COUN503 Intro to Counseling

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Takeaway 3

 At the end of a class, Dr. Rutledge let it be known that in our next week’s class, she would be observed; she advised us to just be ourselves, and to participate. When the next week’s class started, I realized that I was quite nervous—not for myself, I thought, but for Dr. Rutledge. My tension had, at its heart, the many classroom observations I have had while a teacher, and the general discomfort of having watchful eyes somewhere in the “zoom room” which I could not see. I found myself hyper-focusing on all aspects of Dr. Rutledge’s class, hoping all would be well.

 In a classic case of “Counselor, heal thyself”, I consciously tried to reassure myself of the importance of keeping my energy focused on myself. What kind of counselor would I be if I were not able to maintain personal boundaries, or if I were unable to detach from worry? Dr. Rutledge, of course, taught the class very naturally, not seeming to be self-conscious or bothered in the least. I was particularly impressed when she manipulated different colored, labeled boxes into different configurations as we correctly identified some relevant terms from the chapter. My nervousness peaked at this point, yet Dr. Rutledge showed no sign of stress.

This was an instructive experience for me. I would have been concerned for any professor in that position. I cannot pretend that at some distant point I will become someone who is unaffected in this type of situation. It is my capacity to care, to feel someone else’s possible perspective, that bodes well for becoming a good counselor. Yet it was *myself* who ultimately needed the compassion, triggered as I was. This is a valuable takeaway, underscoring the importance of self compassion and regulation, especially in the counselor’s chair.