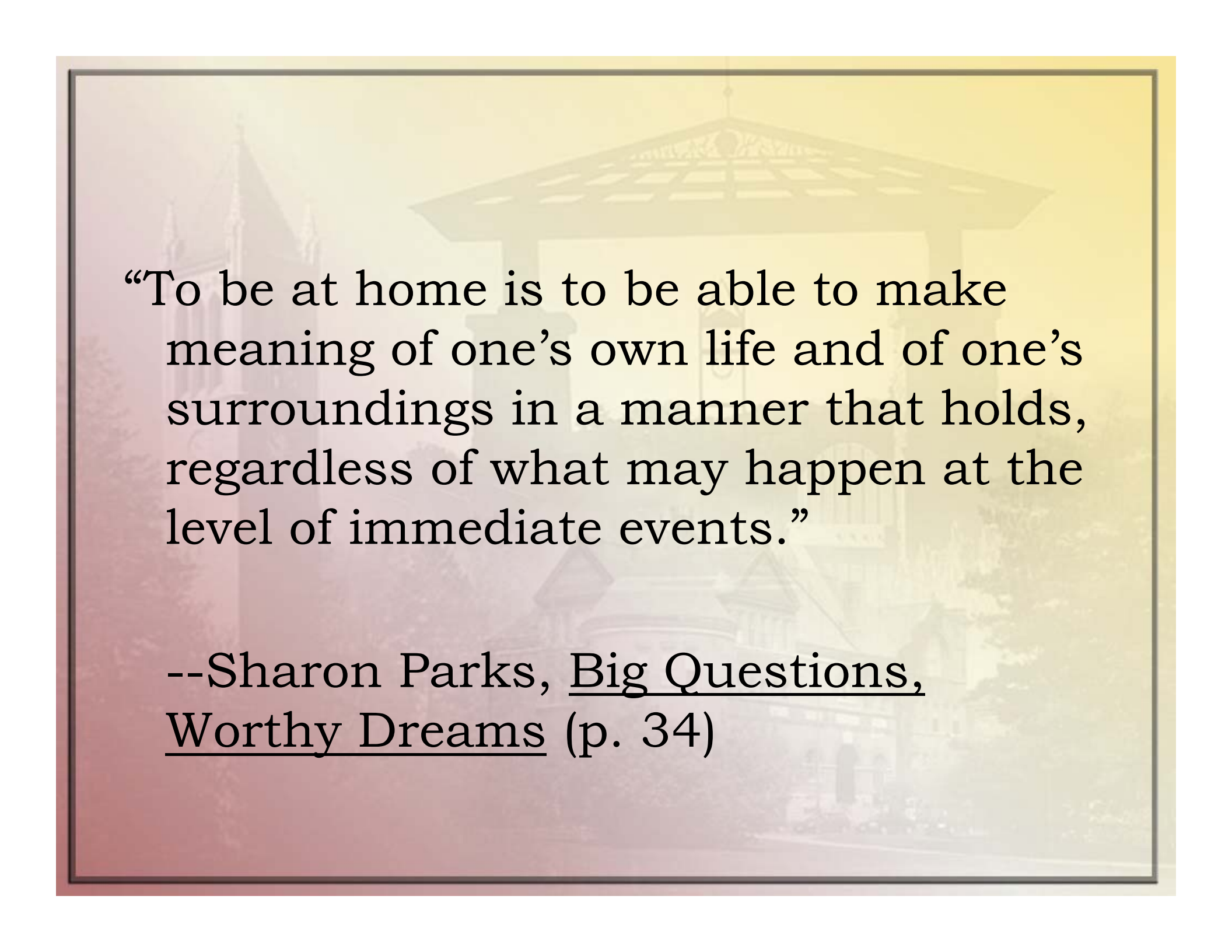




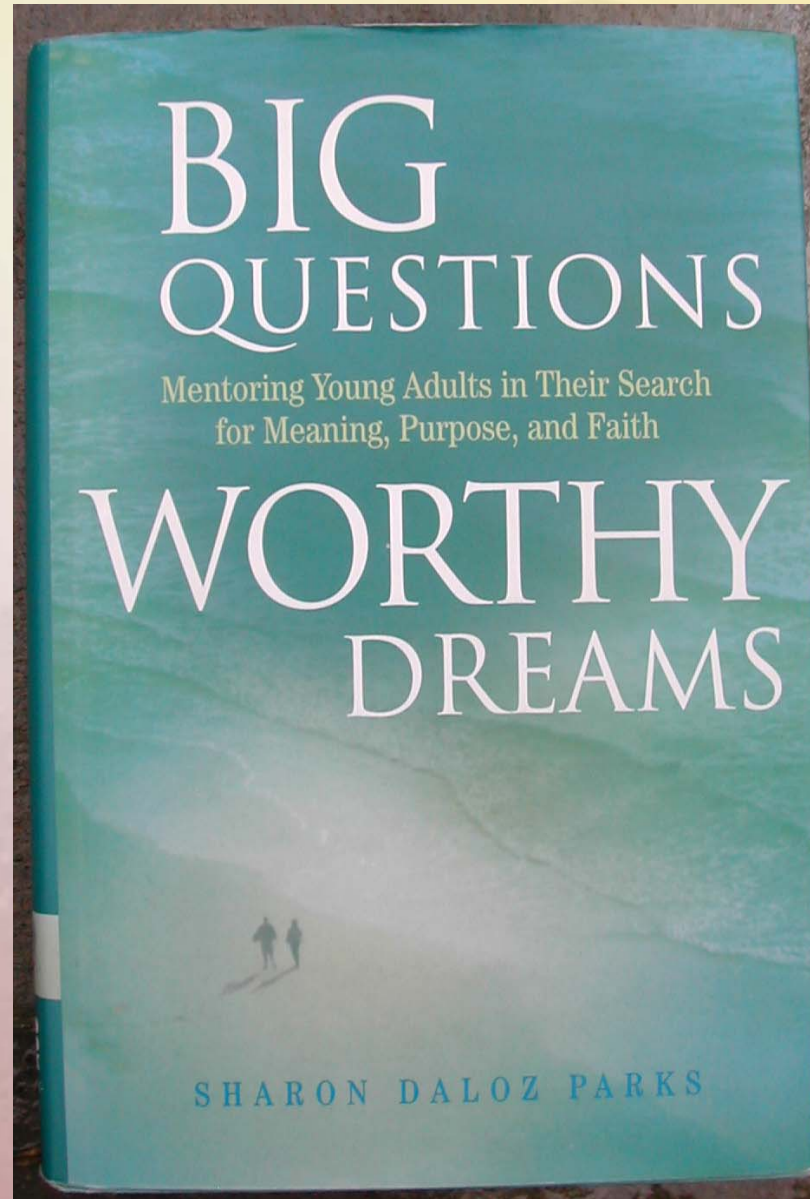
A Bridge Between  
Here and There:  
The Moral Imperative of  
Learning Communities

Iowa State University  
Learning Communities Institute  
May 13, 2008  
Lee Burdette Williams



“To be at home is to be able to make meaning of one’s own life and of one’s surroundings in a manner that holds, regardless of what may happen at the level of immediate events.”

--Sharon Parks, Big Questions, Worthy Dreams (p. 34)

