

October 7, 2018

Rev. Sara L. McKinley
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Re: Feedback Letter Regarding Candidate, Ms. Stephanie Sample

Dear Rev. Sara McKinley,

This letter is intended to assist you and your agents in providing feedback to Ms. Stephanie Sample, a candidate, who was interviewed by me on XX/XX/XX as part of the assessment process for an appointment in the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church (UMC) regarding aspects of her psychological evaluation outcome.

This psychologist recognizes that the candidate may benefit from receiving information from the outcome of her evaluation in non-psychological jargon designed to assist her in enhancing, even deepening her self-understanding as it relates to her own unique psychology.

This Feedback Letter does not include recommendations for the candidate as made by the MAS in that recommendations, if any, are made to the District Committee on Ordained Ministry or other agents of the UMC, who will make specific recommendations, if any, to the candidate following her interview with the committee.

One may also wish to bear in mind that: 1) the feedback provided is based on the sum of information made available to me at the time of the testing, 2) hypotheses made from these data are not infallible, and 3) they are limited to the relative time frame that the evaluation was conducted. Thus, while it may be true that some of the hypotheses regarding the candidate in this feedback letter may be applicable years from now (as they are enduring features of one's personality), others may be applicable to a shorter duration.

It may be helpful for Ms. Sample to know the following:

The candidate revealed a history of feeling unloved by her parents and former husband. She reported having an emotionally controlling mother, an emotionally distant father, and an emotionally abusive ex-husband. These experiences appear to have contributed, at least in part, to a lifelong adult experience of seasonal depression, an eating disorder and alcohol abuse in her youth, as well as the tendency to manifest reactive depression when life stressors mount.

Ms. Sample seems to hold the question in her mind of whether she is actually lovable by anyone, especially whether she will ever be able to have a loving marriage in her lifetime. This question-mark contributes to feelings of loneliness and low self-worth, which appear to manifest in two diametrically opposite ways.

On the one hand, Ms. Sample, appears to rail against any slight suggestions of being made to feel controlled or judged harshly (such as she was made to feel by her mother and ex-husband) by asserting herself in ways that are meant to make bold statements --an 'in your face push back' to authority.

On the other hand, when these efforts fail, she feels the underlying sadness that comes with feeling emotionally impoverished or unacceptable at a core level.

Adolescent development should include a period of allowing a teenager to voice opposition, frustration, or even anger at one's parent(s) in order to further solidify burgeoning separation and desires of individuality from them. When a parent demands that the teenager not engage in any of these behaviors by threat of loss

of the parental love (i.e., “If you are angry with me I won’t love you!”), the teenager may stop this normal developmental expression. This can and often does lead to someone becoming fearful of ‘stepping-out-of-line’ yet still wishing to express such long repressed normal desires.

For Ms. Sample, the notion that she must tow-the-line or risk rejection was compounded by her marriage to a man who was reportedly emotionally abusive by rejecting her in other ways (i.e., doesn’t matter that her body produced a child for him –it was rejected following this important gift).

This psychologist observes that her statements to the effect that she would “like to smoke pot” but that she “doesn’t want to bring badness to the church,” or that she wishes to protest some of the legally objectional things in her community accompanied by a *lais-sez-faire* attitude toward the possibility of arrest are remnants of her lifelong feeling of emotional and behavioral oppression and rejection.

Adolescents who are allowed these normal ‘acting-out’ experiences and are lovingly guided into a proper ‘sublimation’ of them (find ways to deal with emotional pain without getting high or drunk such as counseling, find ways to oppose the law without risking arrest such as becoming a lawmaker) by understanding parents, do not suffer the depressive and emotionally impoverished results that Ms. Sample apparently does.

Ms. Sample could benefit from fully coming into herself, as it were. The recognition of her self-worth, that she is a grown woman who can accept all aspects of herself, perfect and imperfect, and allow herself to continue in and find healthy relationships with people who will accept her full range of emotions without fear of reprisal is something that she should be encouraged to seek and obtain.

Thank you for the opportunity to evaluation this intelligent and interesting candidate.