

One Day at a Time: Lessons Learned from Years of Experience in Education

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Introduction-CC Carter: Dr. D is currently a teacher, educator in the College of Agriculture. As the program coordinator, he manages the teacher credential program to the agricultural students interested in pursuing a teaching credential. He teaches education courses and two leadership courses offered in the college. His interest in leadership began many years ago when - not as many as mine because I'm much older than he is [chuckling] - when he was hired into his first teaching position at Lemoore High School. (I'm interested in where Lemoore's at.) [laughter]. One of his students was the service advisor to a leadership development club - the FFA [Future Farmers of America] there. If any have any experience with FFA, you know they're a phenomenal leadership organization. We've had the privilege of having some of their finest leaders on our campus work in the CCLC. And in the Associated Students, too, so I know. I'm very familiar. And I thank you for all your leadership work there. Six years later he was hired at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo as service advisor in departmental club, as well as he had taught agriculture education courses, supervised student teachers, and a coordinated state in-service program for high school students, and community college teachers in California. This is where a deep passion for youth leadership development grew. The focus of his graduate school experienced at Texas A & M University was leadership, and more specifically, how to grow leaders. Following graduation, Dr. Dodson was hired by the California Department of Education as a regional consultant. His duties included training officer teams and assisting high school teachers to train local chapter officer teams. He was also asked to serve as the state FFA assistant advisor responsible for training the state officer team. And hopefully he'll get into that so you understand the significance of what all of that means. In 2000, he was hired here at CSU Chico in his current position. Lucky us. [chuckle]. While here he taught capstone leadership course with a leadership minor, taught leadership conferences, and offered countless training for students and teachers on leadership development. He continues to have interest in leadership and interpersonal skill development. Without further due [chuckle], give it up for Dr. Dodson

[Applause]

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Good. We're all here. Excellent. Well, thank you for the kind words. I did a good job writing that [laughter]. Hey, you know it was kind of funny. I was talking to my wife and my daughter, Brea, who's a junior here in the Liberal Studies Program. And I was telling them about what I'm doing today. And my daughter, in her frankness, said, "So what are you going to say?" And I said, "Well, you know, I have some prepared remarks. And, you know I hope it goes well." And she says, "Well, who's your audience?" And I looked at her and I said, "You, know, I'm not really sure. I'm not really who's going to be there." She says, "Well, how do you know what you're going to say if you don't know who they are?" So if you could oblige me a little bit, could I just take a few minutes to find out who you are and what, you know, as you read the description of our time together what you hope to gain from this. Or what you're anticipating. Just to give me a little sense of am I on the right track. And if not, I'm going to punt real quickly. Okay. And we're going to go a different route. So would you mind just kind of sharing

who you are? What your position is. Any expectation you have. Or you just wanted to do something over the lunch break?

Well, okay. I think most of you are wide open to whatever and I'm in good shape no matter what I say [laughter]. Alright, so I thought what I would do is kind of tell you a little bit more about my life's path in a little different way than the typical introduction. And it really comes to down four phone calls that really directed my life. And then share with you what I've learned in those - I've been in education for 30 some years. And so maybe there are some things you might be able to take back. And if we have some time, we can have some questions. Or I might also try to share with you my very favorite leadership study that I've learned in the last couple of years about why followers follow certain people. And was that the reason that I am who I am? I don't know. But we could talk a little bit about that. Fair enough?

Okay. Cool. So I'm going to start in my college days. Okay? And it's a little awkward for me to talk about myself. It's not something I typically do. Okay. And so this whole - what I'm doing today is very atypical for me. And so I'm a little humbled by the whole thing. Okay. So, anyway, I was a high school student, went to college, I was a zoology major. Okay. I was going to be a marine biologist or a wildlife biologist, and the reason is I liked watching "Wild Kingdom" with my dad. And that was the extent of my depth of decision making. Okay? So I went to Davis at the time because it was one of the few colleges in California that had a program. And about my first part of my senior year I said, "Hm. I don't want to be a marine biologist. I don't want to be a wildlife biologist. They travel and they study courting habits of wildebeests or whatever they study. That's not me. I think I want to teach." So I took an observation class where you have to spend so many hours in the classroom and liked it. I visited a biology class in a school in West Sacramento. And so I applied for the Teaching Credential Program there and got denied. I didn't have a strong enough GPA.

