

It's not a Book. It's a BoK: Ruminating in the Margins on the Role of Self-Reflective Journaling in Fostering Personal and Professional Socialization

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Abstract

This presentation offers a case study approach to rethink the contemporary understandings and implementations of journaling in higher education. Drawing on educational theory and lived experience, the author presents the Book of Ken (BoK) as a tool for self-reflection, critical thinking, and transformative learning. Through unrestricted creative processes, the BoK served as a method of discovery for students within an undergraduate social work course that emphasized the role of the individual throughout the learning process. Using page entries as data, the author demonstrates what creative journaling looks like in both substance and style and its relativity to personal and professional socialization in teaching and learning environments. From adopting reflective processing methodology, the author details a newfound comprehensive awareness about oneself and the various intersectionalities that make up the self. Such realizations exhibit the effectiveness of the BoK in fostering critical consciousness and personal and professional development. A recommendation follows for increased application of self-reflective journaling in professional education contexts, with the BoK as the means to do so.

Keywords: self-reflection, journaling, Book of Ken, BoK, personal socialization, professional socialization

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1 REFLEXIVITY: MOTIVATION

- lived experience ~ change from within
- began as an emerging social work student
- *Full Circle*: "I honestly feel as though I have come into my own" (Saddler, 2019).

why am I here?

RESEARCH QUESTION

How does self-reflective journaling facilitate the processes of personal and professional socialization?

what am I doing?

REFLECTION

- to holistically process to construct meaning (Boud, 1999)
- it is uncomfortable - "embracing of the doubts, anxieties, uncertainties, and contradictions of the human condition" (Gursansky et al., 2010)

what does it mean?

SELF-REFLECTION

- + the self
- The *individual* becomes the subject of *their own* reflection (Ferreira & Ferreira, 2019)

what is the difference?

SELF-REFLECTIVE LEARNING

- Reflection is intrinsic to learning; serves as a bridging of theory, practice, and personal experience (Boud, 1999; Van Breda & Agherdien, 2012).
- Students "gain the ability to connect their internal processes with external realities" ~ aids in the ongoing development of self-awareness and critical consciousness (Furman et al., 2008; Hubbs & Brand, 2005; Van Breda & Agherdien, 2012).

what is the purpose?

SELF-REFLECTIVE TEACHING

- Although difficult, reflection is an acquired skill that must be taught (Gursansky et al., 2010).
- **The Reflective Learning Model** employs the *didactic-facilitative continuum* of initial instructor supervision to promote *eventual* student autonomy (Davys & Beddoe, 2009).

how is it achieved?

2

does it actually work?

WRITING AS THE METHOD; JOURNALING AS THE TOOL

- The writing process is known to facilitate self-reflection = method of discovery about the self and the world (Furman, 2008; Hubbs & Brand, 2005).
- Reflective journals provide a structured way to track and examine thinking patterns and conceptual and perceptual changes (Dunlap, 2006; Hubbs & Brand, 2005).
- Rooted in theory: EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THEORY ADULT-LEARNING THEORY

DEEP LEARNING THEORY

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THEORY

(Damianakis et al., 2019; Hubbs & Brand, 2005; Van Breda & Agherdien, 2012)

"BOKING" AS THE TRANSCENDENCE (SEE PAGES 3 & 4)

BoK (Book of Ken) =

- (1) *noun*: rethinking / reconceptualization of conventional journaling
- (2) *verb*: to BoK; BoKing

how is the BoK different?

PERSONAL SOCIALIZATION

- Increasing importance is being placed on the "person" of the student ~ reflective journaling allows "learners [to be] the experts in their own learning" (Sage & Sele, 2015).
- Traditional academia is surpassed to foster *individual* awareness and growth, personally, spiritually, morally, and emotionally (Hubbs & Brand, 2005; Van Breda & Agherdien, 2012).

it does this?

PROFESSIONAL SOCIALIZATION

- "A goal of higher education is to develop professionals capable of analysis and self-reflection" ~ it is essential to *know thyself* (Ferreira & Ferreira, 2019; Hubbs & Brand, 2010).
- In many professional disciplines, effective practice calls for "the integration of theory, application of skills, logical insights, and the attitudes, beliefs, and philosophy unique to each practitioner" -- reflective journals provide the prime forum (Hubbs & Brand, 2010).

