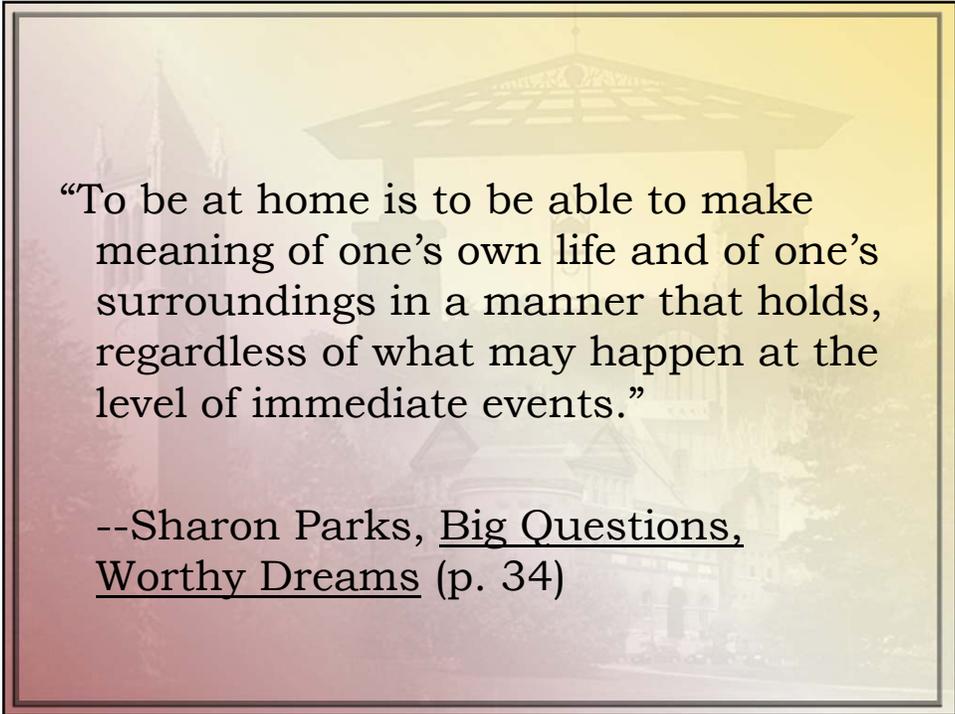


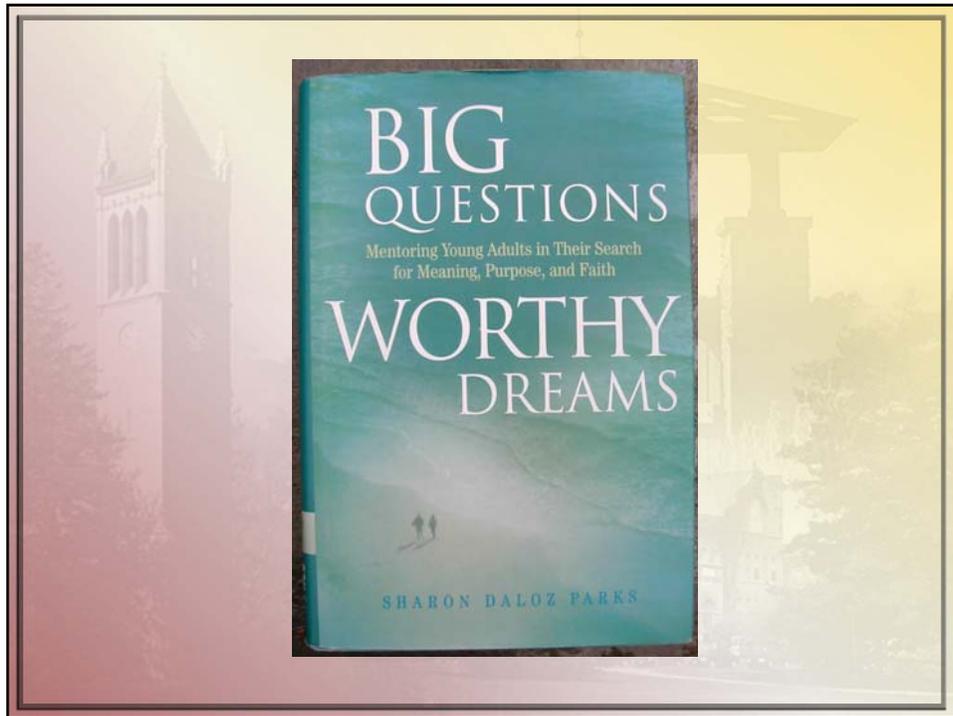
A Bridge Between  
Here and There:  
The Moral Imperative of  
Learning Communities

CSPA-NYS  
October 6, 2008  
Lee Burdette Williams



“To be at home is to be able to make meaning of one’s own life and of one’s surroundings in a manner that holds, regardless of what may happen at the level of immediate events.”

