Think About It: Philosophy and Dialogic Advising

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Effective advising requires practitioners to engage in analysis of theory and practice. Philosophical underpinnings regarding notions of self can shape the advising encounter and determine the level of receptiveness of advisors toward the whole student. A brief review of Western philosophies of the self provides context for Martin Buber's radical dialogic philosophy of the self. Buber offered a foundation for an overarching theory of advising and addressed the selection and timing of particular advising methods in response to students. His idea of the dialogic self, I-You, *consists of powerful, relational encounters with the* other. *Advisors bring an openness to students' contextual reality so an advisor is immersed in a student's world for that moment by applying dialogic advising*.

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All humans engage in communication, many with mixed success. On the basis of inherent or ingrained communication skills or techniques, often acquired without formal education or training, some demonstrate the ability to undertake accurate, meaningful, and reciprocal information transmission essential for academic advising. Furthermore, the capacity to assess the proper communication or advising techniques contributes to the greatest chance to connect successfully with each student. However, advisor training in effective interactions varies widely. Some are flung into a work position with limited prior guidance while others receive extensive graduate preparation; indeed, key competencies are developed only after these educators arrive on campus. Even the best front-loaded training cannot address all the behaviors, practices, and beliefs of effective advisors; once engaged in the trenches of academic advising, the best practitioners review and analyze their sessions with students and colleagues. Successful academic advisors engage thoughtfully in a feedback process of theory and practice.

The longstanding standard in advising-preparation literature, *Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Handbook* (Gordon, Habley, & Grites, 2008), which includes Hagen and Jordan's chapter on the "Theoretical Foundations of Academic Advising" wherein they advocate for a "paradigm expansion" (p. 28) of normative theories of advising to include metaphoric, narrative, and dialectic theories as needed (pp. 30-32). The best academic advisors weave methodologies and practices with deliberation, making determinations about when to prescribe degree requirements, adhere to appreciative or developmental techniques, or engage in intrusive tactics. "Advisors have *license* to draw upon a wide array of theoretical perspectives . . . they have the *obligation* to resist adopting only one theoretical perspective because the phenomenon of academic advising is so very complex" (Habley & Jordan, 2008, p. 32). Advisors may mix methods reflexively, but a new theory of advising permits advisors to think flexibly about the knowledge they presume to possess and their perceptions regarding students and situations. Furthermore, although they advocate application of multiple advising perspectives, Hagen and Jordan did not address the issue of advisor discernment about the effectiveness of one methodology or theory over another.

In addition, many advising professionals experience institutional or departmental pressure to meet with as many advisees as possible and work efficiently by focusing on degree requirements. The nature of these interactions typically involves an advisor–student dyad, two people interacting for the purposeful benefit of one. Heidegger (2013) indicated that humans understand reality within the context of their own experiences: "To *think* being means to endure the differentiation in questioning and to experience the differentiation as the inceptual distinction" (p. 110). In other words, different personal experiences shape what individuals come to think about distinct existences.

To communicate with students effectively, an academic advisor must bridge the gap between her or his understanding of a student's distinct existence and experience of historical and functional understanding, a task complicated by distracting external tensions. Buber's (1996) dialogic philosophy of the self provides a conceptual foundation for a theory of advising and addresses the question of how an advisor knows a student's needs and determines the effective techniques and styles, as well as the timing to use them, to meet those needs. Dialogic advising explains how to apply the hermeneutic theory

advocated by Champlin-Scharff (2010). Using Buber's notion of dialectic self, *I-You,* advisors comprehend a student's sense of self and his or her responses to experiences and environments. Appropriate advising choices may feel intuitive, but in fact, advisors respond to dozens of cues from students and shape their advising selves in direct response to the *other*—the student—a relationship that Wright (2014) called *intersubjectivity* (p. 149). As a result, advisors may know the best way to help students because of their unconscious response to the entirety of the data presented by students, but they may remain unaware of how they know this information. The cues shape and influence the self, or *I,* of the attuned so that in the moment of addressing a student's need, the advisor derives confidence from the full engagement with the student as *You*. Because of the implicit, critical communication during interactions with students, advisors who develop confidence in the validity of their own understanding of and response to students facilitate streamlined and clear comprehension experienced by both the advisor and the student.

