Boundaries in Ministerial Life?!

The Why, Where and How for Longevity in Ministry

Kathryn Kissell & Karin Moser

Ministry as the Ultimate Boundaryless Profession?

London South Bank University

EST 1892

Professional Boundaries

Role

Spatial

Temporal

Financial

Mental

Relational

Clerical Boundaries?

Spatial   Home is your workplace. Your home is owned by your "work"

Temporal   No formal guidelines

Financial   Stipend? Expenses, Tithing

Mental   Switching off when the phone is always on

Relational   Counsellor, Leader, Friend, Manager…

& diffuse intra-role boundaries

e.g. Graveling (2018)

London South Bank University
EST 1892

Establishing Boundaries in Ministry

"Forget boundaries and go where God leads you"
Vaccarino & Gerritsen (2013)

Boundaries – The antithesis of wholehearted, committed ministry?

"Stay always within the boundaries where God's love can reach and bless you." Jude v21

Explore…

- Why boundaries are beneficial in ministry

- Where boundaries need to be set

- How boundaries can be set

London South Bank University

EST 1892

The "Why" of Boundaries

- Boundary stress stemming from the intrusion of the work domain into non-work life is cited as one of the highest of ministerial pressures (Lee, 1999)

- Boundary stress is the factor most likely to precipitate a crisis in ministry (Fallon et al., 2013)

- The highly permeable border produces work-family conflict that can accelerate burnout (Innstrand et al., 2011)

- Boundary intrusions predict reduced marital satisfaction, parental satisfaction & prompt dissatisfaction with family functioning (Staley, 2012)

- Flourishing clergy are intentional about setting boundaries around work and personal lives (Duke Clergy Health Initiative, 2017)

London South Bank University

EST 1892

Why you know what you should do but you don't do it

"Why you know what you should do but you don't do it"