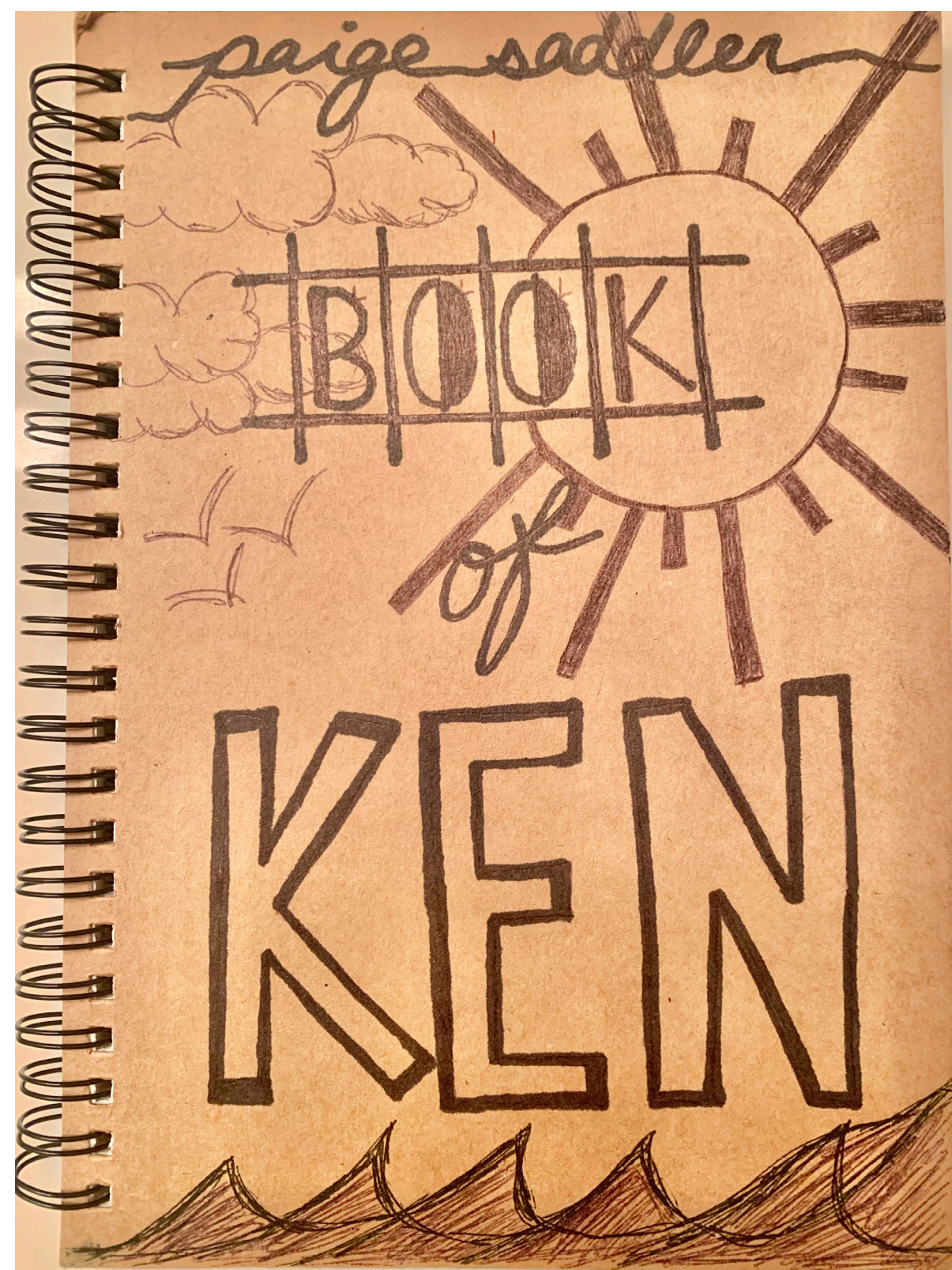
it does this too?

CONCLUSION

- Without action, reflection does not yield anything ~ Journaling is the action.
- "The value of journaling as a learning tool and its place in reflective practice has long been recognized" (Gursansky et al., 2010).
- **The Recommendation:** more implementation of self-reflective journaling.
 - The BoK persists as a successful means.

what is the recommendation?

