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...We talk about Primal Leadership as a theory all the time and I can tell you by definition what it means, but did I earnestly practice it? Did I really exhibit this high emotional intelligence in the way that some of the most amazing, and also terrifying leaders before me have? No, I do not believe that I did. But that is the process of learning that I still have to do. It is more than being able to speak your mind, it is the conviction you choose to do it with. I am still figuring out the power of words and maybe I should take a page out of an introvert's book and take the time to be more deliberate with my actions and words, and really consider the consequences.

I still am not sure how to exist in your space, Dr. Maes. Some days I feel like I can exist freely, and those are the days that I am a little bolder and opinionated, and less afraid of channeling the stereotypes of being loud or aggressive. Other days, I can only sit silently and reflect on my role in your class and at this institution. Your class is a gateway to the world that I sometimes wish could remain unacknowledged. But to think that way is a disservice. I guess that is what the progress of integration is all about. There are going to be days where the lessons you, Derek, and this campus teach me will push me to the point of breaking. It has already happened plenty of times this semester. But I have to move with the fluidity that the Model suggests we have.

Overall, my experience in your class and as a Multicultural Leadership Scholar is a direct reflection of the mental gymnastics a new environment can put you through. All of my life, I have felt the need to assimilate quickly, in hopes of reserving any sense of self-preservation. I have spent the majority of my life being the token black friend, molding myself to fit what people needed me to be for the time being. I still struggle to figure who I am outside of the

influences of the world we live in. It has taken me up until now to realize that I can integrate these two aspects of my environment without losing the traits and beliefs that make me, well me.

Your class has taught me that the world has a lot of growing to do. It has taught me that *I* still have so much to learn and that I have a responsibility to exercise my voice, even on days when it feels so small. In this space that is college, I am surrounded by thousands of people who have experiences that differ from my own and it is easy to get wrapped up in the campus culture. However, moving forward, I will be doing a little bit of both. Learn about those around you, but do not allow it to be all that you are. Understand your morals and the place that you come from, but do not choose to be stuck in a single way of thinking. It is like a scale, sometimes one part outweighs the other but when both are in equilibrium, it is beautiful.

In true Dr. Maes fashion, I am left with one question moving forward to the future: Now what? Frankly, I have no clue. I have never felt as lost as I do at this exact moment. I am frustrated, overwhelmed with the information that I have received in your class. There have been days where I have left your class with my brain swirling, days where any semblance of eloquence has left me, days where I just cried. Cried because of the stories of incredible people who were drowned at this institution, to society. Cried because I felt like I was doing the same thing. Drowning. I still do actually, even though I try to hide it sometimes. I guess that the only thing I do know is that as much I feel like I can not swim sometimes, MLS is still a safe space. The connections that I have made are lifelines that I should cherish always. I need to use my voice and the knowledge that is given to me because it is the only thing that can not be taken away. I have to learn now more than ever because the world we live in is hard. So whatever you have next for me, I am ready.