my own future shipwreck experiences.

References

Agee, J. (2009). Developing qualitative research questions: A reflective process. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 22*(4), 431-447. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390902736512

Allen, K. E., & Kellom, G. E. (2001). The role of spirituality in student affairs and staff development. *New Directions for Student Services, 95*(3), 47-55. https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.22

Arnot, M. (2013). Male hegemony, social class, and women's education. In B. J. Thayer-Bacon, L. Stone, & K. M. Sprecher (Eds.), *Education feminism: Classic and contemporary readings* (pp. 19-40). State University of New York Press.

Astin, A.W., Astin, H.S., & Lindholm, J.A (2011). *Cultivating the spirit: How college can enhance students' inner lives.* Jossey-Bass.

Barbezat, D. P., & Bush, M. (2014). *Contemplative practices in higher education: Powerful methods to transform teaching and learning*. Jossey-Bass.

Barbour, R.S, & Schostak, J. (2011). Interviewing and focus groups. In B. Somekh & C. Lewin (Eds.), *Theory and methods in social research* (pp. 61-68). SAGE Publications.

Bloom, L. R. (1998). *Under the sign of hope: Feminist methodology and narrative interpretation.* State University of New York Press.

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (1995). *Leading with soul: An uncommon journey of spirit*. Jossey-Bass.

Bonner, C. (2008). Spiritually oriented leadership in a secular age. In P. D. Houston, A.M. Blankstein, & R. W. Cole (Eds.), *The soul of educational leadership: Spirituality in educational leadership, 4*, (pp. 131-149). Corwin Press.

Bowen, H. R. (1999). Goals: The intended outcomes of higher education. In J. L. Bess & D. S. Webster (Eds.), *Foundations of American higher education* (pp. 23-37). Pearson Custom Publishing.

Brooks, A. (2007). Feminist standpoint epistemology. In S. N. Hesse-Biber & P. L. Leavy (Eds.), *Feminist research practice: A primer* (pp. 53-82). SAGE Publications.

Brooks, A., & Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2007). An invitation to feminist research. In S. N. Hesse-Biber & P. L. Leavy (Eds.), *Feminist research practice: A primer* (pp. 1-24). SAGE Publications.

Bryant, A. N., & Astin, H. S. (2008). The correlates of spiritual struggle during the college years. *The Journal of Higher Education, 79*(1), 1-27. https://www-jstor-org.proxy006.nclive.org/stable/25144648

Bugenhagen, M. J. (2009). Spirituality and leadership: Engaging both in higher education. *Journal of Leadership Studies, 3*(3), 69-74. https://doi.org/10.1002/jls.20125

Cady, D. M. (2007). Spirituality and student development. In B. W. Speck & S. L. Hoppe (Eds.), *Searching for spirituality in higher education* (pp. 97-109). Peter Lang.

Campbell, J. (2008). *The hero with a thousand faces* (3rd ed.,). New World Library.

Chickering, A. (2004). Encouraging authenticity and spirituality in higher education. *Journal of College and Character, 5*(1), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.2202/1940-1639.1373

Christ, C. P. (1995). *Diving deep and surfacing: Women writers on spiritual quest.* Beacon Press.

Clandinin, D. J., (2013). *Engaging in narrative inquiry.* Left Coast Press.

Clandinin, D.J., & Connelly, F.M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research.* Jossey-Bass.

Clandinin, D. J., Huber, J., Steeves, P., & Li, Y. (2011). Becoming a narrative inquirer: Learning to attend within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. In S. Trahar (Ed.), *Learning and teaching narrative inquiry: Travelling in the borderlands* (pp. 33-51). John Benjamin Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1075/sin.14.03cla

Cottingham, M. E., Davis, L., Craycraft, A., Keiper, C. D., & Abernethy, A. D. (2014). Disordered eating and self-objectification in college women: Clarifying the roles of spirituality and purpose in life. *Mental Health, Religion, & Culture, 17*(9), 898-909. https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2014.950558

Dalton, J. C. (2006). The place of spirituality in the mission and work of college student affairs. In A. W. Chickering, J. C. Dalton, & L. Stamm, *Encouraging authenticity and spirituality in higher education* (pp. 145-164). Jossey-Bass.

