WHAT IS THE SOUND OF ONE STORY BEING TOLD?

• Qualitative researchers are story tellers following an ancient tradition of one or another kind. In the East, the Zen tradition is one of telling stories through Koans and Sutras.

• What are koans? A koan is a riddle like story which offers a way to view the world through metaphors. Qualitative researchers use metaphors regularly to capture the lived experience of their participants.

• What are sutras? A sutra is a short saying about a life lesson. This is comparable to finding themes in the data of any qualitative research project. Sutras are usually pithy, unambiguous and comprehensive.
Three key principles of Contemplative Qualitative Inquiry

• IMPERMANENCE refers to the fact that all things are fleeting and all things will pass. It is a reminder to be wide awake in the present moment. For the Qualitative Researcher, or any researcher, the connection to our findings is clear. All findings are tentative if not continually in motion and changing.

• NON-SELF refers to being in the world free of the self. For Qualitative researchers, this Zen approach would lead to being aware of not interfering with an interview for example.

• NIRVANA refers to total awareness and understanding of the world before us.
Other Zen Practices

- **JOURNAL WRITING:** KEEP A JOURNAL OF YOUR THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS

- **WRITING POETRY:** WHILE CONTEMPLATIVE TRADITIONS USE HAIKU AND OTHER FORMS OF JAPANESE POETRY, ANY STYLE OR FORMAT OF POETRY PUSHES US AS RESEARCHERS TO ANOTHER LEVEL OF ARTISTIC UNDERSTANDING.

- **PAINTING, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND ARTS BASED APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING**
WHAT IS ZEN?

- Zen is a form of Buddhism, that asserts that enlightenment and understanding come from meditation. Self contemplation and intuition are part of meditation. The Zen mind is a critical, meditative and thoughtful mind. Zen relies on knowing yourself and the world through meditation and doing no harm.

- **Lotus Koan**

- A monk asked Chimon, “Before the lotus blossom emerged from the water, what is it?” He replied, “A lotus blossom.” The monk asked, “After it has come out of the water, what is it?” He replied, “Lotus leaves.”
THE HEART SUTRA

FORM IS NO OTHER THAN EMPTINESS.
EMPTINESS NO OTHER THAN FORM.
FORM IS EXACTLY EMPTINESS,
EMPTINESS EXACTLY FORM.
SENSATION, THOUGHT IMPULSE, AND
CONSCIOUSNESS
ARE ALSO LIKE THIS.
ALL THINGS ARE MARKED BY
EMPTINESS.
NOT BORN.
NOT DESTROYED.
MINDFUL MOMENT

WHEN YOU BEGIN A RESEARCH PROJECT, THERE ARE MANY PATHS. THINK ABOUT YOUR CURRENT PROJECT.

WHAT PATH GOT YOU STARTED?
WHAT INSPIRED YOUR STUDY?
HOW ARE YOU SUSTAINING THE PROJECT?
CHARACTERISTICS OF ZEN AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

- BOTH ARE HOLISTIC
- BOTH LOOK AT RELATIONSHIPS IN CONTEXT
- BOTH PRACTICES USE BODY AND MIND
- BOTH PRACTICES PAY ATTENTION TO ETHICS
- BOTH PRACTICES RELY ON STORYTELLING
- BOTH SHARE RELIANCE ON THINKING, WRITING, DILIGENCE, INTUITION, AND CREATIVITY
SELECT A MINDFUL ACTIVITY

• WRITE either A KOAN (A RIDDLE LIKE PRINCIPLE) or a SUTRA (a life lesson based) on your own work as a researcher.

• WRITE ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE TEACHER. WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THIS TEACHER? DESCRIBE THE TEACHER’S CHARACTERISTICS THAT CHANGED YOU?

• WRITE A PAGE IN YOUR JOURNAL ABOUT WHAT YOU HOPE TO LEARN FROM THIS CONFERENCE.

• PHOTOGRAPH PEOPLE OR THE PLACE WHERE YOU ARE JUST NOW. WRITE ABOUT WHAT THE PHOTO MEANS TO YOU.
CREATING POETRY

• WRITE A FOUND DATA POEM FROM ANYTHING THAT WAS SAID IN THIS WORKSHOP OR ANYTHING FROM THE POWER POINT SLIDES.

• WRITE A HAIKU, 16 SYLLABLES IN THREE OR FOUR LINES, ABOUT THIS CONFERENCE.

• WRITE SOME LINES IN YOUR JOURNAL ABOUT ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN ANY ZEN PRINCIPLE AND YOUR LIFE.
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AS AN ACT OF COMPASSION

• OBSERVING AND INTERVIEWING MAY BE VIEWED AS COMPASSIONATE ACTIVITY TO ENABLE US TO WRITE THE STORY

• RESEARCH LIKE ZEN, SHOULD DO NO HARM.

• ZENERGY (ZEN ENERGY) OPENS THE IMAGINATION THROUGH COMTEMPLATION
QUESTIONS?

CORRESPONDENCE TO:

vjanesic@usf.edu