And so being the heavy, long-term goal setter that I am, I said, "Okay. Now what?" Okay. And my brother was an ag teacher at the time. And he said, "Why don't you teach ag? If you want to teach, teach ag." I had not one ag class in my life. I wasn't involved in ag in high school. "Fine, okay, sure. What do I do?" He said, "Call Cal Poly, they'll get you in. We need ag teachers desperately." And I did. So I went through the program. It took me about a year and half because I had to take a lot of classes. And got my first job at Lemoore.

Lemoore High School is southwest of Fresno. I bet you've never been anywhere - yes [laughs]. All right [laughter]. Okay. If you see white ground, that's alkali. And that kind of typifies what Lemoore looks like. Taught six years and loved teaching. I wasn't crazy about the program I was in, but I loved it. And CC kind of described that as ag teachers, you are also involved in youth leadership. So I was the FFA advisor and helped young people. Tried to help young people run their organization. To be honest with you, I hadn't a clue what I was doing, okay? I don't feel like I received the kind of training I needed to be an advisor to an organization. We were limping along. If we got good officers to run and they did their job, we had a good year. If not, we couldn't wait for the year to be over so we could try to elect some new ones. It was that kind of thing. I just didn't have the skill set to develop leaders at that time. So I did become interested in that.

So about my sixth year my wife and I decided we don't really want to live in the San Joaquin Valley. No offense to anyone who is from the San Joaquin Valley. There's a thing called Valley Fever that you can get because of - okay. You know what I'm talking about. So I called up Cal Poly because they published a vacancy bulletin for ag positions. So you paid \$15 and every week or so you'd get a vacancy bulletin of all the ag teaching positions in California. I was just going to teach ag, but somewhere else. And the guy who answered the phone - phone call number one - was Bob Flores [assumed spelling]. He said, "Hey, we've got a position here at Cal Poly. Why don't you apply?" Well, I was going to be an ag teacher for the rest of my life. I never thought myself worthy to work at a university, but that statement gave me confidence. I said, "Okay." So I applied at Cal Poly and was hired as a lecturer. But I also coordinated the in-service programs for all the state of California and for high school and community college ag teachers. So any workshops, professional development, leadership conferences -- my job was to coordinate those. So I got the job. So we moved and packed up. We went over to San Luis Obispo and worked there for six years.

About my fifth year I said, "Hey. This is cool. I like the university level." Okay. And so we started looking at graduate schools and well, take it back. I started looking at graduate schools. My wife loves San Luis Obispo. So I said, "Debbie, if I'm going to do this for real, I've got to have the degree." Right? And so we started looking. I started interviewing, started visiting schools, and chose Texas A&M. And so she went, "Grrr." We had two children at the time. And she, you know, if - anybody from Texas or know anything about Texas? Okay. No offense. I loved it. I had a great experience. My wife did not love it and did not have a great experience. But she was a kind wife and she supported me on that. So I chose Texas A&M because they have a strong leadership program. And, in fact, they were in the process of developing a leadership education center. I can't remember the exact title.

And so I was about a year and three-fourths into my program. I had all the data for my dissertation done, but not quite my dissertation written. And I get my second phone call, and it was Mr. Huval [assumed spelling] who was the State Supervisor of Ag Education in California. He said, "Brad, you ready to come back to California?" And my wife [chuckles], "Yes! We are!" [laughs] And he says, "We've got a job for you in the Department of Education." Again, I was really going back there to be a teacher educator.

But we were ready to come back to California, and there a lot of cool things that - a regional supervisor is a consultant to high school ag programs in various-- in one of the geographic regions of California. So I helped them strengthen their program, gave them resources and advice. So I applied and I got it. I wasn't done with my dissertation, but I figured, "I'll finish it after work. I'll just write in the evenings when I'm not busy." In fact, I had to leave early because I really wasn't even done with the classes that spring. So I became a regional consultant. And part of that job is to serve as a regional advisor. You have a regional officer team and you train them. And you put on regional conferences along with the kids. And it was going really, really well.