Many academic advisors proceed with philosophical assumptions that they spend little time examining; for example, they may assume reality has an objective existence outside of self, such that selves are silos of experience and interpretation. Using dialogic advising, practitioners can breach the aloneness of self and student. To place Buber's (1996) theory in context, I selected a few philosophies to review because of their possible embeddedness in advising. In the remainder of the article, a short explanation of the two types of dialectics described by Buber leads to an analysis of the applicability of his dialogic theory of self to the advising relationship and ties philosophy to experience. Three scenarios provide examples of dialogic advising, and practical implications and suggestions for further development of the theory of dialogic advising are given in conclusion.

Philosophy

Martin Buber was an Austrian, Jewish, existential philosopher, 1878–1965, whose most renowned work, *I and Thou,* first appeared in 1923. His oracular style made the original text laborious, but his insights offer much for academic advisors, and numerous translations make his work accessible. Buber claimed that the primary experience of self was *relational*—usually with mother or other parental figure; hence, according to him, all subsequent experience of self was dyadic, or paired. He labeled the pairs *I-It* or *I-Thou* (hereafter, *I-You*), depending on the nature of the interaction. Because humans always experienced their "selves" in relationship, all knowledge and experience of self emerge out of ongoing dialog with others/it. In Buber's portrayal, "There is no I as such but only the I of the basic word I-You and the I of the basic word I-It" (p. 54). The other half of Buber's pair only can be You, experienced in total, or It, experienced functionally.

Buber's (1996) revolutionary idea differed from many Western philosophies, which contrast one's self with everything else. Western thinkers have struggled with the idea of human aloneness, or singularity, since classical times. Ancient philosophers viewed the self as an essential component of individual human existence that requires personal or solo reflection to comprehend (Heehs, 2013). Socrates's ideal man was self-aware and self-critical (Frogel, 2016, p. 93), but not necessarily other-aware. In contrast, Buber felt that the admonition to "know thyself" really meant set oneself apart from others (pp. 13-14). Buber was more concerned with relating to You and entering into You's truth of the moment than with logical facts or truths.

The ancient Roman philosopher Seneca connected self-perception to self-preservation, but the capacity to identify self with ever-broadening circles of others would, ideally, lead to treating people "as parts of the same whole to which the subject belongs—in a way, a morally good person conceives of other people as herself" (Toivanen, 2013, p. 360). According to Seneca, recognizing others as self does not equate to experiencing the self of others. Rather, it echoes the Biblical admonishment to do unto others as we would have them do unto us, and it delineated a personal separation and an assumption of fundamental self-interest that was addressed explicitly.

The selves imagined by the ancients demanded scrutiny, moral reflection, examination of the soul, and evaluation of the impact of one's behavior on others. St. Augustine felt humans remained essentially unknowable because they were fashioned in the image of a transcendent, incomprehensible God (Marion, 2011, pp. 30-31). Augustine hinted at the idea of self as completed in relation with another in the religious context of relating to God. Buber (1996) also discussed a relationship with God, but for him, relationships with others whom he encountered as You intersected with his relationship with the "eternal You" (p. 123). Perceived this way, any relationship, including those developed through advising,

becomes sublime because interactions with others connect each to the universal.

Much later, French philosopher Rene Descartes famously proved the existence of his self, but his conceptualization entailed epistemology rather than relation to other selves; his work involved a thinking rather than a relational self. The personal, logical self of Decartes's *Meditations* neither seemed to interact with nor need others. Buber might have found Descartes's deep need for analysis alienating. Focused more on relation than causation, Buber (1996) did not discard reason but believed that relating to You improved outcomes even in scientific, political, and economic arenas (pp. 97-98). As a tool for reasoning, Descartes has much to offer, but as a guide to the relational nature of the selves participating in advising, Descartes's self offers more isolation than connection.