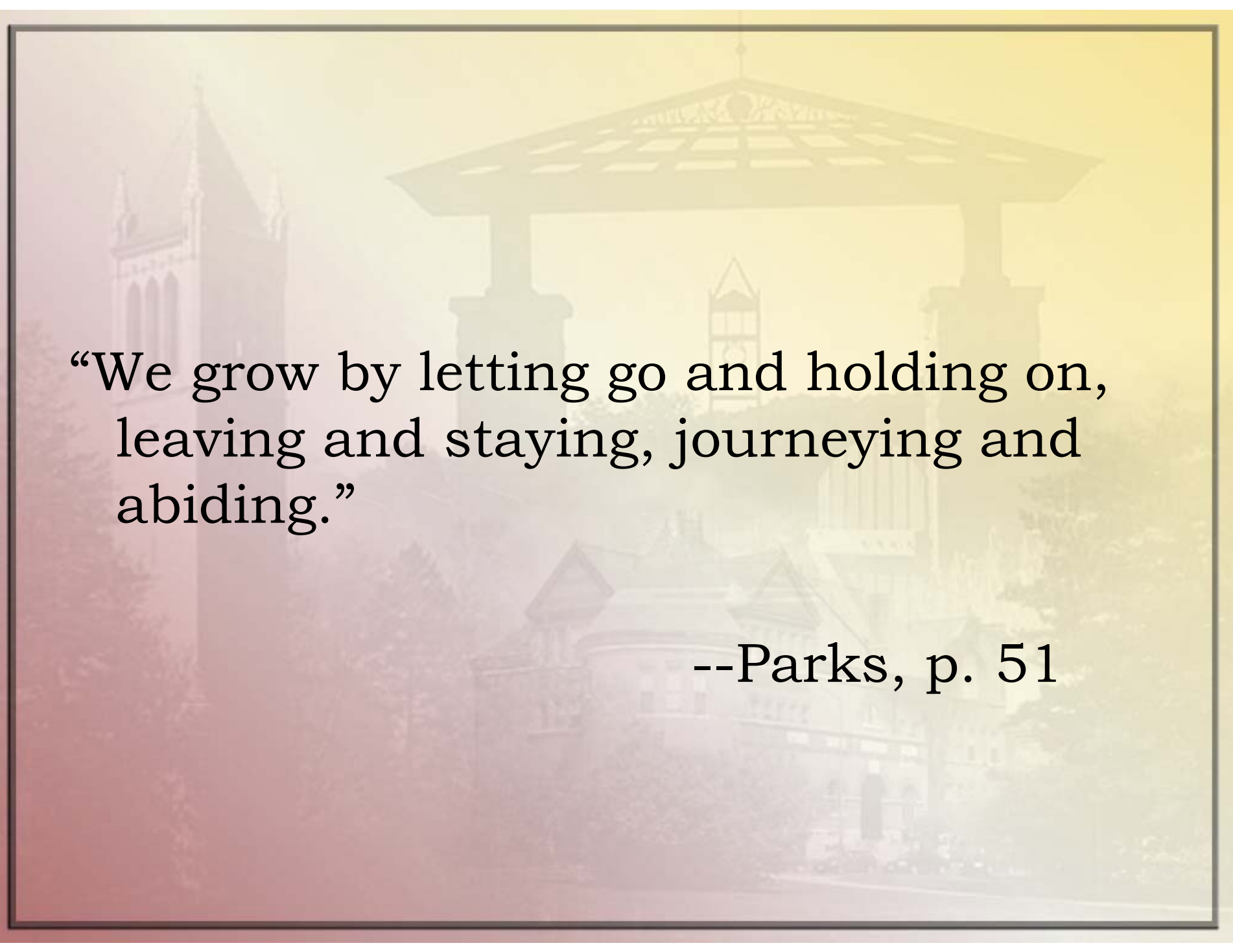


# BIG QUESTIONS

Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search  
for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith

# WORTHY DREAMS

SHARON DALOZ PARKS



“We grow by letting go and holding on,  
leaving and staying, journeying and  
abiding.”