ALL ABOUT THE BOK

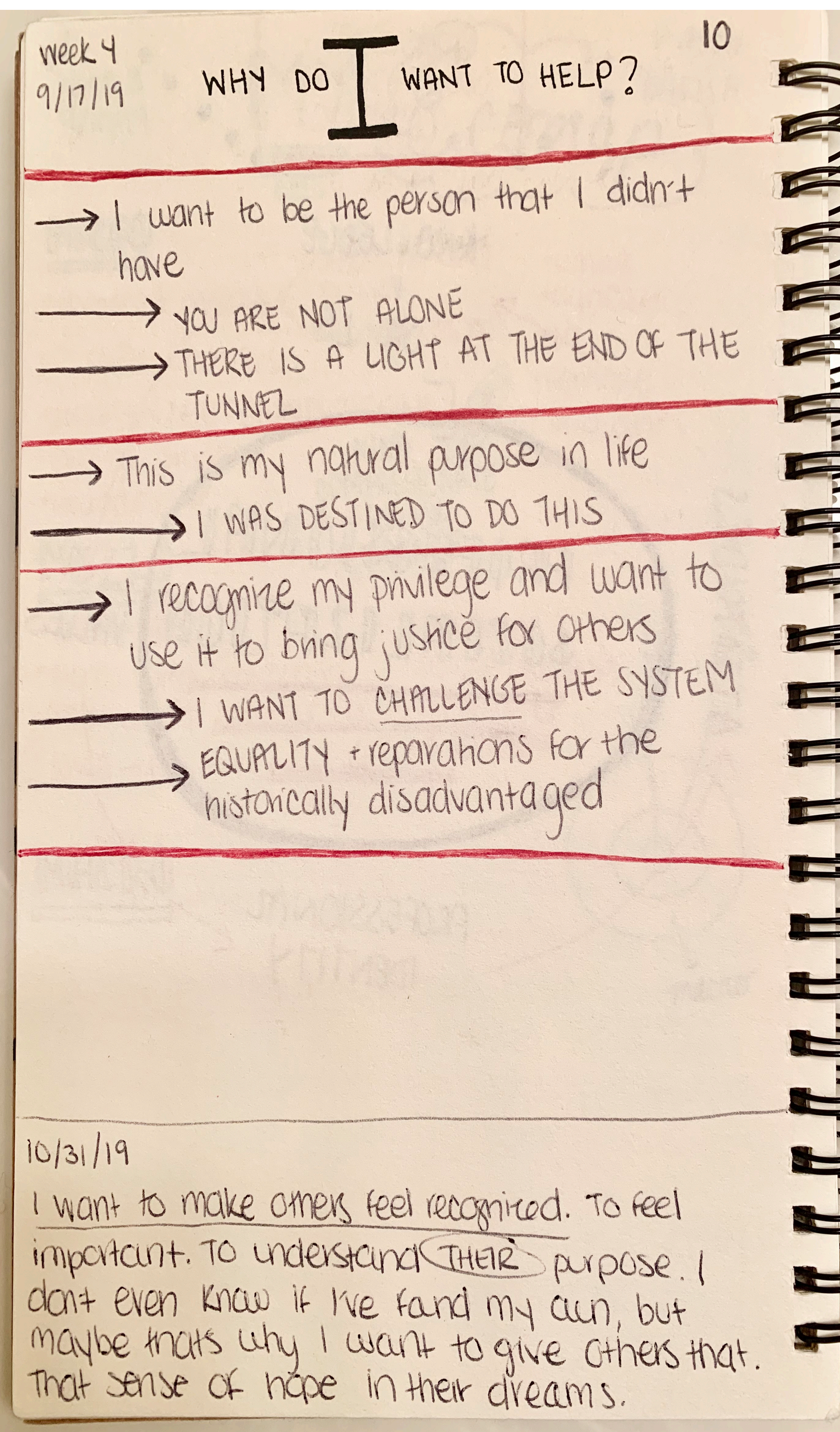