Jean Jacques Rousseau saw self as an entity that should develop freely to the extent that no harm come to self or society; hence, to him, self stands in opposition to all else. Rousseau's concern with personal liberty and self-actualization stressed exploration that could include the nature of others, but it often pitted individual needs against social structures such as the education system (Peckover, 2012, pp. 91-92). His ideas of self-preservation referred not to the continuation of life but to the continuity of one's self to include the nature of the other. In an important difference with that of Buber (1996), Rousseau's view of self built a paradigm of separation and did not enable the shaping interpenetration of another to form one's self.

Perhaps closest to Buber's (1996) conception of self, Levinas (Peperzak, Critchley, & Bernasconi, 1996) described an ethical relationship to the other: "The relationship with the other (*autrur*) puts me into question, empties me of myself and empties me without end, showing me ever new resources" (p. 52). Respectful recognition and revelation of other, hinting at the infinite, forms the core of Levinas's work and certainly relates to a mind-set consistent with advisors interacting with students. Many other philosophers expressed concern with notions of self, but they cannot all be included in this summary; nevertheless, this partial review places Buber's notions of self in context.

The Western ideas discussed differ somewhat from the Eastern philosophy articulated through Buddhism. The Western focus on rationalism and logic places each person connected to society and to other individuals as a self-interested solo agent who also presumes the self-interest of others. Buber's (1996) dialogic philosophy of the self bore some casual resemblance to Eastern philosophies, such as Buddhism, that negate self. According to Fink (2012), Buddhism includes the idea, radical by Western standards, that a subjective self does not exist; instead, while conscious, the self that experiences the world is illusory (p. 291). In this regard, Buber framed the experiential self very differently from Eastern philosophies; he considered all knowledge as self-emerged from ongoing dialog with You or It such that self is transformed but retains centrality.

Martin Buber's Dialog

Buber (1996) declaimed:

> The attitude of man is twofold in accordance with the two basic words he can speak. The basic words are not single words but word pairs. One basic word is the word pair I-You. The other basic word is the word pair I-It. . . . Thus the I of man is also twofold. (p. 53)

I is always part of You or of It. Buber described It as having boundaries, as experienced on the surface of interactions. The It is necessary but limited, so the I paired with the It is also limited (Wright, 2014, p. 152). You has no boundaries but hints at the infinite in engaged relation with the other. The functionality of It remains essential to advising and to many other human exchanges, but Buber would assert that persons need not abandon the knowledge and experience of It in relating to You.

Buber's (1996) stance on I, You, and the other comports with Champlin-Scharff's (2010) hermeneutic theory formed on the basis of Heidegger's philosophy. Rather than frame the advisee as It, as a specific set of course and major requirements, or a particular class standing or subset of needs, hermeneutic theory involves understanding "how advisees find significance and make meaning in the world within which they exist over time" (Champlin-Scharff, 2010, p. 59). This subjective viewpoint emerges within a relationship in which full engagement with the other yields a sensation of shifting perspective, such that advisors see the world through their students' eyes. I-You, Buber's basic word pair, applied to advising means the advisor's I-self requires the advisee's You. "The concentration and fusion into a whole being can never be accomplished by me, can never be accomplished without me. I require a You to become; becoming I, I say You" (Buber, p. 62). Seemingly mystical, in the moment of I-You

engagement, I and You are the same self; thus, I truly knows You in that moment. These encounters, even if brief, can inform advising decisions whether or not advisors are aware of the intense relationship.