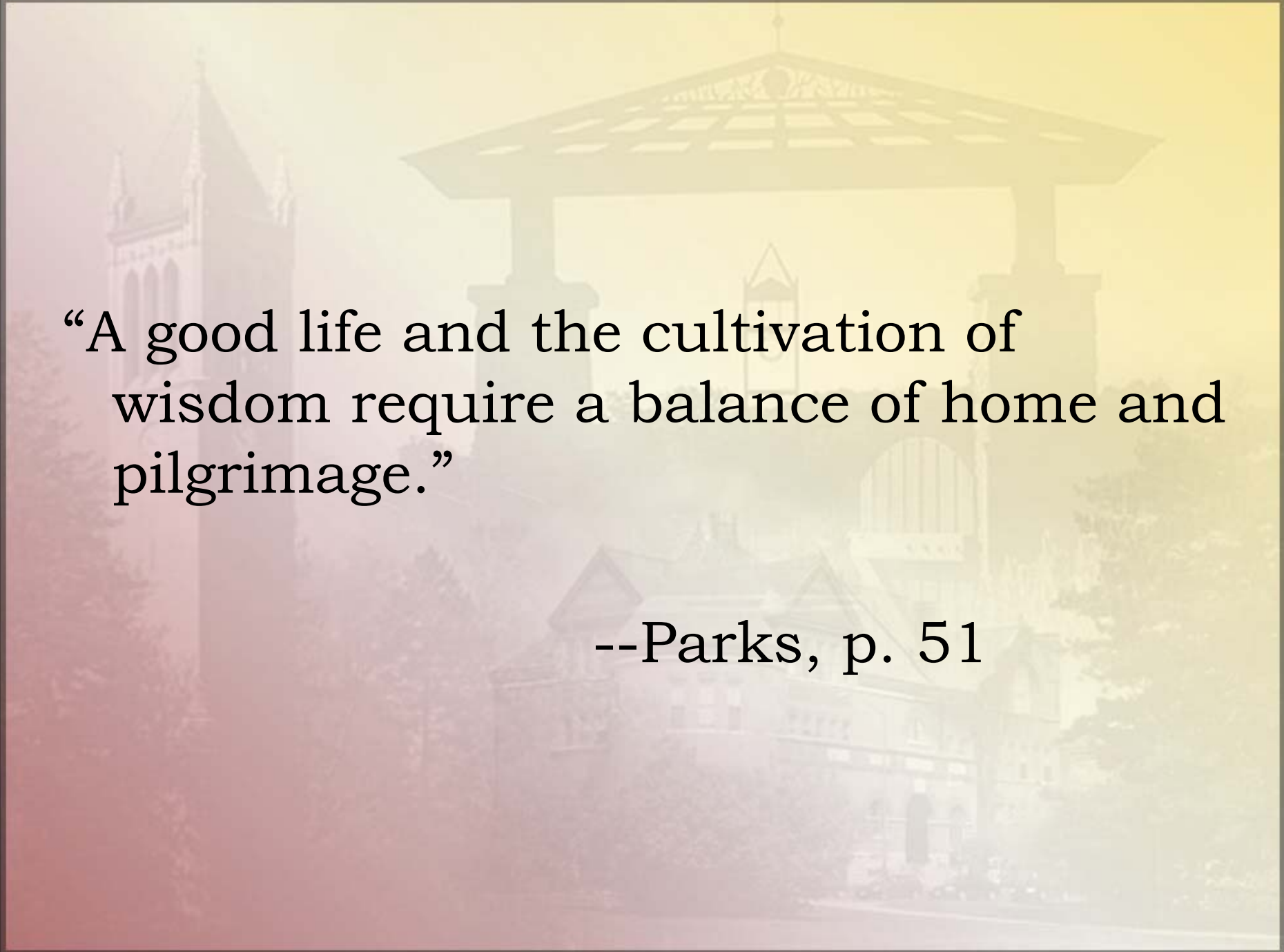
--Parks, p. 51

# Our Work This Morning

1. The learning community as a “home” for students—academic, spiritual, emotional, social (“abiding”)
2. The 21<sup>st</sup> century student:  
Desperately seeking shelter
3. The learning community as the well-anchored bridge (“venturing”)

# Some Questions for You

- What place do you consider to be your “home”? Why?
- What are the characteristics of a home, “a manner that holds”?
- What “immediate events” in students’ lives are most pressing?
- List a couple of conditions necessary for learning.