I didn't touch my dissertation, just to kind of walk down that path a little bit. It was just really a demanding job. So one of my professors in Texas said, "Brad, come back this summer. You can live in my house and you just write till it's done. We'll feed you. We'll take care of you." And that's the kind of guy this man is. He's a pastor on weekends. And I said, "Sure, Dr. Lark [assumed spelling]. I'll do that." And so that's what I did. And I kind of finished it. And they said, "Get out of here. We'll finish the rest of it for you." And that's what happened.

So about a year and a half into that situation I get my third phone call. And it was Mr. Huval again. He said, "We want you to be the assistant FFA advisor," which really runs the whole entire state program." And that was quite an honor. I never saw myself doing that. I didn't think I had the skill set to do. But I did it. And so that was a real growth experience for me. And from that experience I started to make connections across the United States. Because you do that, you know, state officers travel. So I became connected to the National FFA organization. And from that I was able to do trainings. They call them blastoffs - blasts off. Which you go into that state and you train their state officers -- just those six, seven, eight, nine students and you. It's a three-day conference, and I was in 22 states doing training for these young people. And I did some training on the national level for the National Officer Team. And so I really was learning a lot about leadership.

And, by the way, to go back to Cal Poly, that's where I really started to think, "Okay. If I was an ag teacher and didn't know what I was doing, the students were putting out - did they know what they're supposed to be doing?" And so I really that's when my whole love for youth leadership development really just blossomed. And that's why I chose Texas A&M. And I told you that. So, anyway, I did that for about a year and a half. I was the assistant state of advisory and the consultant. I had kind of two jobs.

And then I got my last phone call, and that was from the guy whose job I assumed here. He said, "Hey, you know, we want you to come to Chico State. We want you to be the teacher educator. We want you to run our program." And I applied and got it. So really it was those four phone calls. And I didn't anticipate...

The reason I'm telling you this story more than anything, I didn't plan any of it. I didn't anticipate any of it. And I have to think back and wonder how that is. Now, I'm a man of faith, and I think I know why that happened. But the truth of the matter is I didn't have goals of someday I wanted to be a teacher educator. I didn't have goals someday I wanted to be the FFA dude. It just kind of happened. And so this invitation caused me to think back and say, "How did that happen? And what did you learn from it?" And that's what I think I'll share a little bit with - I'll share with you now.

First of all, any thoughts about my journey? That is my journey in so far as a professional goes. I'll retire from here, and so I don't anticipate going to other jobs. I've had opportunities. I got a call from Texas A&M two years ago that said, "Hey, we've got a department headship. We'd like you to apply for it." And I said, "That's not me." The further away I get from students is not a good thing for me. Okay. And I just saw myself in an office and in meetings and that's not what I want to do. So any questions or thoughts about my life's journey?

Mary Wallmark (CSU, Chico Student Life & Leadership): I just have one.

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Yeah?

Mary Wallmark: You must have been making an incredible impression. People are calling you and thinking of you. So somewhere in there, and this is the underlying story, is you must have been killing in the positions you were in. As an ag teacher, as a student at Texas A&M--

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Yeah, well.

Mary Wallmark: -- somebody was like come back and do that. So kudos to you--

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Well, thank you.

Mary Wallmark: To put yourself in that position without even knowing--

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Yeah.

Mary Wallmark: --that you may, you know, that you may have this fabulous plan. You were doing what you were doing so well that people were thinking of opportunities for you--

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Well, thank you.

Mary Wallmark: --and that's awesome.

