

Davidson University

A Reflection Odyssey: Not Quite a Box Project

before you can think out of the box, you have to start with a box (or a jazzy little file)

With your Bonner experience we hope you will:

- _ discover how your personal values and experiences are connected to the reasons for which and the ways in which you engage in the community
- _ examine the social and economic circumstances of people living in various situations and the network of services available to them
- _ be articulate about the role of non-profits, communities, and individuals in response to exhibited need
- _ examine the economic, social, and political structures which create and perpetuate injustice in various communities

No small task, we understand and so we also want to give you a system that might help you put these ideas and experiences in context.

This year's reflection process will consist of several different layers:

- _ A regular journal prompt to be completed before your class meetings where at least one person will share his/her reaction
- _ A closing ritual to each class meeting led by different class members
- _ The **Not Quite a Box Project**: a way for you to pay attention to all the world has to offer, to focus on what matters to you, and an opportunity to share those things at your Bonner interviews.

From The Creative Habit Learn It and Use It For Life by Twyla Tharp

"Everyone has his or her own organizational system. Mine is a box, the kind you can buy at Office Depot for transferring files.

I start every dance with a box. I write the project name on the box, and as the piece progresses I fill it up with the every item that went into the making of the dance. This means notebooks, news clippings, CDs, videotapes of me working alone in my studio, videos of the dancers rehearsing, books and photographs and pieces of art that may have inspired me.

The box documents the active research on every project

There are separate boxes for everything I've ever done. If you want a glimpse into how I think and work, you could do worse than to start with my boxes....

It... represents a commitment... makes me feel connected to a project. It is my soil... Most important, though, the box means I never have to worry about forgetting.

There's no single correct system. Anything can work, so long as it lets you store and retrieve your ideas—and never lose them... the box is like soil to me. It's basic, earthy, elemental. It's home. It's what I can always go back to when I need to regroup and keep my bearings. Knowing that the box is always there gives me the freedom to venture out, be bold, dare to fall flat on my face. Before you can think out of the box, you have to start with a box.

There's one final benefit to the box: It gives you a chance to look back. A lot of people don't appreciate this. When they're done with a project, they're relieved. They're ready for a break and then they want to move forward to the next idea. But the box gives you the opportunity to reflect on your performance. Dig down through the boxes archaeologically and you'll see (the) beginnings. How did you do? Did you get to your goal? Did you improve on it? Did it change along the way?

Above all, learn to respect your box's strange and disorderly ways. As a repository of half-baked inspirations and unformed aids, the box can seem to be a haphazard tool while you're filling it. But when you want to go back and make sense of your path, every step is there to be found, and the order emerges if only in hindsight."

The Not Quite a Box Project

Use your file to store your journal (where you will record your responses to your class's journal prompts), items that we complete today at the retreat, and anything else that you collect along the way that informs, inspires your intentions with regard to your place in community.

Some ideas might be (and this is not an exhaustive list):

- _ magazine clippings
- _ notes from class
- _ Poems
- _ a letter from someone
- _ your mission statement
- _ a letter from someone
- _ artwork from the child that you are tutoring
- _ a thank you note
- _ a paper you wrote
- _ a program from a speaker who inspired you or helped you to see the world differently
- _ a sketchbook with your visions
- _ a newspaper article
- _ photographs
- _ letters from home

At your January interview: Bring 3 items from your file to share with your class coordinator. If you would like, you can bring 3 journal entries in lieu of 3 items.

At your March interview: Bring 3 other items (or 3 other journal entries).