Although the immersion in the other appears to subsume individuality, one's essential self engages in dialog. Buber's (1996) mystical description of encountering You reflected the totality of the engagement: "Neighborless and seamless, he is You and fills the firmament. Not as if there were nothing but he; but everything else lives in *his* light"(p. 59). Buber encountered You so holistically that You is comprised of everything in that moment, but such an overwhelming, mystical experience would have limited utility in advising encounters, which retain established purposes. The self Buber brought to the dialog with You must understand, at the time of the encounter, the totality of the universe generated by and through dialog with You, but that self can still behave and think functionally. "This does not mean that the person 'gives up' his being-that-way, his being different; only, this is not the decisive perspective but merely the necessary and meaningful form of being" (p. 114). In other words, while my self may form something new and unique in each encounter with the other, I retain the integrity of my person, a unique individual engaged in a true, shared moment with another unique individual, and together we comprise a self. That openness to the other can help advisors determine how best to help each unique student, and it generates a paradigm expansion of the type advocated by Hagen and Jordan (2008).

Furthermore, others have recognized requirements of an advising dialog that benefits students; advisors' egos must contract to make space for greater awareness of student needs. For example, the self- and other-awareness required of a servant leader promotes greater empathy and can result in effective persuasion and aid to students to students because advisors' expanded worldviews "inform their own perceptions" and offer additional insight (Paul, Smith, & Dochney, 2012, pp. 59-60). Similarly, Champlin-Scharff (2010) advocated tucking away the list of fixed questions and solutions and instead encouraged engaging in "organic conversation," a genuine dialog, which will "allow students to reveal their contextualization," (p. 63) their lived realities at that moment.

Advising cannot fully abandon the prescriptive. The self that interacted with and upon an It "appears as an ego" which "sets itself apart from other egos" (pp. 111-112). I-It interactions are purpose driven, functional, quantitative, analytical, and objective. They incorporate a necessary detachment between self and other. Advisors enmeshed in I-It interactions are still involved in dialog, but the objectivity of the It creates a transaction that unavoidably renders the other into something acted upon, experienced in a specific fashion.

Some students desire a prescriptive, task-focused, checklist approach to academic advising, but advisors must make evaluations on the basis of experience regarding whether to engage more thoroughly. Buber (1996) claimed that individual selves differ as they move between I-It and I-You dialogs, and he had a marked preference for the wholeness of combined realities. Buber evidently disdained unremitting I-It, "O mysteriousness without mystery, O piling up of information! It, it, it!" (p. 56). Someone encountering another as You "appears as a person and becomes conscious of itself as subjectivity. Persons enter into relation to other persons" (p. 112). The ego-centered self separated from You and fueled the encounter with usefulness, but the relational self-encountering You was "touched by a breath of eternal life" (p. 113). Both have a place in academic advising, but the advisor who shares a dialogic encounter with You experiences a richer, more inclusive engagement with a student, which then supports better advice that is based on that person's whole truth. The advisor cycling through I-You and I-It dialogs with a student absorbs the advisee's narrative and reconsiders prescriptive methods when the student's story suggests a need for intervention (Hagen, 2008, pp. 17-18). For Hagen (2008), applying narrative or hermeneutic theory to advising requires a "leap of the imagination" (p. 19); however, Buber's I-You precludes the need for such a leap because the advisor's self comprehends the other in that moment through openness to the fragile humanity and the totality of communication provided by the student. Buber suggested attention to the entirety of a student and the verbal cues, to the aversion of eyes and subtle body language, to revealed and hidden histories, to the whole, vulnerable, fascinating package of a person.