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Or they were desperate. But either way [laughter], it's good. But thank you for the kind words. So here's three thoughts I have. Number one, and you can ask Marlene and you can ask Lindsay, I keep the big picture in my mind every single day. And the reason I do what I do and the reason I did what I did is for students. Okay. And that's what I am. That's who I am. And when you think about that, it dictates how I teach, it dictates how I advise, it dictates the decisions I make, and it dictates how and where I spend my time. Okay. And to give you slight example, I was a little nervous about this and a student came in and needed some advising about half an hour ago. And I had a decision to make. Do I ask her, "I'm sorry. I just got kind of collect my thoughts and get my notes together." Or do I spend time with Raquel?" And the decision I made was, this will take care of itself, and I need to be there for Raquel. So student-centered is the big picture. Now, in education and probably not so much at the university level but at the high school level for sure, educational trends come and go. Okay? And I understand why that is. You have different administrators so they'll - how are you?

Late audience member: Doing well.

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Excellent. And who else came in? Hello. How are you? My name's Brad or Dr. Dodson or Dr. D. Okay? ...So every administrator wants to make their mark on the institution. Right? So they want to implement changes and they have - there's new trends in education and so, you know, like "common core" happening right now. Are you familiar with common core? Yeah. So those things come and go. And if you stay in education long enough you know they come and go. So I'd never let that bother me because why I'm there it's not about the trends. I'm trying to get better every day. Okay. It's about the students that I serve. And so to me in education that's number one. Okay. No offense to folks that really love research. I think there's a time and place for that. But I am an old school guy, and I think we have institutions so we can help young people both grow as students and human beings. And I think that's maybe more important than the content. I'm just wondering. Okay?

When you think about the situation that our society's in, and the situation in terms of families and homes, I try to be a model. I try to be a model of a dad and a model of a father and now a grandfather. And that's the best model I'm in [laughter] right now. Yeah. [clapping]. In fact, I'm going to tell you this story. It has nothing to do with my notes, but our second one is on the way. And his middle name is Bradley, and [laughter] I'm pretty excited about that. Pretty excited about that. My, side note two, my wife comes flittering about in the house last night. She goes, "I just talked to Blakey [assumed spelling]." Blakey's our first grandson. She goes, "And he said, 'I love you.'" And she just flaunted it. She just flaunted it right there in my face. Blakey told her that on the phone [laughter]. Dang you; dang you.

Okay. So I think that there's a bigger picture in that. First of all, I'm a student-centered - I like to think I'm a student-centered teacher who is in it for that very reason. And I try to keep my focus right there. Marlene, am I saying anything that's wrong? You're supposed to be a professional heckler. Okay [laughter]. All right.

Marlene: I'm heckling internally.

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Okay. Good, good, good. So that's number one. Okay? If you're thinking about education, I just challenge you. I encourage you to just remember why we're here, and that is to help young people. Fair enough? Number two, I think that I kind of live for the day and it goes back to what my story's all about. I like to believe that I'm not much of a ladder climber. I had no anticipation of anything. I've already told you that. But it will take care of itself. If you let your performance take care of yourself then who knows where you're going to be? And be open to that. Okay? So I told you I didn't have all those goals, but I tried to do my very best every single day. Okay? That I come. And I try to stay focused and be present. And maybe it did work. Okay? But I think that's just key for me that I just didn't take anything for granted and I didn't look ahead. I just tried to be there every single day. Make sense? So live for the day. The third lesson that I learned is I think I'm also here for a purpose. And that is to help someone else. So I've had tons of opportunities here at Chico.

When I was a grad student, it was phenomenal. That's why I chose Texas A and M because the doors were wide open and the money flowed. Okay. They had - those land grant institutions. They've got money. Okay? So I was, you know, with the conferences. I'm really into ropes courses and challenge

courses. And so I took all the courses they had there. How to build them. How to facilitate them. How to manage them. I took the PE classes they have there to learn more about them. And that started when I was at Cal Poly and I was trying to figure out ways to train my officer team. And I heard about these things called challenge courses. And so I started calling around and there was a program up in Santa Cruz that wanted to get into nonprofits. Catalyst Consultants was the name. They said, "Hey, we've just been thinking about getting into nonprofits. Why don't you bring your officer team up?" Go through the course and the hills of Santa Cruz, and from then I was just hooked. So anyway, back to Texas. ..And I don't even know where I was. But where was I?