Dennis, D. (2007). Biological basis of spirituality. In B. W. Speck & S. L. Hoppe (Eds.), *Searching for spirituality in higher education* (pp. 69-84). Peter Lang.

Dent, E. B., Higgins, M. E., & Wharff, D. M. (2005). Spirituality and leadership: An empirical review of definitions, distinctions, and embedded assumptions. *The Leadership Quarterly, 16*(5), 625-653. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.07.002

Dillard, C. B. (2000). The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen: Examining an endarkened feminist epistemology in educational research and leadership. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 13*(6), 661-681. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390050211565

Durdella, N. (2019). *Qualitative dissertation methodology: A guide for research design and methods.* SAGE Publications.

Eller, C. (1993). The birth of a new religion: The feminist spirituality movement. *Continuum, 2*(2), 77-102.

Fry, L. W. (2003). Toward a theory of spiritual leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 14*(6). 693-727. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2003.09.001

Gehrke, S. J. (2008). Leadership through meaning-making: An empirical exploration of spirituality and leadership in college students. *Journal of College Student Development, 49*(4), 351-359. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.0.0014

Gilley, D. V. (2005). Whose spirituality? Cautionary notes about the role of spirituality in higher education. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 104*(4), 93-99. https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.218

Glesne, C. (2011). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (4th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.

Goodman, K.M. (2013). Deliberative campus practices to foster spirituality, purpose, and meaning: Recognizing student characteristics and group differences. In A. B. Rockenbach, & M. J. Mayhew (Eds.), *Spirituality in college students' lives: Translating research into practice* (pp. 57-66). Routledge.

Hafner, M. M., & Capper, C. A. (2005). Defining spirituality: Critical implications for the practice and research of educational leadership. *Journal of School Leadership, 15*(6), 624-638.

Harding, S. (2004a). Introduction: Standpoint theory as a site of political, philosophic, and scientific debate. In S. Harding (Ed.), *The feminist standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies* (pp. 1-15). Routledge.

Harding, S. (2004b). Rethinking standpoint epistemology: What is "strong objectivity"? In S. Harding (Ed.), *The feminist standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies* (pp. 127-140). Routledge.

Harding, S. (2012). Feminist standpoints. In S. N. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *The handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis* (pp. 46-64). SAGE Publications.

Hartsock, N. C. M. (2004). The feminist standpoint: Developing the ground for a specifically feminist historical materialism*. In S. Harding (Ed.), *The feminist standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies* (pp. 35-53). Routledge.

Hegde, R., Tungesh, G.M., & Phil, M. (2016). Exploring teachers' perceptions with the narrative inquiry approach. *Language in India, 16*(7), 150-158.

Hindman, D. M. (2002). From splintered lives to whole persons: Facilitating spiritual development in college students. *Religious Education, 97*(2), 165-182.

hooks, b. (1993). A life in the spirit: Reflections on faith and politics. *ReVision, 15*(3).

hooks, b. (2015). *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics.* Routledge.

Houston, P. D. (2008). What's spirituality got to do with it? In P. Houston, A. Blankstein, & R. Cole (Eds.), *The soul of educational leadership: Spirituality in educational leadership* (Vol. 4)., (pp. 7-12). Corwin Press.

Hoyle, J. R. (2002). The highest form of leadership. *School Administrator, 59*(9), 18-21.

Hoppe, S. L. (2007). Spirituality in Higher Education Leadership. In B. W. Speck & S. L. Hoppe (Eds.), *Searching for spirituality in higher education* (pp. 111-136). Peter Lang.

Kiessling, K. M. (2011). Fitting a round peg in a round hole: Spirituality and student affairs. *Campus Activities Programming, 43*(7), 32-39.