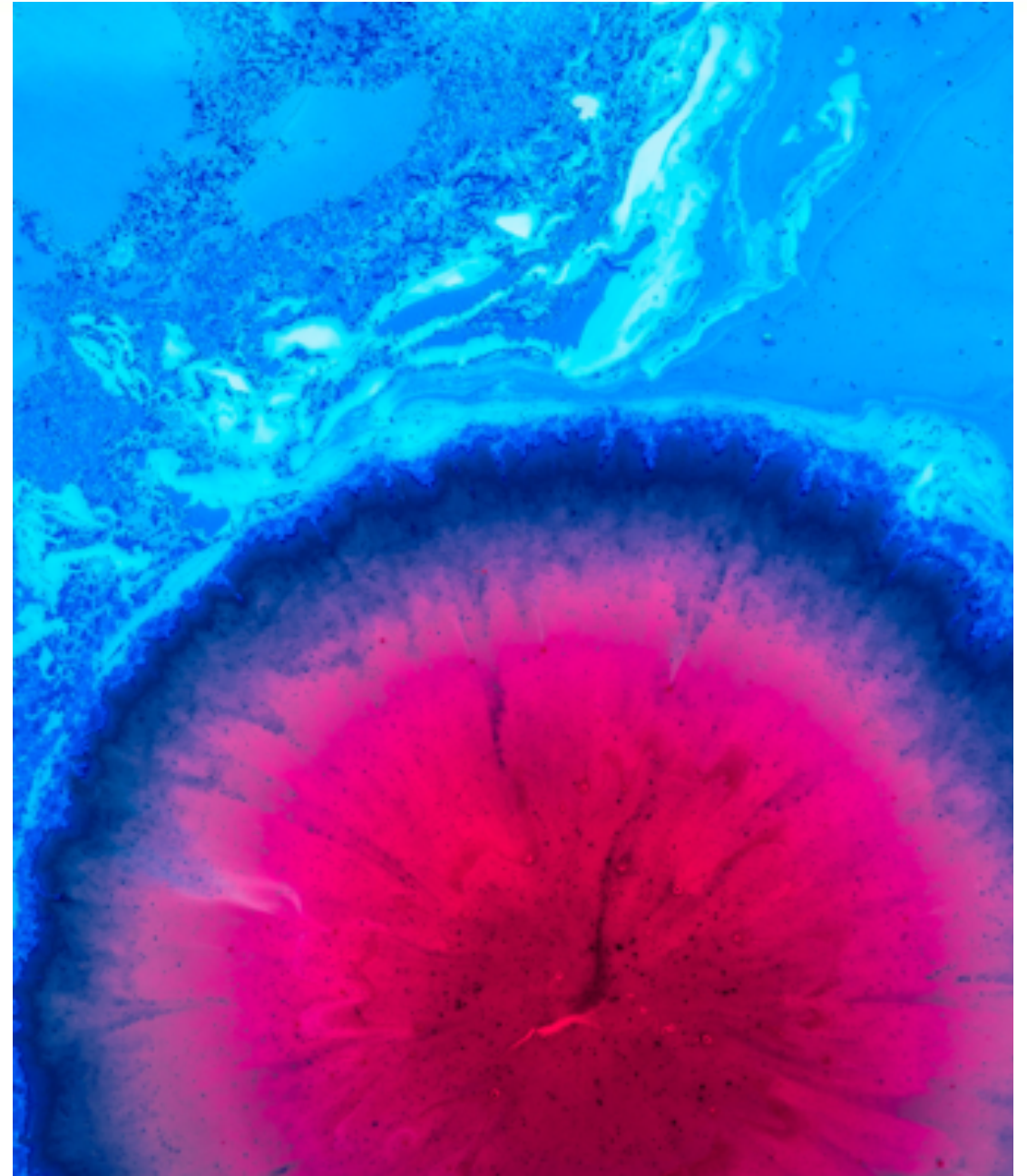London South Bank University
EST 1892

Negotiated Process of Creating Boundaries

Instead of focusing on the content of boundaries

Focus on the process of creating boundaries
- Within our self
- Between the self & our relational systems

The "Where" of Boundaries

- The impact of identity on boundaries

The force towards self-definition that represents the desire to live a productive and relatively autonomous life free from the dictates of the group

- Self Representation – In touch with one's innermost wishes & values
- Self Esteem – Positive attitude towards oneself
- Agency – Sense that you can create self-directed purpose & influence one's own actions

IDENTITY

Solid ID

Ontologially acceptable

In contact with one's inner values
Self-esteem based on who we are not what we do
Agency to act in accordance with one's inner values

Contingent ID

Self esteem based on something or someone outside of ourselves

Either through outcomes within relationships or through work performance

e.g. Hallsten et al. (2005)

How Identity Impacts Boundaries

- Identity drives motivation
- Motivation creates diffuse boundaries

- Diffuse boundaries can result in
    a) Diminished Non-Work life (Sonnentag et al., 2010)
    b) Spouse functioning as boundary "enforcer" (Cattich, 2012)
    c) Fusion with role & loss of sense of self (Beebe, 2009)
    d) Exhaustion and burnout (Grosch & Olsen, 2000)

Vocational Calling
Core sense of who you are fuses with the role you feel called to as well as the quality of relationships through which that calling is enacted

London South Bank University
EST 1892

Systems Eat Boundaries for Breakfast

- Relational systems love fusion not differentiation of identity

- Boundaries raise anxiety producing predictable attempts at sabotage

- Understanding responses to anxiety, expecting the homeostatic kickback, developing the capacity to hold the line