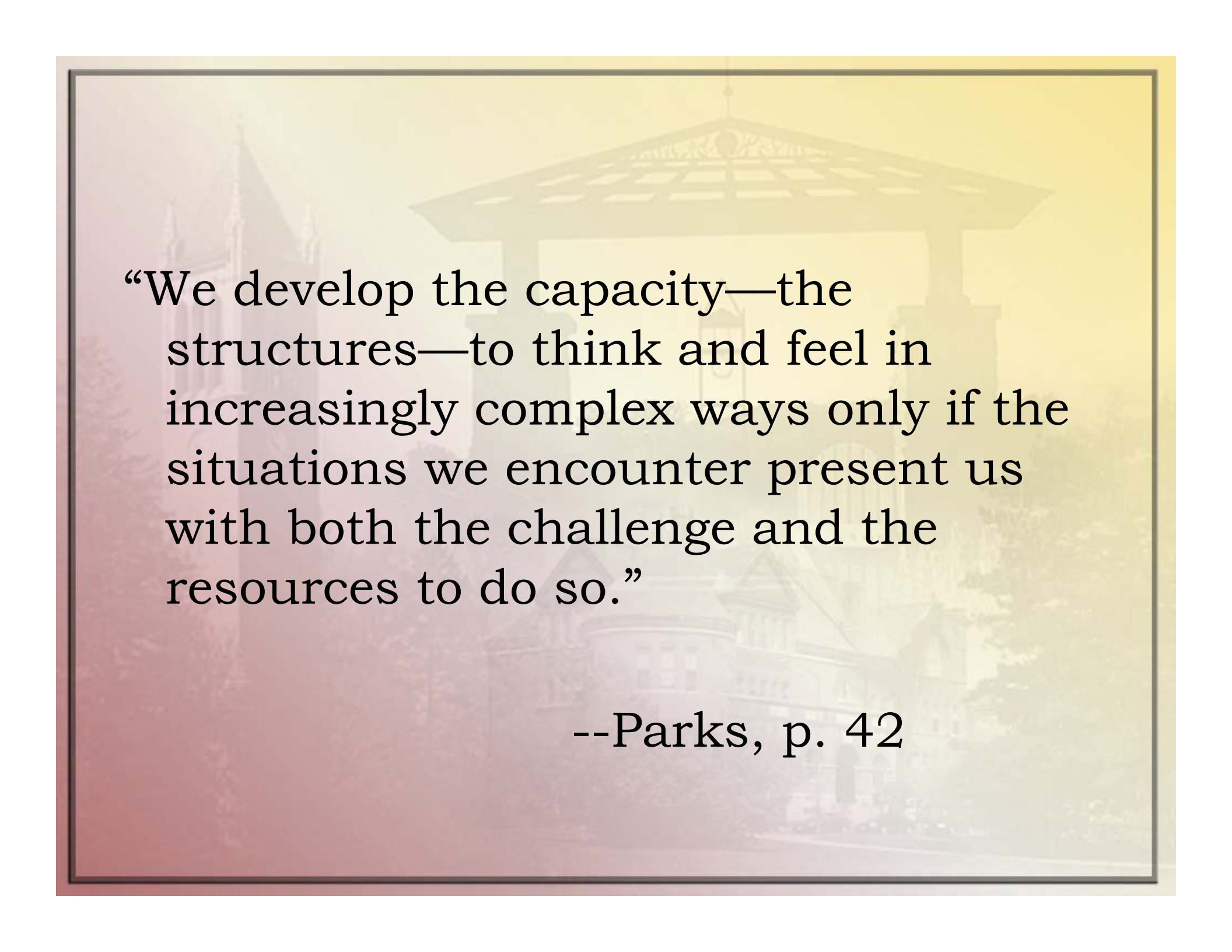
“A good life and the cultivation of wisdom require a balance of home and pilgrimage.”

