

I believe it is important to trust in yourself and that what you have to contribute is important. Here is my story.

I completed my undergraduate studies as a middle aged person, and continued my post graduate studies soon after. Early on, I discovered that I was among people who were “well read” and very smart. There were many times that I felt inadequate, especially as they cited mutually familiar authors and scholars that I’d never heard about or read.

My worst fears of being exposed came to a head for me one day in a seminar. The dean of the school asked us to share our experience of life, especially as it related to people who were most influential in our thinking. “Oh my God!!”, I cried out to myself, “They finally caught up to me!” What was I going to say? What scholar would I cite? The answer was simple, “I had none.”

Thankfully, I was in a group that had some Phd’s. Their extensive readings and scholarly influences gave me time to craft my response. I began with my parents as my primary influences, I also talked about a pastor who was important to me. As I shared this, I noticed that the mood in the room had changed for me. I experienced a sense of appreciation from the others for what I’d shared of myself.

That experience and others like it give me the confidence and courage to speak out when the moment calls for my response to the question. It informs my belief that each of us has something important to share.