Dialogic Advising in Practice

Academic advising incorporates personal interaction, of course, but also record keeping, policy imparting, grade tracking, and other decidedly nonmystical tasks. For the purposes of following through the necessary details, advisors apply I-It interactions to the mundane. Those practicing in

some fields of knowledge, such as science, math, and business, rely heavily on the I-It mode of understanding the world, so advisors from or working in those disciplines may bring their intellectual training that values concrete, reproducible, known factors to the interaction. However, a predominantly I-It orientation may inhibit acknowledgment of the lived humanity of the student because advisors must prioritize institutional, departmental, or logistical goals. Functional demands may impede mindful advising and recognition of obscure student cues. Prescriptive advising relies heavily on communication of details, but for some institutions or departments, discussion often consists of an eight-semester curriculum guide handed to first-year students, who are then expected make sense of the sequences and attain success. Possible consequences of overusing I-It dialog include underdeveloped faculty or advisor connections with students, with the correlated potential loss of retention caused by lack of engagement; missed chances to reinforce positive student behaviors and intellectual relationships that might engender excitement with chosen disciplines; and advisor burnout caused by the unremitting repetition involved with primarily meeting institutional, rather than human, needs.

Missed opportunities to encounter others prevent advisors from modeling values about the genuine humanity of other members of communities. When I-It dialogs form the majority of advising encounters, students also incorporate a potentially rigid conception of advising and learning. I-It may impress upon students the lesson that regulations and officialdom matter more than engagement with their own learning and with others in their environments; it suggests that degrees and education consist of discrete categories to be covered. I-It may inhibit students' dialogic encounter with content, the faculty, and the student body while prioritizing a narrow, institutional definition of success. I-It is not inherently negative, but both types of dialog belong in advising, and advising practitioners must examine their practices and assumptions to ensure that they are prepared to regard the whole student. Kuh (2008), for example, emphasized, "every advising contact is a precious opportunity for meaningful interaction" (p. 79). By engaging with the whole person, advisors can determine the advising methodology, intervention, or activities that best meet that student's needs. By applying dialogic advising, practitioners come to understand the timing and reasoning for making specific methodological choices.

I-You consists of powerful, authentic relational interactions that enable people to encounter each other. The dialogic relationship can transpire with objects, animals, texts, and people, and this encounter encompasses the other holistically. Engaging the other as You permits advisors to use Champlin-Scharff's (2010) four concepts of hermeneutic theory: "interpretation, connectedness, world, and time" (p. 61). Those moments of shared existential perception (Champlin-Scharff, p. 63), which an advisor might chalk up to intuition, consist of an openness to students' realities such that an advisor is immersed in a student's world for that moment. "Through effectively listening, clarifying, and interpreting, a practitioner can assess and understand what a student is really trying to say" (Clark, 2009, p. 142) about deep personal issues and their impact on academics, which results in advising choices. To cultivate an I-You encounter, advisors must minimize their deepest assumptions and barriers of ego, which act as personal defenses that impede true comprehension of others. According to Buber (1996), "the more a human being, the more humanity is dominated by the ego, the more does the I fall prey to inactuality" (p. 115). Personal ego, with its burden of history, can interfere with the formation of an I-You self. To accomplish the vulnerable state of minimal ego, the advising session must revolve around the student's needs not the advisor's agenda, and any negativity the student brings to the session rarely originates with the advisor.

Buber (1996) sounds esoteric, but he offered conceptual tools for reimagining advising relationships in ways in which students feel genuinely known. Advisors can listen with their eyes: Relaxed focus on the student enables advisors to pick up cues missed when selecting from the menu of progress-to-degree questions with the corresponding narrow range of correct answers. An I-You encounter permits an interaction without regard to overarching objectives or time, location, or other externalities such that advisors encounter only the student. Clark (2009) asserted that practitioners need to feel comfortable encompassing students in "unconditional positive regard" (p. 144) and prioritize the human interaction by avoiding the incredible distractions of multitasking during the meeting (p. 145). Advisors must deliberately neglect the internal timekeeper, which insists that the meeting last no longer than 15 or 30 minutes. One cannot engage fully with You when focused on minutia and externalities. Furthermore, in paying attention to the whole student, the advisor dare not neglect the commonplaces of that student's life: Does

he or she need to work? What socioeconomic and education background does the student bring to the institution? Have previous interactions between the student and education professionals been positive? The answers to these questions do not define the student but inform, and possibly shape, the advising relationship, on the basis that "advising is a cultural and culture-bound activity" (Kuh, 2008, p. 81).