--Sharon Parks, Big Questions, Worthy Dreams (p. 34)



“We grow by letting go and holding on,  
leaving and staying, journeying and  
abiding.”

--Parks, p. 51

## Our Work This Morning

1. The learning community as a “home” for students—academic, spiritual, emotional, social (“abiding”)
2. The 21<sup>st</sup> century student:  
Desperately seeking shelter
3. The learning community as the well-anchored bridge (“venturing”)

Define LCs here

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“A good life and the cultivation of wisdom require a balance of home and pilgrimage.”

--Parks, p. 51

## A Premise

Students seek to belong. Belonging has two benefits. It provides students with:

1. A place to stay (i.e., retention)
2. A place from which to venture forth (i.e., involvement and integration)

“We develop the capacity—the structures—to think and feel in increasingly complex ways only if the situations we encounter present us with both the challenge and the resources to do so.”

--Parks, p. 42

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“Thus the dance of self and other in the story of human becoming might best be understood as reflecting ‘two great yearnings’: one for differentiation, autonomy and agency, and the other for relation, belonging, and communion.”

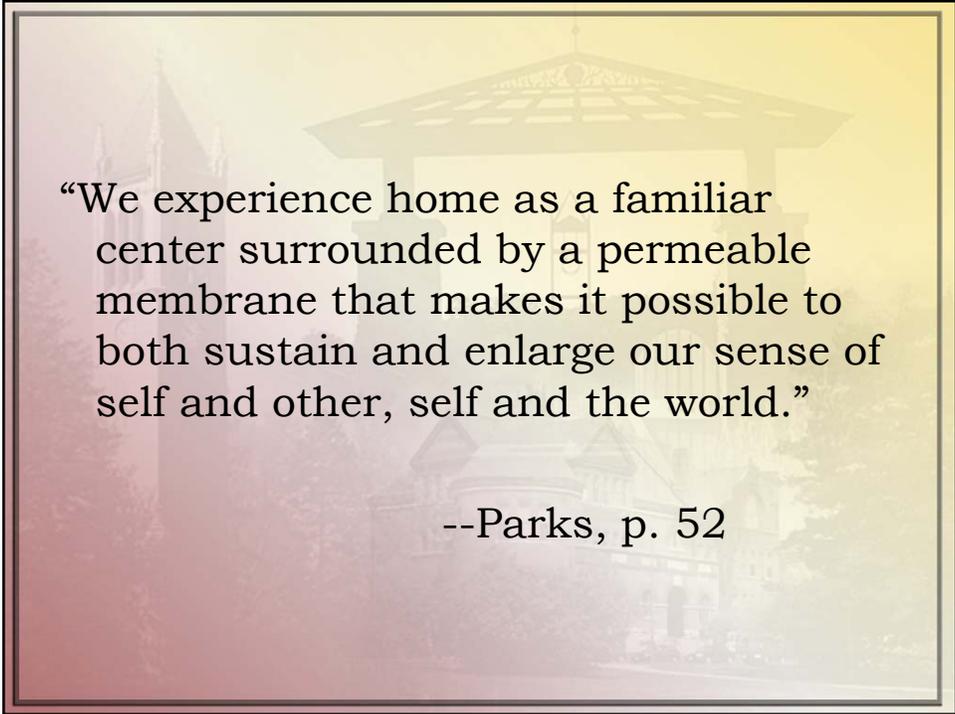
--Parks, p. 49

## Three Pressing Issues for Students

- Student mental health/lack of resourcefulness
- Substance abuse
- Isolation/alienation/poor social skills