Kim, J. H. (2016). *Understanding Narrative Inquiry: The crafting and analysis of stories as research.* SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071802861

Komives, S. R., Mackie, M. M., Shalka, T. R., & Smith, M. (2020). Spirituality and leadership: Research supports the connection. *New Directions for Student Leadership: Spirituality and Leadership*, *166*(2), 135-157. https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.20388

Lindholm, J. A. (2007). Spirituality in the academy: Reintegrating our lives and the lives of our students. *About Campus, 12*(4), 10-16. https://doi.org/10.1002/abc.218

Lindholm, J. A. (2020a). Editor's notes. *New Directions for Student Leadership: Spirituality and Leadership*, *166*(2), 7-12. https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.20379

Lindholm, J. A. (2020b). Leadership, spirituality, and the legacy of Helen "Lena" Astin. *New Directions for Student Leadership: Spirituality and Leadership*, *166*(2), 13-32. https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.20380

Love, P. (2001). Spirituality and student development: Theoretical connections. *New Directions for Student Services, 95*(3), 7-16. https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.18

Love, P., & Talbot, D. (2009). Defining spiritual development: A missing consideration for student affairs. *NASPA Journal, 46*(4), 614-628.

Lowery, J. W. (2005). What higher education law says about spirituality. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 104*(4), 15-22. https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.208

Martin, J. R. (2013). Excluding women from the educational realm. In B. J. Thayer-Bacon, L. Stone, & K. M. Sprecher (Eds.), *Education feminism: Classic and contemporary readings* (pp. 41-58). State University of New York Press.

Mashburn, H. J. (2017). Personal journal from the Camino de Santiago. Unpublished manuscript.

Maxwell, J.A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach.* SAGE
Publications.

Morgan Consoli, M. L., Unzueta, E. G., Delucio, K., & Llamas, J. (2018). What shade of
spirituality? Exploring spirituality, religiosity, meaning making, and thriving among
Latina/o undergraduates. *Counseling and Values 63*(2), 232-253.
https://doi.org/10.1002/cvj.12090

Murphy, C. (2007). The relationship between religion and spirituality. In B. W. Speck & S. L.
Hoppe (Eds.), *Searching for spirituality in higher education* (pp. 35-51). Peter Lang.

Narayan, K., & George, K. (2012). Stories about getting stories. In J. Gubrium, J. Holstein, A.
Marvasti, & K. McKinney (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research: The
Complexity of the Craft* (pp. 511-524). Sage Publications.

Nash, R. (2001). *Religious pluralism in the academy: Opening the dialogue.* Peter Lang.

Nash, R. (2019). *Liberating scholarly writing: The power of personal narrative.* Information Age
Publishing.

Nash, R. J., & Swaby, M. (2011). Helping college students discover meaning through
spirituality. In H. Chang & D. Boyd (Eds.), *Spirituality in higher education:
Autoethnographies* (pp. 111-125). Routledge.

Noghiu, A. A. (2020). Spiritual capital: A framework for spirituality-infused leadership
education and organizational spirituality. *New Directions for Student Leadership:
Spirituality and Leadership*, *166*(2), 45-59. https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.20382

Nolan-Arañez, S. I. (2020). The intersectionality of leadership and spiritual development through
mentoring. *New Directions for Student Leadership: Spirituality and Leadership*, *166*(2),
97-110. https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.20385

Northouse, P. G. (2016). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (7th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Nouwen, H. J. M. (1981). *The way of the heart.* Ballantine Books.

Palmer, P. J. (1993). *To know as we are known: Education as a spiritual journey.* Harper Collins.

Palmer, P. J. (2003). Teaching with heart and soul: Reflections on spirituality in teacher education. *Journal of teacher education, 54*(5), 376-385.

Palmer, P. J. (2004). *A hidden wholeness: The journey toward an undivided life.* Wiley-Jossey-Bass.

Palmer, P. J., Zajonc, A., & Scribner, M. (2010). *The heart of higher education: A call to renewal.* Jossey-Bass.