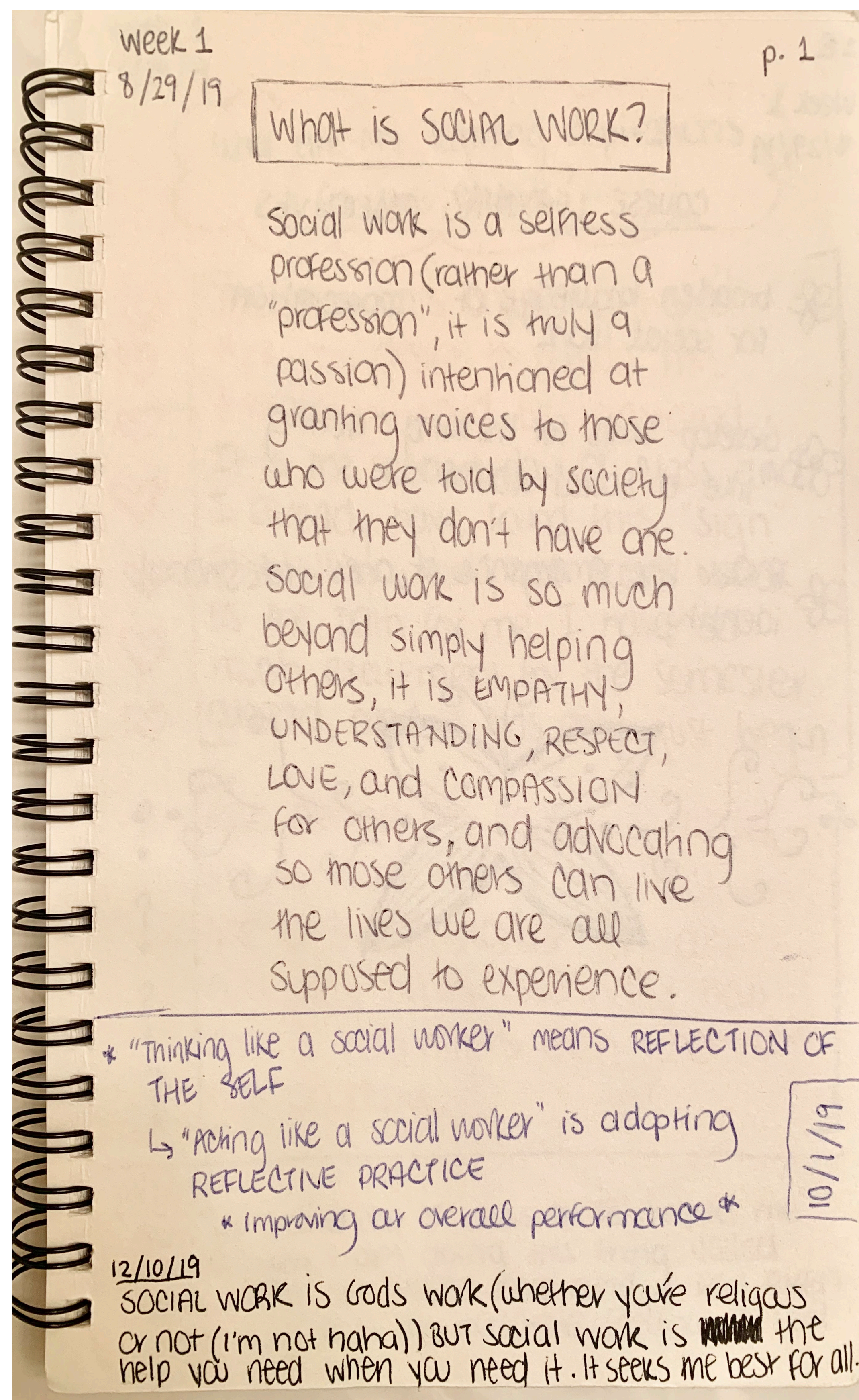