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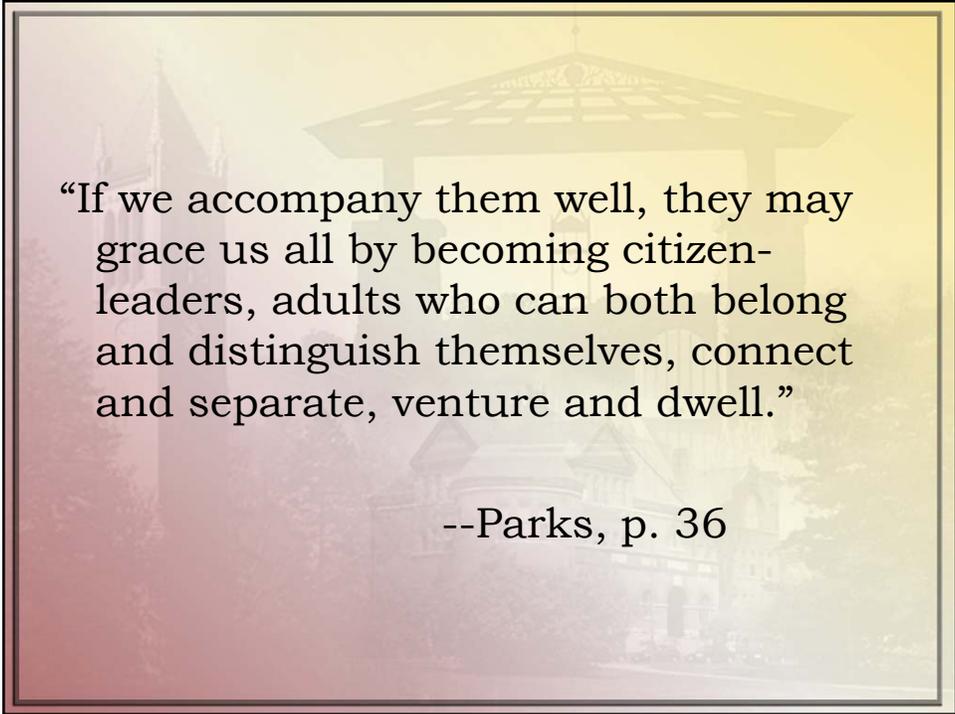


“We experience home as a familiar center surrounded by a permeable membrane that makes it possible to both sustain and enlarge our sense of self and other, self and the world.”

--Parks, p. 52

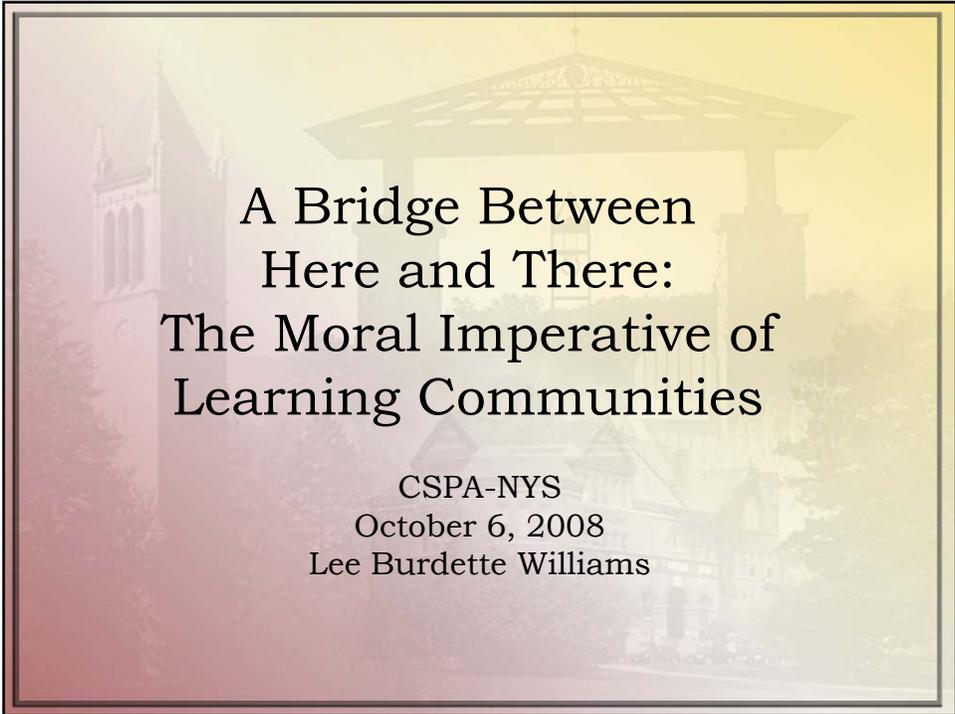
### Three Things Students Need to Learn

- Self-advocacy (knowing how to appropriately look out for one’s best interests)
- Resourcefulness (persevering in the face of obstacles)
- Social capacity (building a network, an “infrastructure” of friends and social connections)



“If we accompany them well, they may grace us all by becoming citizen-leaders, adults who can both belong and distinguish themselves, connect and separate, venture and dwell.”

--Parks, p. 36



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