Oh, yeah. So I had a chance to just serve and do things for other folks. We would facilitate groups. We had the Construction Management Group from Houston, Texas come up. And my teacher asked if we would help facilitate that -- and so lots of tons of opportunities just by saying yes. I think in my time here, 14 years, I've said "no" to two people, and it was this year. And it bugs me still to this day. If I am open, I will help. And we talked about the - what is it? Party pro thing that I did this week. And I'm going to do another one. It just, that's kind of what I do. If folks think that I have something to offer, then I will say yes. And so some people say, you know, you've got to learn how to say no. No I don't. No I don't. I can say yes if I can be helpful. So I think that I like to see myself as a servant leader and really try to be others focused even though it takes my time, it takes my energy. I don't always have it. I think the ladies can attest that I'm pretty busy over there. But I really believe it's key. Thoughts about that? Students centered. Others focused. Live for the moment. Nothing profound here. Just--

Audience Member: One of the things I took about what you were saying, you know, learn how to say no. How do you see - like how do you practice [inaudible]. Because sometimes I think if I don't take care of myself then I'm not really good to anybody else so how did you figure out where [inaudible] to say no [inaudible] so you are effective to the point of being--.

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Okay. I don't know that my schedule is that rigorous to where that is an issue for me. I do a lot of laying around, and I try not to feel guilty about that. Just time where I just zone out and watch the TV. So to be quite honest with you, I haven't got to that point. I get tired. There's no doubt about it. And you older folks know, the older you get the longer it takes to recuperate. But--

Audience Member: [inaudible]. Because it sounds like you were doing a lot of stuff.

Dr. Bradley Dodson: And I didn't even tell you all of it. No. Maybe, well, some people say I have a little ADD. I don't know [laughter]. You know, I go pretty hard, but I rest pretty hard. That's a good point though. And, you know, of course, [inaudible] says you need to sharpen the saw. So if it ever got to that point where I didn't think - and that's where I said no this year, by the way. One was for Governmental Affairs. They asked me to serve as a faculty advisor. Or, not advisor; representative to that. And I just felt that to do the other job I just couldn't do that anymore the way I should I do it. So I don't know that I had an answer for you. But I never really got to that point. If it does get to that point where you see your performance waning a little bit, then you're going to have to say no. I would think. Yeah.

Audience member: So kind of spinning off of what Meredith was saying, you know, what did you do to be this person that people call to offer jobs? So I was wondering, particularly in that first stint, you were six years at the high school. And you called Cal Poly. But how did you know about you? Was it from the FFA?

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Well, I had gone there for my credential program. Did I skip that part?

Audience member: Oh, that's right. You did say that. But what did you do in the program that made you - what do you think made them say, apply for this much better job? You know, why did you stand out amongst all those credential students or [inaudible] ag teachers do you think?

Dr. Bradley Dodson: All right. So maybe that's a cool transition to my favorite study. Because I tried to investigate that, too. What did Bob Huval see in me? That state supervisor guy. You know, I was just an ag teacher. And I don't say that to belittle ag teachers. I'm just saying that that's a different level. Okay. So let's try to make sense of that. Three years ago I was reading a book by the Gallup organization. Anybody familiar with the strengths finder and all that jazz? Okay. I'm a fan, and you know about Gallup. You know what they do; right? Everybody knows something. Well, no. I shouldn't say that. That's assuming. Gallup is best known for their polling. Right? But they have a whole other facet to what they do. Right? You familiar with that? I'm putting you on the spot right now.

Audience member: [inaudible].

Dr. Bradley Dodson: What's that all about?

Audience member: Well, [laughter]. Gallup [inaudible] is about focusing on what your strengths are. And building on that and managing your periods of growth or weakness. so you that you can really excel in your naturally talented [inaudible].