WHAT IS IT?

- o inspired by *The Sound of Music*
- o "Ken" = "one's range of perspective, knowledge, or insight" (Earls Larrison, 2020)
- o objective: move *beyond* one's Ken

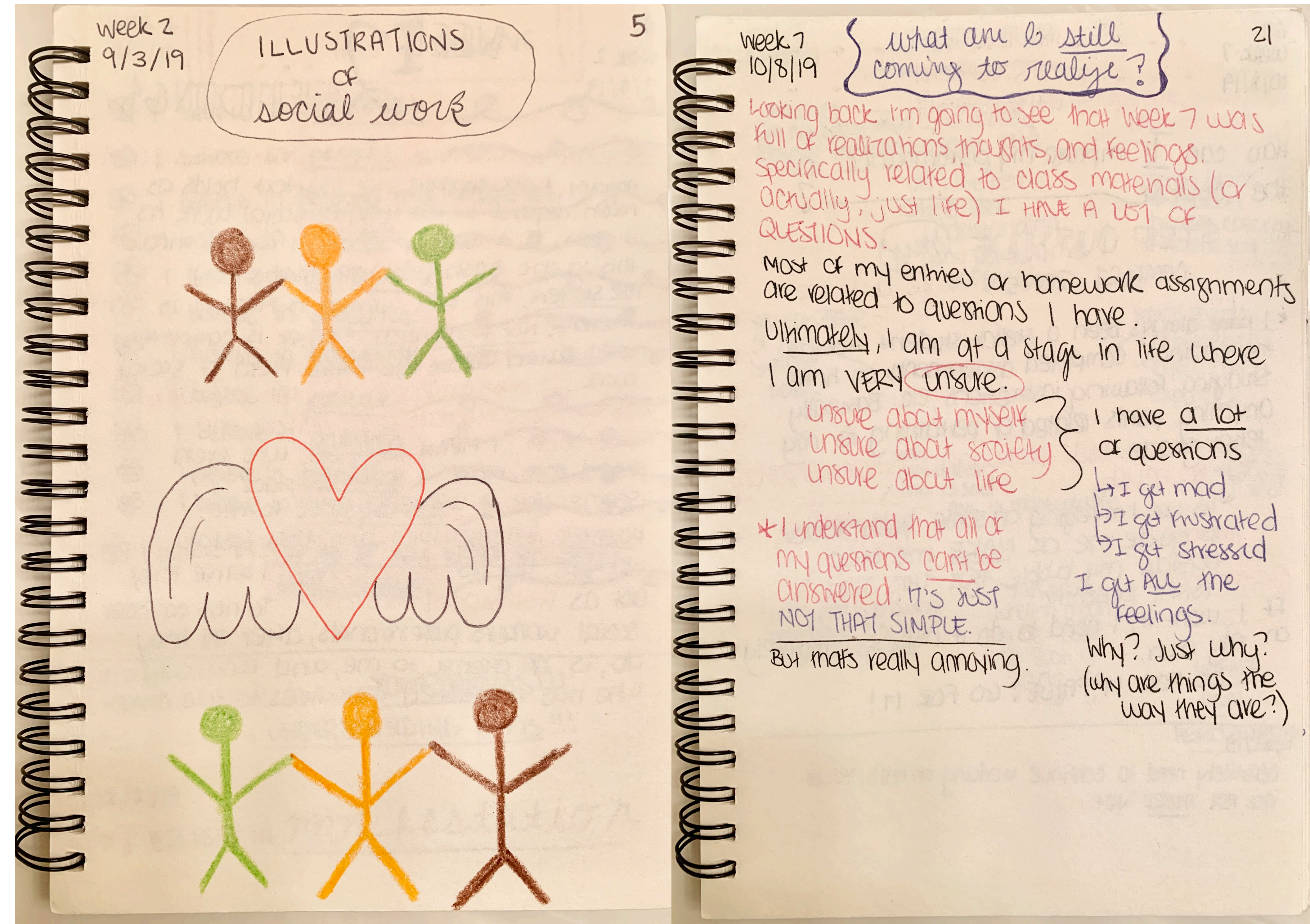
WHAT DOES IT DO?

- **Personal-Professional Intersectionality** : The Bok serves as a vessel to process and sift ideas, feelings, and thoughts throughout learning and living experiences.
 - o "The Bok allows students to explore different sides of themselves with absolutely zero constraint." (Saddler, 2019).



HOW DOES IT DO THAT?

- Freeing and self-directed: the Bok is an "informal, unrestrained, unencumbered, and creative approach to learning-growing processes" (Earls Larrison, 2020).
 - o **NOT** limited to words on a page ~ the student decides what *their* Bok will be (illustrative, poetic, narrative, etc.)
 - o "After a couple weeks I realized that the Bok is not 'supposed' to be anything. Everyone's Bok is different, unique to them, personal to their story, and that's how it should be" (Saddler, 2019).



WHAT HAS IT DONE FOR ME?

- I am a testament to its efficacy... I *have changed* and I *have evolved*.
 - o **Why?** ... Because I did the work and I embraced it. ~ I forced myself to think deeper.
 - work = ongoing Reflective Processing on integration of knowledge and self
- **Pages About Paige** "There is a piece of me on every single one of those pages" (Saddler, 2019).
 - o "I 'experienced disorienting dilemmas, felt conflicted and displaced, and had to reevaluate [my] sense of self in relation to social work' (Damianakis et al., 2019, p. 7). But I reemerged stronger." (Saddler, 2019).
- **Completing the Circle**: Now, I am Paige Saddler, the social worker.
 - o New obtained sense of self as a knower, learner, student, social worker, and scholar.

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