- Ultimately raises everyone's maturity

e.g. Olsen & Devor, 2015

London South Bank University

EST 1892

The "How" of Boundaries

Where?
Boundaries are set within the self and co-created within the system
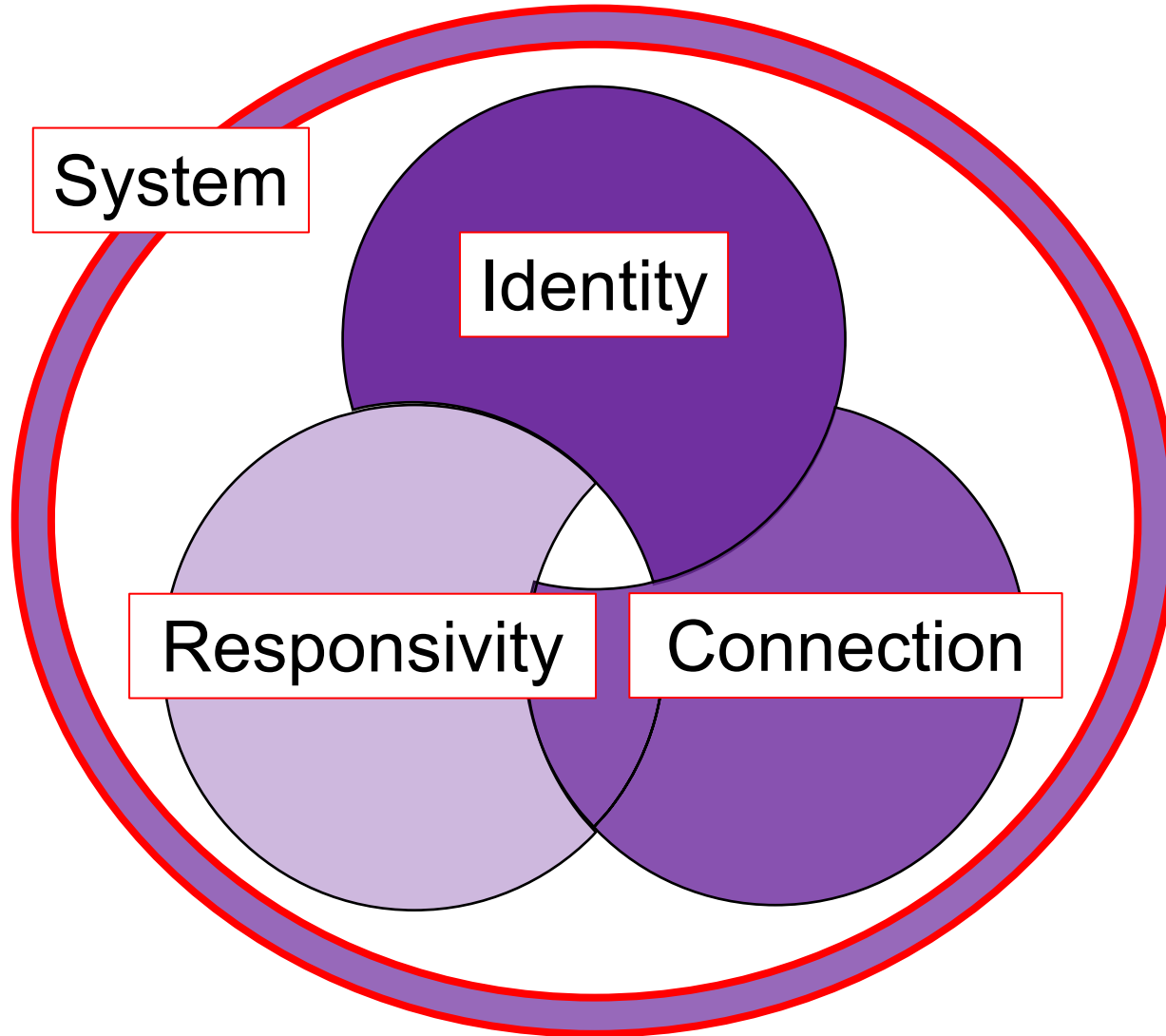
How?
Establishment of healthy inter-role and intra-role boundaries stems from developing mature intrapsychic boundaries of identity

Differentiation
    One's personal and behavioural functioning when under pressure

EST 1892

Differentiation

- **Identity** - Being positively connected with one's non-contingent sense of identity

- **Connection** - Capacity to establish authentic, reciprocal relationships

- **Responsivity** - Ability to be emotionally responsive rather than reactive under pressure

- **System** – Understand natural behaviour of relational systems & formative impact of family of origin

e.g. Titelman (2014)

Group Coaching Intervention

3 Church of England dioceses hosted 3 coaching groups
    - 6-8 self-selected participants in each group
    - Full-time stipendiary parochial clergy

6 half-day sessions over 7 months

Coaching programme- Introduction to Bowen Systems Theory
    - Understand key ideas
    - Apply to own patterns of functioning and behaviours
    - Practical coaching to mature personal and behavioural responses under pressure "Do something different"