Dr. Bradley Dodson: She has the motto down [laughter]. She has - yes. Start with your strengths, manage your weakness. But what so what [inaudible] Gallup will do for an organization, if they're in the process of hiring, they will come in and design a hiring procedure and process. Identify questions based on these themes that they have created or identified. And so they do that for people. So they're in the people-hiring business as well. Okay. So in their latest book, I think, there was this study about why followers follow people. And I've read lots and studied lots about leadership. And watched lots of leaders. But I don't know that I've ever really read anything that asks that question. Has anybody ever read anything about that? Did you read what I'm talking about? Okay. So you can't play for a little while. Okay? So I'll ask you because I really prefer not to lecture. I don't like lecture as a teaching methodology. So I'll try to engage you at this point. Okay. What do you think were the four reasons why people follow other people? We're going to get back to your thought because I'm wondering if maybe some people saw me as having these. I don't know. Let's go. So what do you think? Any thoughts? Be bold.

Audience member: Passion.

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Oh, good thought. Good thought. Did you say passion?

Audience member: Passion.

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Okay. Keep that thought.

Audience member: Vision.

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Pardon?

Audience member: [inaudible] vision.

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Love it. Love it. And that's one of the 21 irrefutable traits of a leader. Surprisingly. It relates. We're looking for 4 key words [pause].

Audience member: How about competence?

Dr. Bradley Dodson: You'd think so, huh? Keep that thought [laughter]. You know how to say, no. That is not one of them. Hm-hm.

Audience member: [inaudible].

Dr. Bradley Dodson: I teach in my methods class. I say, "Okay. If students give you the wrong answer, try to match the right question to their wrong answer to at least validate their contribution. Okay. So if I was to ask you what are the, you know, I'm not going to go there. Yes, sir?"

Audience member: They're usually self-motivated.

Dr. Bradley Dodson Keep that thought [pause]. Number one, trust. Are you trustworthy? Maybe I was looked upon as someone that they could trust. Okay. And you know about trust. You know about trustworthiness. You know about following through with what you say you're going to do. Being one that they can count on in need. Being there for people. Yeah. Just this whole idea of trust. That's number one. And you probably know that from your leadership studies. You just maybe never put the two together. So people follow other people that they can trust. Make sense? Think about political leadership. Think about any realm you want. Think about your own life and those you follow. We define leadership as influence. So think about those people in your life that influence you in some way. They're probably trustworthy. So I think that I was. It goes back to number two. I tried to do well at whatever I did. And if ever didn't do well, then I owned it. Okay? And I still do that. More often than not in class I'll say, "Hey, I screwed up. Okay. Let's make this right." Fair?

Number two - compassion. So we're really close. People follow other people that care about them. And I think that makes sense. Does it not? I care about people. If you haven't noticed I really am in this - we're

in the people business. Okay? And I do care about them. And I think, you know, have you ever seen those studies where they have two things on the end of a continuum? Relationship and task. And you can evaluate yourself, you know. Are you relational? Are you task oriented? Or somewhere in the middle? I think I'm way over here. Okay. And so compassion was number two.

Number three - pardon?

Audience member: Hope.

Dr. Bradley Dodson: That's my favorite. Hope. Number three. And that's not in any particular order. But hope. People who give them hope. Now think about that. Okay. In fact, our current President ran on a platform of hope and change. Hope and change. And so we all are looking for some answers to - ways to improve our life. And so he tapped right into that. But I think the concept of hope is amazing to me. I like to think, Jody [assumed spelling], that I am a hopeful person. I prefer to think on the positive. I prefer to surround myself with those that do the same. In my current job, especially two years ago, when education was, you know, a little shaky. Schools were pink slipping teachers right and left. My wife of 13 years, she's a counselor at Paradise High, was pink slipped after 13 years in the district. Year after year. In fact, we were hiding from the mailman hoping that the pink slip didn't come in the mail. Okay. So my job for our candidates who were putting five years at least of education into their - out of their life - I had to provide hope. There's going to be a job for you. There will be a job for you. We'll find you something. I don't quit. My job's not through until you're employed. And I still feel that way by the way. So I felt I needed to be an instrument of hope. I think in my jobs I've always kind of felt that way. I just choose to see life from the bright side of things. That didn't make sense, but anyway.

Number four [pause] - stability. Okay? There's some consistency about you. You see what you get, and that's who you are. And I just think that makes solid sense, if you will. That you're a model of consistency. And so I thought that was pretty interesting. Back on hope I wanted to share something with you that I really have been inspired. I have a new hero in my life that I learned about when I read this study. Has anybody heard of Victor Frankl? Who's Victor Frankl?