--Parks, p. 51

# A Premise

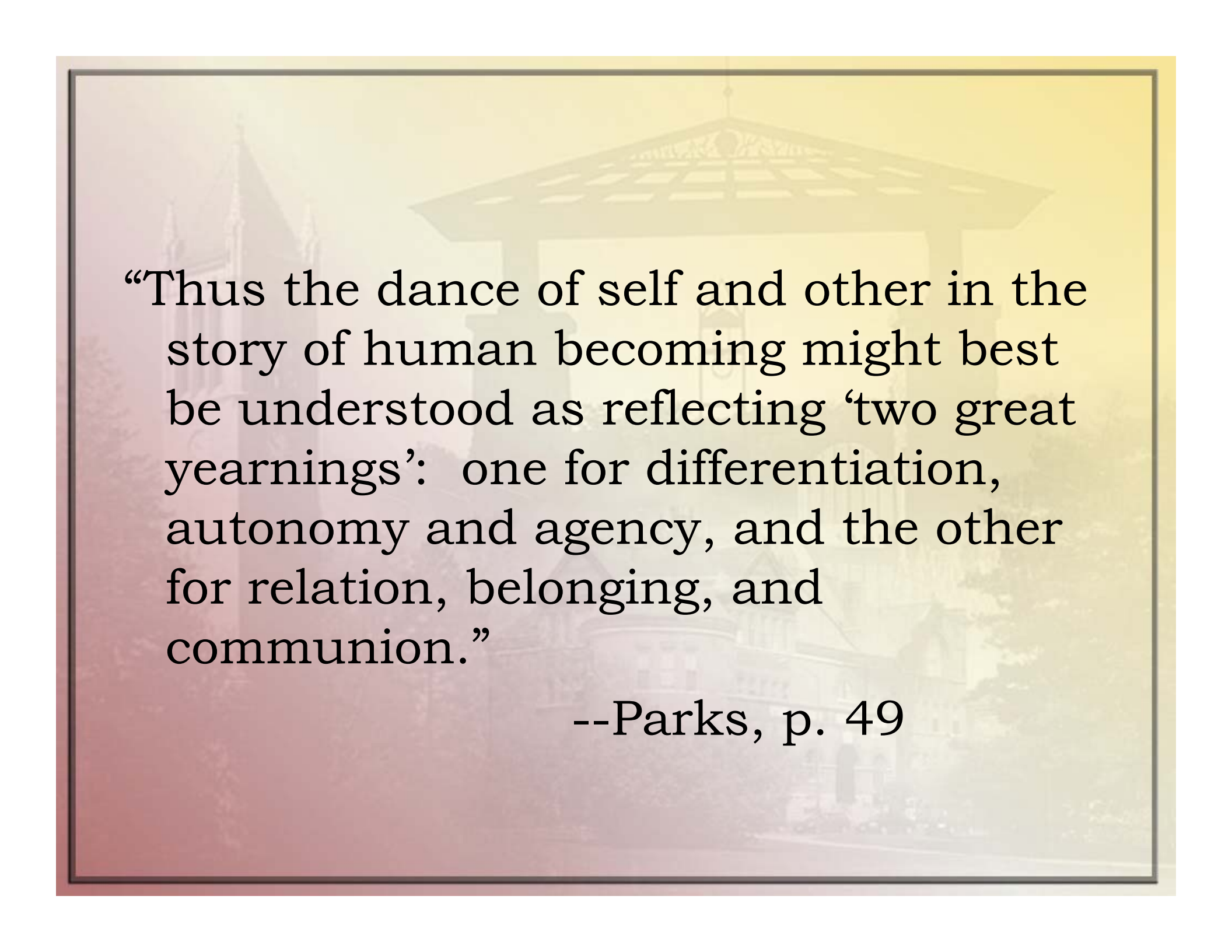
Students seek to belong. Belonging has two benefits. It provides students with:

1. A place to stay (i.e., retention)
2. A place from which to venture forth (i.e., involvement and integration)

The background of the slide features a faded, sepia-toned photograph of a university campus. A prominent feature is a large, open-air pavilion with a peaked roof and decorative elements, likely a central landmark. In the background, there are several multi-story buildings with traditional architectural styles, including gabled roofs and windows. The overall atmosphere is that of a historic or well-established academic institution.


“We develop the capacity—the structures—to think and feel in increasingly complex ways only if the situations we encounter present us with both the challenge and the resources to do so.”

--Parks, p. 42

The background of the slide features a faded, sepia-toned photograph of a university campus. In the center, there is a large, prominent pavilion structure with a flat roof supported by several columns. To the left, a building with a tall, pointed tower is visible. The overall scene is a wide-angle shot of a large, historic-looking university building complex.

“Thus the dance of self and other in the story of human becoming might best be understood as reflecting ‘two great yearnings’: one for differentiation, autonomy and agency, and the other for relation, belonging, and communion.”