Control group comparison

Assessing Impact of Coaching

Intrapsychic boundary   (Beebe, 2007)
- Identity contingent with Role
- Identity contingent with Relationship

Inter-role boundary   (Wayne, Musisca and Fleeson, 2004)
- Negative and positive spillover between home and work

Intra-role boundary   (Edwards, Webster, Van Laar & Easton, 2008)
- Manageable work demands
- Sense of control
- Clarity of role

Intra-role boundary   (Clinton, 2012)
- Burnout
- Work Engagement

London
South Bank
University
EST 1892

Results

Overall Differentiation & Identity specifically strengthened
- Ability to take an I position in role significantly increased (large ES)
- Significant reduction in relational fusion (large ES)

Inter-role boundaries enhanced
- Level of negative spillover of work into home life significantly reduced (large ES)
- Amount of positive facilitation of work into home life increased (medium ES)

Intra-role boundaries strengthened
- Clarity of role increased (Small ES)
- Sense of control within the workplace increased (medium ES)
- Level of work demands remained consistent, but the experience of stress attributed to those demands decreased in contrast to control group

Work-related psychological health
- Burnout, particularly exhaustion decreased (medium ES)
- Work engagement increased (medium ES)

Areas of Impact

Inter-role Boundary

'Boundarying my time better'

Strengthened identity when under congregational relational pressure

'Maintaining a clear sense of self in the middle of conflict'
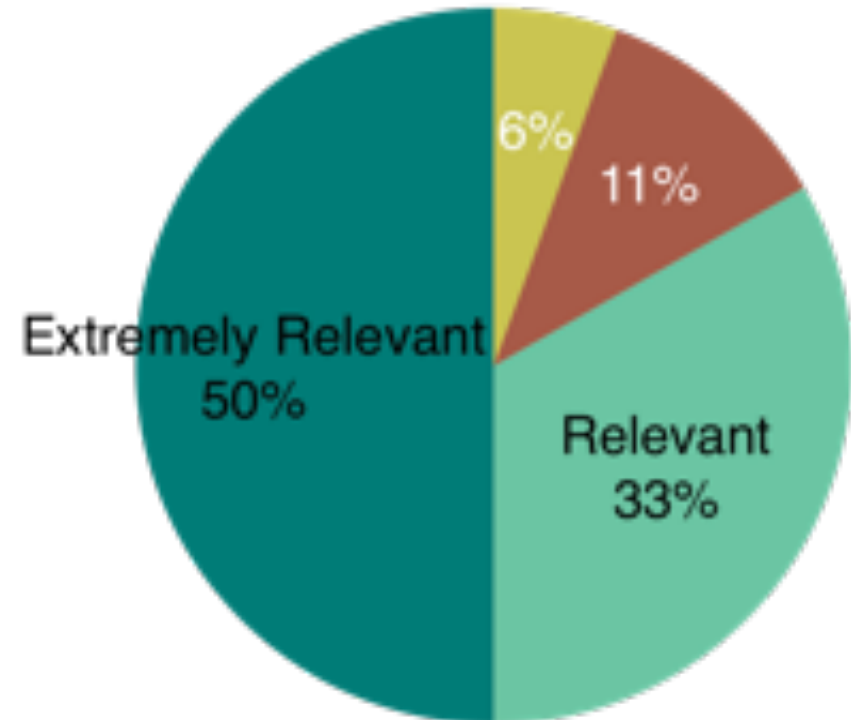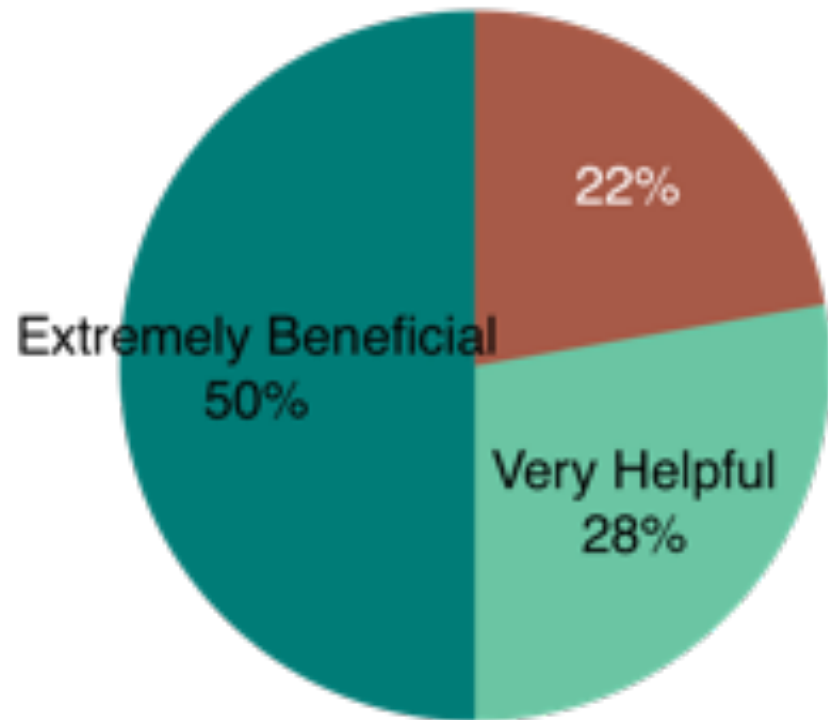
Enhanced sense of self in colleague relationships