Audience member: He was a Holocaust survivor.

Dr. Bradley Dodson: He sure was.

Audience member: [inaudible].

Dr. Bradley Dodson: He's an Austrian psychiatrist. Yeah. So he did a study about what did the survivors of Auschwitz have in common. Kind of an interesting study. And what was it? It was they all had something in their life they still had to do. Hope. They looked into their future and said, "Hey. I'm not done yet." And that kept them going through these terrible - anybody ever been to a concentration camp? Pretty sombering; yes? We went to Dachau when I was - it was an FFA trip by the way. We went to Germany and just - I didn't like it.

Audience member: [inaudible]

Dr. Bradley Dodson: No.

Audience member: [inaudible].

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Yeah. Yeah. Something we don't talk about very much do we?

Audience member: Nope.

Dr. Bradley Dodson: So to get back to your question, I hope that maybe I was modeling some of those things, Jody. And others saw I work hard. I really don't know for sure. I've never really asked them, "Hey why did you - Bob, why did you call me?" or "Dennis, why did you call me? What did you see in me?" I don't know. I never really asked and that's something you typically ask. Huh? But I don't know. I just try to my best. Try to keep students in the center of my mind and try to be present. And try to live each day and do the best I can each day.

Audience member: Do you think you can gain anything from calling those people and asking [inaudible]?

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Sure.

Audience member: Do you think that's something that [inaudible] for others if--

Dr. Bradley Dodson: I'll do it.

Audience member: --you have someone that is making an influence on your life, and that obviously they see something in you later going back and asking why?

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Yeah.

Audience member: Do you understand me?

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Mm-hm. I'll do it, Lindsay. I promise. All right. Okay. Other thoughts? Questions? That's really what I want to share with you is what I've learned and what I try to live by. And just share with you that study because I was trying to answer the same question. And I'm thinking well, maybe that's kind of what I tried to model. And so I don't know. It's paid off I guess. I feel very blessed to be here. I owe a thank you for the invitation, by the way. I meant to say this too because I challenge you to reflect back on the people who have influenced your life and who have affected your life. And I feel so thankful when I look back. I love my job. Okay. I really do. I would never want to be any place else. I've had opportunities with Cal Poly to go back, which I loved that school, too. But I don't want to go anywhere else. Okay. I notice in my world it's more prestigious to be at a land-grant institution and

there's this whole academic attitude about that. It doesn't bother me a bit. I love it here. And so I'm just thankful. It caused me to be thankful and to think back. And I should. I should. If nothing else, in fact, I'm going to. Because of this I'm going to go back and thank all those people. Bob Huvel, Bob Flores, all those people that gave me these opportunities. And I don't know that I have. So anyway. Yes?

Audience member: [inaudible].

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Yeah, you sure can.

Audience member: [inaudible] and I believe one thing you said. You certainly come across as a caring person for the students [inaudible]. My question to you would be, how do you think you - this legacy that you're speaking of in your classroom with all the students and lives that you're touching, which is the passion of who I hear you are?

Dr. Bradley Dodson: I'd like to take you in a different direct--

Audience member: Yeah, you sure can.

Dr. Bradley Dodson: I just met you here and I believe everything you've said. You certainly have a [inaudible] kind of person the students [inaudible]. My question to you would be [inaudible] in your classroom with all the students, advisors [inaudible] touching which is passion [inaudible]? How do I use it?

Audience member: How did you use it? Could you show us how [inaudible].

Dr. Bradley Dodson: How does it look? I care about them. I give people second chances. I told them yesterday - I gave back a quiz yesterday and there were some really excellent scores. And then there were some not so excellent scores. And I said, you know, I'm a teacher for one reason and one reason only, and that is for you to learn. And if you didn't catch it the first time I have no problem with you coming into my office and let's talk. Because some people don't do well on written exams. And I know you know this stuff. Just come in and articulate it to me and we'll work on that. So I think I care about them. I try to be present when they come - we have mandatory advising. I see all my 50 students every single semester. I don't keep office hours. I have appointment calendars and from 8 to whenever anybody signs up who knows. I don't care. I'll be there for them. Okay.