"Advisors should begin each interaction by identifying where and how the advisee interprets and makes sense of things" (Champlin-Scharff, 2010, p. 63). Dialogic advising permits the advisor to focus only on the student as You and to internalize the student's sense of the world and, if briefly, the student's experience of self. The relevance of prescriptive recommendations springs from the coherence of them to the student's context (Champlin-Scharff, 2010). Practitioners of all types of advising can and do engage in I-You dialogic exchange, and the relationship that ensues encourages advisors to blur the lines of the differing advising practices on the basis of professional determinations perceived to work best for that student at that moment. Rather than address students as finite sets of component needs, the best advisors routinely engage with the whole student and selectively use different approaches. "Even as a melody is not composed of tones, nor a verse of words, nor a statue of lines—one must pull and tear to turn a unity into a multiplicity—so it is with the human being to whom I say You" (Buber, 1996, p. 59).

During dialogic advising, student and advisor construct a reality in the space between them. Although Wright (2014) asserted that I-You encounters must be reciprocal (p. 152), students need not be as open to relating to You as advisors need to be; rather, advisors can engage the student as You by opening up to the other to participate in students' actualities. Moreover, because of the reciprocity of advising, students encounter You whether or not they expect to do so.

Examples of Applied Dialogic Advising

Insufficiency of I-It Without I-You

John, a faculty advisor in a science department at State U., makes clear that his priority is reminding students to do well enough in their courses to persist in the required sequence. The dean of John's college has instructed him to focus on shortening students' time to degree. As a consequence of John's goals and the dean's mandate, 15-minute advising appointments consist of checking the student's current courses off the list of degree requirements and generating a list of necessary upcoming courses. When a second-year student, Mark, indicated uncertainty about successfully completing the rigorous, required chemistry sequence needed for his pre-med path, John suggested Mark visit the Counseling Center to decide whether he had identified the proper major; John suggested that Mark needed to determine whether he "had what it took to succeed."

The I-It advising interaction involves John's spreadsheet more than his students such that his level of engagement with students remains superficial, and his knowledge of them "is mediated by concepts and categories" (Wright, 2014, p. 152). Many students succeed despite their advisors' limited engagement and simple broadcasting of information, but John's routine practice closes the door to potentially enriching exchanges and risks diminishing students' connections to their learning. Because of the constraints and expectations of John's institution and his own preferences, his dialogic advising mainly involves the It of students.

What might have enabled John, in his current situation, to acknowledge Mark's needs? Could John be motivated to redirect Mark because of his own cognitive dissonance regarding prioritizing perceived institutional and program needs? Furthermore, could the needs of all constituents have been met in this scenario? Because developmental and prescriptive advising need not be mutually exclusive, how could John have implemented I-You dialogic advising to transform his current advising practices?

Questioning to Know

Monica, an advisor meeting with a first-semester student, Jamal, sensed his agitation during the course of their conversation through the answers he gave freely and fully to her questions. Deliberately pursuing a low-key approach, she inquired about Jamal's academic experience, and because Jamal's answers indicated satisfaction and engagement, she then led the conversation in a natural way to his social and emotional situation. "What are you doing to be involved on campus?" "How are things going with your roommate?" Relieved by her open interest, Jamal revealed problems with his roommate that presented safety issues, and he further expressed surprise that the advising meeting proved an appropriate place to raise this topic. Monica, however, calmly expressed her dismay that Jamal's roommate threw scissors and other sharp objects

toward Jamal, and by showing her concern, she justified Jamal's discomfort with the situation, which he had been reluctant to broach. When Monica led Jamal to the office of the Director of Residence Life and helped him to change rooms, Jamal recognized that his advisor understood his suppressed concerns and felt validated.