'Feel a more confident resource, able to be more constructive'

London South Bank University

EST 1892

Value and Relevance of Coaching Groups

Pie chart 1:
- Extremely Beneficial 50%
- Very Helpful 28%
- 22%

Pie chart 2:
- Extremely Relevant 50%
- Relevant 33%
- 11%
- 6%

**"It is a resource at many different levels.
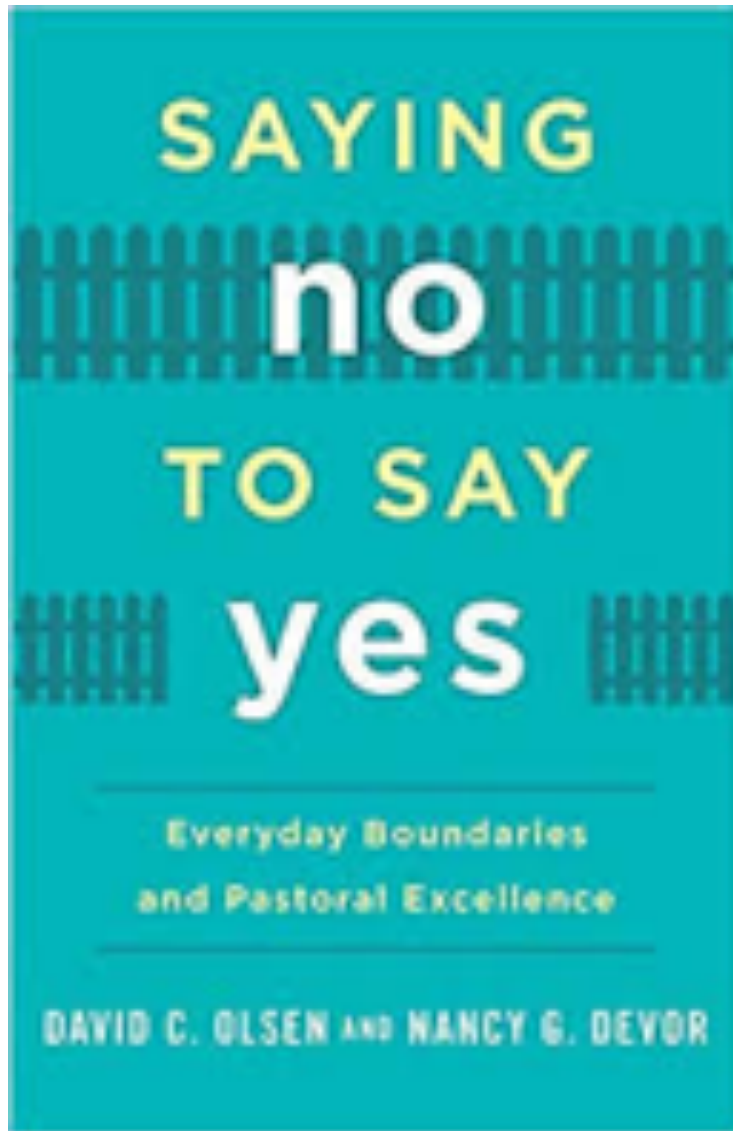I would have benefitted from it earlier in ministry."**