Pargament, K. I., Murray-Swank, N. A., Maygar, G. M., & Ano, G. G. (2005). Spiritual struggle: A phenomenon of interest to psychology and religion. In W. R. Miller & H. D. Delaney (Eds.), *Judeo-Christian perspectives on psychology: Human nature, motivation, and change,* (pp. 245-268). American Psychological Association.

Parks, S. (2000). *Big questions, worthy dreams: Mentoring young adults in their search for meaning, purpose, and faith.* Jossey-Bass.

Patton, L. D., & McClure, M. L. (2009). Strength in the spirit: A qualitative examination of African American college women and the role of spirituality during college. *The Journal of Negro Education, 78*(1), 42-54. https://www-jstor-org.proxy006.nclive.org/stable/25608717

Peelen, J. & Jansen, W. (2007). Emotive movement on the road to Santiago de Compostela. *Etnofoor, 20*(1), 75-96. https://www-jstor-org.proxy006.nclive.org/stable/25758131

Plaskow, J., & Christ, C. P. (Eds.). (1989). *Weaving the visions: New patterns in feminist spirituality.* HarperCollins Publishers.

Rentz, A. L. (2004). Student affairs: An historical perspective. In F. J. MacKinnon & Associates (Eds.), *Rentz's student affairs practice in higher education* (2nd ed., pp. 27-57). Charles C. Thomas Publisher, LTD.

Rockenbach, A. B. (2011). What roles should student affairs educators play in attending to students' religious and spiritual needs? In P. M. Magolda. & M. B. Magolda (Eds.), *Contested issues in student affairs: Diverse perspectives and respectful dialogue* (pp. 335-346). Stylus Publishing.

Rogers, J. L., & Love, P. (2007). Exploring the role of spirituality in the preparation of student affairs professionals: Faculty constructions. *Journal of College Student Development, 48*(1), 90-104. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2007.0006

Rose, H. (2004). A feminist epistemology for the natural sciences. In S. Harding (Ed.), *The feminist standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies* (pp. 67-80). Routledge.

Ross, S. A. (2012). Feminist spirituality. In M. Cobb, C. M. Puchalski, & B. Rumbold (Eds.), *Oxford textbook of spirituality in healthcare* (pp. 31-36). Oxford University Press, Inc.

Sanders, J. E., III, Hopkins, W. E., & Geroy, G. D. (2003). From transactional to transcendental: Toward an integrated theory of leadership. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies, 9*(4), 21-31. https://doi.org/10.1177/107179190300900402

Seidman, I. (2013). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (4th ed.)*.* Teachers College Press.

Seifert, T. A., & Holman-Harmon, N. (2009). Practical implications for student affairs professionals' work in facilitating students' inner development. *New Directions for Student Services, 125*(1), 13-21.

Shahjahan, R. A. (2009). The role of spirituality in the anti-oppressive higher-education classroom. *Teaching in Higher Education, 14*(2), 121-131. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510902757138

Slavin, S. (2003). Walking as spiritual practice: The pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. *Body & Society, 9*(13), 1-18.

Sligh, C. E., & Talbot, D. M. (2020). Recognizing the inevitable intersections of spiritual and leadership development. *New Directions for Student Leadership: Spirituality and Leadership*, *166*(2), 33-44. https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.20381

Smith, D. E. (2004). Women's perspective as a radical critique of sociology. In S. Harding (Ed.), *The feminist standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies* (pp. 21-33). Routledge.

Smith, H. (2001). *Why religion matters: The fate of the human spirit in the age of disbelief.* Harper Collins.

Soet, J., & Martin, H. (2007). Women and spirituality: An experiential group for female graduate students. *Journal of College Counseling, 10*(1), 90-96.

Speck, B. W. (2007). Spirituality in higher education: A literature review. In B. W. Speck & S. L. Hoppe (Eds.), *Searching for spirituality in higher education* (pp. 3-34). Peter Lang.

Subbiondo, J. L. (2011). Spirituality on campus: The emergence of a postsecular age in American higher education: The value of spirituality in higher education. *About Campus, 16*(5), 30-32. https://doi.org/10.1002/abc.20079

Thompson, S. (2008). Spiritual leadership- The invisible revolution. In P. D. Houston, A.M. Blankstein, & R. W. Cole (Eds.), *The soul of educational leadership: Spirituality in educational leadership, 4*, (pp. 131-149). Corwin Press.