Monica typically addresses all areas of students' lives during advising sessions by evaluating their responses to open-ended questions. She also embraces the meaning students assign to their experiences by adopting the principle "always only *one* being . . . Nothing else is present but this one, but this one cosmically" (Buber, 1996, p. 83). Despite the brevity of her dialogic encounters with You, they create an extraordinary impact on her capacity to engage students.

How can dialogic advising help advisors discern the most appropriate degree of intervention? What characteristics of the dialogic relationship made Jamal trust Monica and reveal concerns he had not fully acknowledged even to himself?

Turning Insight into Action

A developmental advisor, Sherwin, tried to help a student, Jackie, regain momentum in her Psychology 100 class, and she sat quietly agreeing with his suggestions for improving her grade. As Sherwin reviewed active reading techniques, he recognized subtle cues of indifference typical of a student who has already given up. Despite her external expressions of attentiveness, the absence of other body language, such as very slight squinting around the eyes, alert movements of the head, and verbal agreements, provided subtle behavior indicative of disinterest that he was not consciously noticing. I-You engagement alerted Sherwin to the dissonance between her voiced agreement and her reflexive actions. With his receptivity to You, to the student's whole life, he caught the flickering image of Jackie sleeping through her very early first class. Insight like Sherwin experiences, like a flash of a memory, feels and looks like intuition, but in fact, it stems from his dialogic receptivity to information on multiple levels, including to Jackie's own experience of self. Surprised by the revelation, Sherwin asked, "You stopped going to class, didn't you?" I-You encounters enable participants to encompass the other without feelings of otherness, to have genuine, full comprehension that feels personal. Jackie admitted that she had quit attending the course. Encountering Jackie's truth allowed her advisor to switch directions, so rather than suggesting academic remediation, Sherwin instructed her to withdraw from the class.

How do advisors avoid discounting those flashes of insight that feel baseless but have real foundation in I-You dialogic observations of real information, the data points rooted in students' experiences of self? Can I-You dialogic advising be used to surmount possible barriers of gender, class, race, and ability? If they can, how so?

Implications for Practice

Dialogic advising acts as a philosophical and practical tool. Many students come to advising with preconceived notions of the types of interactions that will take place. However, advisors attuned to You need not abandon the knowledge and experience of the It of their programs, courses, institutions, or even the It of the student to both meet students' perceptions of need and their actual need. Rather, advisors routinely select from a variety of techniques to help a particular student at a specific moment in his or her academic career. Engagement in I-You dialectic with the student enables advisors to ascertain the best way to reach the student and to confirm the applicability of that advising communication for the student.

Reflection on the philosophical underpinnings of advising practice can improve advisors' capacities for flexing notions of self and permit the practice of dialogic advising. Meeting students as participants in the selves created by I-You encounters creates a dialectic of equals (Hagen, 1994, p. 88) and fosters communication on multiple levels, which leads to the best advising. In addition, Buber's (1996) acknowledgement that people in communication continuously cycle between I-You and I-It can help advisors navigate between unguarded altruism and functional directives. Awareness of students as You enables advisors to shed preconceptions and to determine when to bridge advising methodologies. Buber's dialogic philosophy of the self supports and magnifies the "simple conversation" advocated by Champlin-Scharff (2010) for appreciating students' contextual meaning making (p. 64). Careful attention to the whole student, and to the wholeness of the student, should guide advising practice. Opening oneself to the other in a dialog of engagement, even temporarily, results in a sharing of self that lends critical insight to advisors.

As an overarching theory of advising, dialogic advising continues as a work in progress. Many advisors already implement the practices described

as dialogic, but they ascribe to it the term *intuition*. Acknowledgment of dialogic advising as a practice enables advisors to support a robust epistemology of understanding students on multiple levels by deepening comprehension of the ways people come to know. I welcome additional contributions to the ongoing project of developing philosophical underpinnings through descriptions of various advising methodologies: The best advisors share, for brief moments, in selves with their students and should trust the advising choices that this information compels them to make.

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Author's Note

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