Conclusion

- Healthy boundaries are vital for the well-being of ministers and ministry well-being

- Establishing boundaries is additionally challenging for clergy due to the lack of external institutional boundaries & nature of vocational calling

- Healthy boundaries are **internally created and externally co-created**

- **Responsibility for maturing and growing our self identity**
- Individual insight e.g. Spiritual direction, supervision, coaching
- Group insight e.g. Reflective practice groups

- **Responsibility for maturing and growing our systems**

London
South Bank
University
EST 1892

Contact

Website & Blog
www.drkathrynkissell.com

Twitter
@kathrynkissell

Get in Touch
drkathrynkissell@gmail.com

SAYING
no
TO SAY
yes

Everyday Boundaries
and Pastoral Excellence

DAVID C. OLSEN AND NANCY G. DEVOR

London South Bank University

EST 1892

References

Beebe, R. (2007). Predicting burnout, conflict management style, and turnover among clergy. Journal of Career Assessment, 15(2), 257-275.

Cattich, J. (2012). Three models of clergy systems: Analysis of couple processes and spiritual meaning. Pastoral Psychology, 61, 179-195

Clinton, M. (2012). Experiences of Ministry Survey 2011: Findings Report. Unpublished report for Archbishops Council on behalf of the National Continuing Ministry Development Panel.

Duke Clergy Health Initiative (2017) Downloaded from https://divinity.duke.edu/news/report-flourishing-ministry.

Edwards, J. A., Webster, S., Van Laar, D., & Easton, S. (2008). Psychometric analysis of the UK Health and Safety Executive's management standards work-related stress indicator tool. Work & Stress, 22(2), 96-107.

Fallon et al., (2013). Factors that Precipitate and Mitigate Crises in Ministry Pastoral Psychology, 62, 27–40.

Graveling, L. (2018). Negotiating Wellbeing: Experiences of Ordinands and Clergy in the Church of England. Panel Study Wave 1 Report, Ministry Division, Archbishops' Council.

Grosch, W. N., & Olsen, D. C. (2000). Clergy burnout: An integrative approach. Journal of Clinical Psychology/In Session: Psychotherapy in Practice, 56(5), 619-632.

Hallsten, L., Josephson, M. & Torgén, M. (2005). Performance-based self-esteem: A driving force in burnout processes and its assessment. Arbete och Hälsa, 4, 1–35.

Innstrand, S. T., Langballe, E. M., & Falkum, E. (2011). The longitudinal effects of individual vulnerability, organisational factors, and work–home interaction on burnout among male church ministers in Norway. Mental Health, Religion & Culture, 14(3), 241-257

Lee, C. (1999). Specifying intrusive demands and their outcomes in congregational ministry: A report on the Ministry Demands Inventory. Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 38(4), 477–489.

Olsen, D. C. & Devor, N.G. (2015). Saying no to say yes: Everyday boundaries and pastoral excellence. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Sonnentag, S., Kuttler, I., Fritz, C. (2010). Job stressors, emotional exhaustion and need for recovery: A multi-source study on the benefits of psychological detachment. Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 76, 355-365.

Staley et al., (2012). Strategies employed by clergy to prevent and cope with interpersonal isolation. Pastoral Psychology, 62, 843–857.

London South Bank University

EST 1892

Titelman, P. (2014). The concept of differentiation of self in Bowen theory. In P. Titelman (Ed.), Differentiation of self: Bowen family systems theory perspectives (pp. 3-64). New York: Routledge.

Vaccarino, F. & Gerritson, T. (2013). Exploring clergy self-care: A New Zealand Study. The international Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society, 3, 69-80.

Wayne, J. H., Musisca, N., & Fleeson, W. (2004). Considering the role of personality in the work-family experience: Relationships of the big five to work-family conflict and facilitation. Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 64(1), 108-130.

London South Bank University

EST 1892