So, and I don't keep office hours. I know that sounds inconsistent but I travel visiting student teachers. I like to think that I care about them beyond, you know. We travel in cars a lot together. We take trips together. We do things after school together. Two weeks ago we were three days up in the mountains doing team building for high school kids. Man, I get to know them. I try to build rapport and relationships with them. I should have Marlene talk. I've had her in multiple classes. I brought some things. She ransacked my office the other day and she left me very kind notes in various places around. So, you know, the obvious ones were posted and then I opened my drawer and there's another one.

And so I thought that was very kind so I brought a couple of them. And then I got a really cool note from one of my past students. It says, "Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to write me a letter of req. Words cannot even begin to describe how you have influenced me. Thank you for helping me to develop me into the person that I am today. You're seriously my role model. I appreciate it." Ba-ba-ba. Yeah, I think it's a matter of giving your heart to them. Did I answer your question? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah?

Audience member: How did you balance family, career, and moving and every - how did you do all that? It's [inaudible] how's that work?

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Next question [laughter]. You know my wife is very patient. And I'll be honest. I'll tell you real frankly, you know, high school it didn't work very well. The job of an ag teacher is very demanding and I worked with two other fellows, and it was a weird situation. Okay. Three-person department. And ag the department is more than just - I'm an English teacher and there's other English teachers on campus. We do things together; we work together. This is the dynamic I got hired into at Lemoore High School. Two other fellows, he was the department chair okay, the year before. And it was given to him. We're all in the same department still. You see the dynamic and the problem there? This guy was pretty bitter. He didn't want anything to do with anything outside of class. He came, he taught class, he went home. This guy was just trying to learn how to be a department chair. So I was doing everything in the department for the most part, and my wife was concerned about that. We just had our first child and that was - I didn't tell you this part. But that's another reason why I called Cal Poly to look for a different position.

I was looking for a program that had more ag teachers that were also contributing to the outer class stuff that we do as ag teachers. Okay? So one, be frank with you. Marry a understanding person that knows what you're doing and is okay with that. Two, I took my kids with me. And you can do that as an ag teacher. Okay? When we went up to State Fair my son was with me. My students would watch him while he was still sleeping and I'd go with some other students and go do chores. Okay. I would go home and pick up my son - because when I was an ag teacher we only had my son - and go make project visits. Go to students' home. That's what ag teachers do and visit their animal project or whatever project. So I included my children in the program. And to be honest with you, I believe my son in part is who he is because he hung around with wonderful students like Marlene and Lindsay. They influenced him tremendously. So I wouldn't trade that for a minute. When you're home -- I try to be there for my family. And my wife is a very independent sort and so she has her own hobbies and is into beads an all that jazz. So she has her own hobbies and interests too, so that helps. Yup?

Audience: Did your wife work when you [inaudible]?

Dr. Bradley Dodson: She did. My wife is a home economics teacher by trade, and the only time she didn't work is when we were in Texas that first year. She didn't get a job, but the second year she found a job in Texas. So they were raised in daycare, but there are some wonderful daycare people. And they definitely learned how to socialize. My son is an ag teacher, and I'm very proud of him. And my daughter

is thinking about being an elementary school teacher. She's not sure. You know some people just know and some people just don't know [chuckles]. I feel bad for the people who just don't know. But they just don't know.

Audience member: We have fun.

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Pardon?

Audience member: We have fun.

Dr. Bradley Dodson: Oh, is that you? You just kind of roll with it; huh?

Audience member: [inaudible].

Dr. Bradley Dodson: And you grow and learn from each of them; huh? That's kind of cool. Yeah, because education's all I've ever known. I washed dishes in a truck stop. I bagged groceries at a grocery store. I did landscaping. But they weren't real jobs so. Well, okay. Other? Okay. No.

Female Voice: No other questions? Well, then join me and thank you. Thank you, Dr. D., for coming here.

[Applause]