Tisdell, E. J. (2003). *Exploring spirituality and culture in adult and higher education.* Jossey-Bass.

Walsh, K., Choo, T., Wall, M., Hirsch, J. S., Ford, J., Santelli, J. S., Gilbert, L., Thompson, M. P., Reardon, L., & Mellins, C. A. (2020). Repeat sexual victimization during college: Prevalence and psychosocial correlates. *Psychology of Violence, 10*(6), 676-686. https://doi.org/10.1037/vio0000339

Wortmann, J. H., Park, C. L., & Edmondson, D. (2012). Spiritual struggle and adjustment to loss in college students: Moderation by Denomination. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 22*(4), 303-320. https://doi.org/10.1080/10508619.2011.638606

Yakushko, O. (2011). Preliminary validation of the women's spirituality instrument: Development of a measure to assess feminist religious and spiritual attitudes. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 3*(3), 194-200. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022965

Yin, R. K. (2016). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. (2nd ed.). The Guilford Press.

Zhang, K. C. (2013). What I look like: College women, body image, and spirituality. *Journal of Religious Health, 52*(1), 1240-1252. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-012-9566-0

Appendices

Appendix A: Invitation to Participate

Appendix B: Participant Recruitment Flyer

Appendix C: Participant Screening Information

Appendix D: Participant Consent Form

Appendix E: Interview Protocol

Appendix A: Invitation to Participate

Dear Potential Participant:

My name is Heather Jo Mashburn and I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program at Appalachian State University. I am conducting a research study to explore the role spirituality plays during moments of shipwreck for college women. I am writing to invite you to participate in this study.

Introduction and Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study is to understand how college women use spirituality during moments of shipwreck, and how these moments of shipwreck serve as a catalyst for self-discovery, personal growth, and transformation for college women's spirituality. In particular, I am interested in how college women describe their experience in seeking support from a higher education professional during and/or following a shipwreck moment. Consequently, participants will offer insight into the practices higher education professionals can implement to support spiritual development of college women, especially following a shipwreck moment. I believe that you bring a unique perspective that can greatly inform our understanding of this topic moving forward.

Description of Study Procedures
As a participant, you will be asked to participate in 3 individual, private interviews lasting 60 minutes each. These interviews will be audio recorded. All interviews and other materials will remain confidential and will be stored on a password-protected computer and a secured online server to ensure confidentiality throughout the process.

Risks of Participation
There are no known risks or threats associated with your participation in the research. Under no circumstances will your interview data be shared with anyone without your explicit permission. The results of this research project may be presented at academic conferences, professional meetings, or in publications; however, your identity will not be disclosed. Presentations and manuscripts typically contain participants' quotes, but participants will not be identified. Your involvement in the research project is entirely voluntary. You have the right to discontinue participation at any time.

Benefits of Participation
The findings of this study have the potential to offer recommendation to Student Affairs administrators, so they can work towards more intentional inclusion of spiritual development when working with students. Moreover, sharing your experiences individually could prove to be beneficial for you.

Contact Persons
If you have any questions concerning this research project, please contact Heather Jo Mashburn (Principal Investigator) at mashburnhj@appstate.edu or 706.289.7595 or Roma Angel at angelrb@appstate.edu or 828.262.2109. Thank you for your time and consideration!

Appendix B: Participant Recruitment Flyer

shipwreck & spirituality: finding wholeness after deep challenge.

SEEKING PARTICIPANTS FOR A DISSERTATION STUDY.

