

CHAPTER 5 CLASS HANDOUTS

Note: Your instructor may ask you to download, print out, and/or email the following class handouts for this chapter:

A FIRST-PERSON NARRATIVE: WALKING TO SCHOOL

INTERACTIVE PROBES FOR “WALKING TO SCHOOL”

A FIRST-PERSON NARRATIVE: WALKING TO SCHOOL

DESI's First-Person Narrative:

It occurred to me about how the W-shaped model can be applied to situations outside of ethnic and cultural boundaries. My example is a car accident that left my brother in a coma for two weeks. When he came to, the doctor discovered that Ryan was paralyzed from the waist down. When I heard the news I was filled with tears, fear, and shock. I could not believe my outgoing brother would never walk again or have children. I had a hard time looking at him in the hospital without crying or feeling angry. Why him? What if he had not driven that night? What if it was me who was driving?

My family and I learned to use humor to get through the most difficult three months Ryan was in the hospital. We sat in the Intensive Care Unit and joked with all our visitors, and I even joked with Ryan a lot about things that could only be funny to the two of us. I tried to cheer him up, and cheer myself up in return. To get through it, I took everything in like a sponge, absorbing any knowledge of Ryan's injury and the situation. I researched paralysis and became an "expert" on the subject. My parents looked to me for information and advice. It was really a more positive way for me to handle my beloved brother's devastating situation.

Through the months that I spent visiting the hospital, it became a second home for me. It was not only a place to visit Ryan, but also where I visited family and friends, a study hall, and a place to eat. I soon blended right in with all the staff there. I knew many people—their names, their hobbies, their quirks—including the doctors, nurses, therapists, and cafeteria staff (as well as others by face). When Ryan was transferred to a rehabilitation clinic, I went back to school and spent more time on campus.

Coming back to school was so difficult. I no longer felt like I belonged there. Everyone had continued their lives as before, while I had undergone a major life-changing event. My whole outlook on life changed. It was as if my eyes were finally opened for the first time and I took a long hard look at my life priorities. On the way to class I thought about the blessing that existed in being able to WALK there, while everyone around me was stressed out about their homework assignments, social life, and dating life ... and the matters I used to think were very important became less important. To be able to walk with my two legs matters to me now, and to have a healthy body matters to me ... to have my beloved parents and brother to talk to matters to me. Everything pales by comparison. And to think, my experience in all this was just as a sister.

NAME: _____

INTERACTIVE PROBES FOR “WALKING TO SCHOOL”
(Ask yourself and probe your classmates’ reactions)

1. What are your feelings and reactions to this story?
2. To what extent can you relate to Desi’s story and experience? Do you have a similar story to share?
3. Do you find the W-Shaped Adjustment Model useful in interpreting and understanding the story? How so?
4. Thinking of your own life transition or transformation stories and the stories of others, if you could make some changes to the W-Shaped Adjustment Model, what would you recommend?