Doctoral student at ASU is seeking 5 students that have been challenged academically, socially, or personally *and* used spirituality as a way to navigate the challenge. Seeking students that have found wholeness, purpose, serenity and peace after facing a difficult experience.
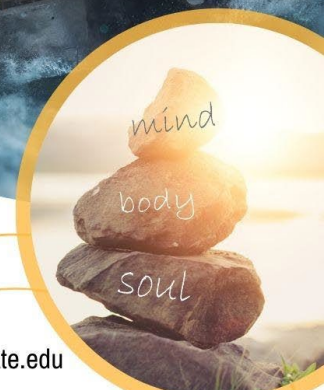
OTHER CRITERIA:
- *COLLEGE WOMAN*
- *JUNIOR/SENIOR*
- *SOUGHT SUPPORT AND/OR CONSULTED WITH A UNIVERSITY STAFF MEMBER*

If interested in participating in this research study, you will be asked to complete multiple individual interviews over the course of several weeks.

mind

body

soul

For More Information:
Heather Jo Mashburn
706.289.7595 | mashburnhj@appstate.edu

Appendix C: Participant Screening Information

Thank you for your interest in participating in my dissertation study. I am looking for college women to help me answer what role spirituality plays in moments of shipwreck. I hope this study benefits you, future students, and the work of Student Affairs professionals in assisting students in navigating the role that spirituality plays in moments of shipwreck. This study would include 3 individual interviews, for a total of approximately 3 hours of your time.

This form will be used to select the participants of the dissertation study in order to have the most diverse participant group possible.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me (Heather Jo Mashburn) at mashburnhj@appstate.edu.

First & Last Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

What year are you? (Fr, So, Jr, Sr, Grad) _____

What is your major? _____

What is your racial identity? _____

What is your gender identity? _____

What is your religious and/or spiritual identity? _____

Are you a first generation college student? (yes or no) _____

Briefly describe a significant time in your life when you have been academically, socially, or personally challenged <u>and</u> used spirituality as a way to navigate the challenge.

Briefly describe how you define and engage with spirituality.

As part of this study, I am seeking individuals that have sought support and/or consulted with a university staff member during the challenging time faced. Did you consult with a university staff member in the scenario you described above? (yes or no) _____
       If so, what position did/does that person hold at the university? _____

Appendix D: Participant Consent Form

Shipwreck and Spirituality: College Women's Experiences of Surfacing through Deep Challenge to Find Inner-Development and Purpose

Principal Investigator: Heather Jo Mashburn
Department: Doctoral Student, Educational Leadership
Contact Information: mashburnhj@appstate.edu, 706-289-7595
Faculty Adviser: Dr. Roma Angel, Committee Chair, 828-262-2109

You are invited to participate in a research study designed to explore the role of college women's spirituality in moments of personal, social, and academic challenges. The research also aims to explore the experience of college women seeking support from a higher educational professional during or following said challenges.

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to participate in three one-hour semi-structured interviews and will be asked to respond to a series of questions. Semi-structured interviews allow for pre-written questions to be a guide to the interview, and are addressed in the Interview Protocol.

All records of participation will be kept strictly confidential. Only the researcher will have access to the names of the participants involved in the study; each participant will be given a pseudonym upon submission of the completed consent form. The results from the interviews conducted will be used for the researcher's dissertation, publication, and may be used in conjunction with conference and workshop presentations. Data will be shared, but actual names of participants and the information they share will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Information about the project will not be made public in any way that identifies individual participants.

Interviews will be audio recorded and may be published. Recordings and transcripts will be stored on a password-protected computer and a secured online server that only the researcher will have access to. Information or quotations from the recordings and transcripts will be used for the researcher's dissertation, publication, and in conjunction with conference and workshop presentations. By signing below, you agree to give the researcher ownership of the recordings and transcripts from the interviews conducted with you.

There are no known risks or threats associated with your participation in the research. You will not be compensated for your participation in the research.

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You may choose not to answer any question that you are asked or continue with the interview for any reason.

Based on the nature of the research at hand, some topics may be difficult for participants to discuss. If you begin to feel triggered or retraumatized for any reason, you may decide to discontinue the interview. The researcher will have available at all times during the process,

referral information to a counselor and will be prepared to stop the interview upon the request of the participant and/or at the discretion of the researcher.

If you have questions about this research study, you may contact Heather Jo Mashburn at 706-289-7595 or Dr. Roma Angel at 828-262-2109.

The Appalachian State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has determined that this study is exempt from IRB oversight.

I have read the above information. I understand the information given to me. I understand that I can ask questions of the researcher at any time. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any point. I agree to participate in this study.

_____
Participant's Name (PRINT)

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   Date

Appendix E: Interview Protocol

Introductory Phase:

1. Introductions
2. Provide brief overview of the study
3. Participants review/sign informed consent forms

Individual Interview #1 (Rapport & Foundation Building):

1. Please describe yourself to someone who doesn't know you--what would you say they should know about you to get a good sense of who you are?
2. What made you decide to reach out to be a part of this research?
3. Walk me through your typical day. What would I see you doing?
4. In what moments do you find the greatest joy? (What are you doing, where are you, who are you with)
   a. What is it about these moments in particular that bring you joy?
5. What helps or hinders you from doing or being at your best?
6. What does spirituality mean to you? (How do you define spirituality?)
7. Do you view yourself as a spiritual person? Why or why not?
8. What spiritual practices do you engage in on a daily/regular basis?
9. In what way does spirituality play a role in your life?
10. What role do you believe spirituality plays in higher education?
11. Please complete the following sentence: In my spiritual journey, I feel I'm…

Individual Interview #2 (Story/Source of Shipwreck & Seeking Support):

1. Please describe, in detail, the time in which you were challenged academically, socially, or personally (the situation that made you inclined to be part of this study).
2. When faced with a challenging or difficult situation (shipwreck moment) in your life, how do you overcome it?
3. During/after your moment(s) of shipwreck, you sought support and/or consulted a university staff member. Tell me about that experience.
   a. What made you reach out to this person?
   b. If you were to face another shipwreck moment, would you reach out to a university staff member for support?
4. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your interaction with a university staff member in seeking support in/during/after this shipwreck moment?
5. Were there any barriers that got in the way of you overcoming this shipwreck?

6. One of the criteria to participate in this research was that you "found wholeness, purpose, serenity and peace after facing a difficult experience (shipwreck moment)". Please tell me more about this wholeness, purpose, etc.
7. Has this shipwreck moment impacted who you are and who you want to be?
    a. If so, how?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your shipwreck moment?

Individual Interview #3 (Spirituality before/during/after Shipwreck & Reflection):

1. How would you describe your spiritual practices before the shipwreck moment we discussed last time? During?
2. How has your spiritual life changed because of the shipwreck moment we discussed last time?
3. How did your concept of spirituality influence your movement through the shipwreck?
4. How has your spiritual life changed over the years? How would you describe it now?
5. How, if at all, has your life (generally and on a daily basis) been changed by your spiritual practice?
6. Please complete the following sentence: In my spiritual journey, I feel I'm…
7. What advice would you give to other students navigating shipwreck moments?
8. How can spiritual development efforts be elevated at institutions of higher education?
    a. What is working well?
    b. What is not working well?
9. Anything else you would like to share?

Vita

Heather Jo Harralson Mashburn was born in Cusseta, Georgia. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology and a Master of Education in Higher Education Administration from Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia. She earned her Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. Heather Jo currently resides in Boone, North Carolina with her husband, Mark, her son, James, and is expecting another child in the summer of 2021.

Heather Jo has eleven years of experience working in higher education in community engagement activities, leadership development, student conduct and risk management, and scholarship programming. She currently works at Appalachian State University as the Associate Director of Appalachian and the Community Together in the Department of Student Engagement and Leadership. In her role, Heather Jo provides leadership to all campus efforts related to co-curricular service and volunteer activities, as well as is responsible for fostering mutually beneficial relationships with constituents across campus and the greater community.

Heather Jo plans to continue her work as a Student Affairs professional but also has future goals to publish her scholarship. Through her work, Heather Jo aspires to deepen the understanding of the importance of a focus on spirituality for college students. Ultimately, Heather Jo hopes to play a role in the purposeful and intentional inclusion of spirituality across the practice of Student Affairs.