--Parks, p. 49



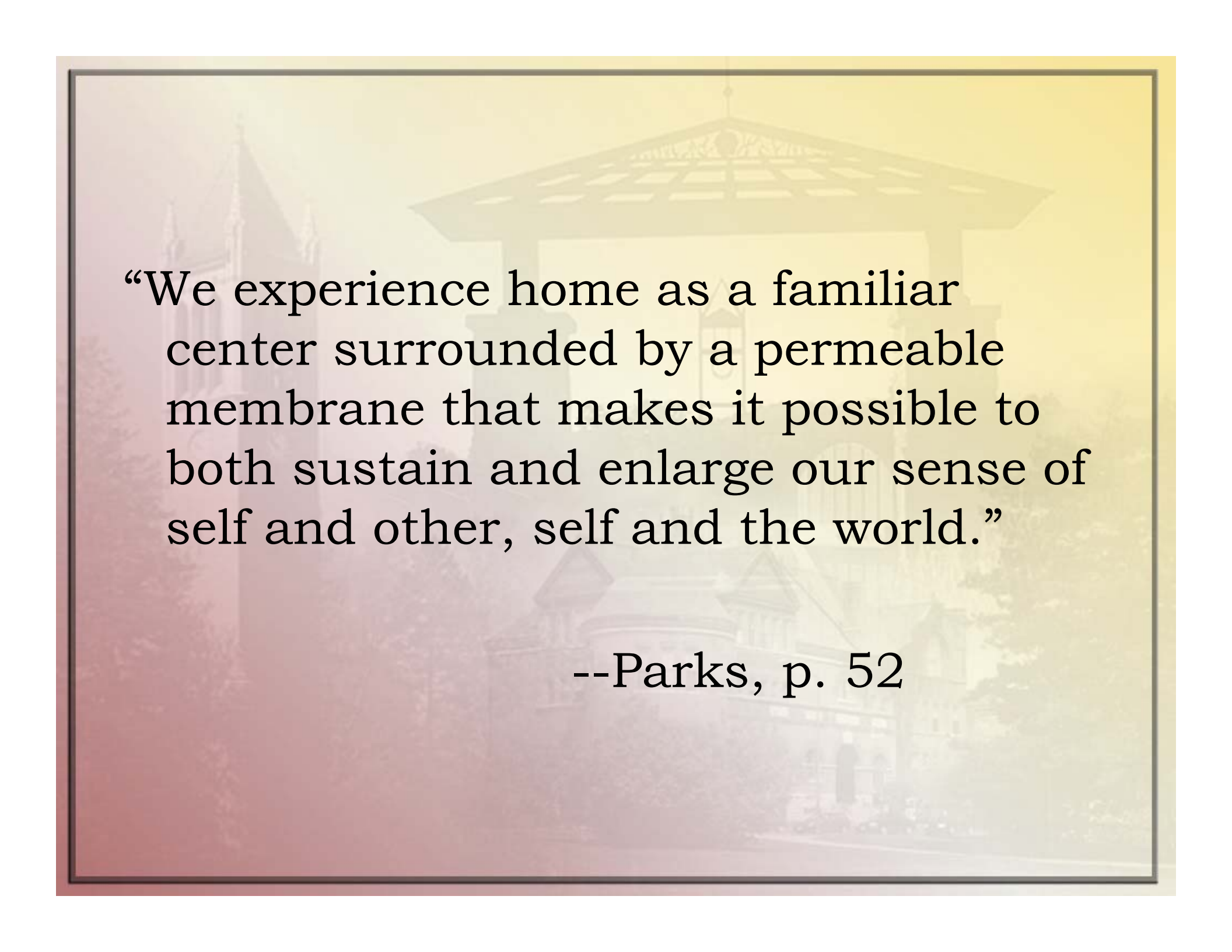
# A Question

What has a student done (recently or not) that has really baffled you?



# Three Pressing Issues for Students

- Student mental health/lack of resourcefulness
- Substance abuse
- Isolation/alienation/poor social skills



“We experience home as a familiar center surrounded by a permeable membrane that makes it possible to both sustain and enlarge our sense of self and other, self and the world.”

--Parks, p. 52

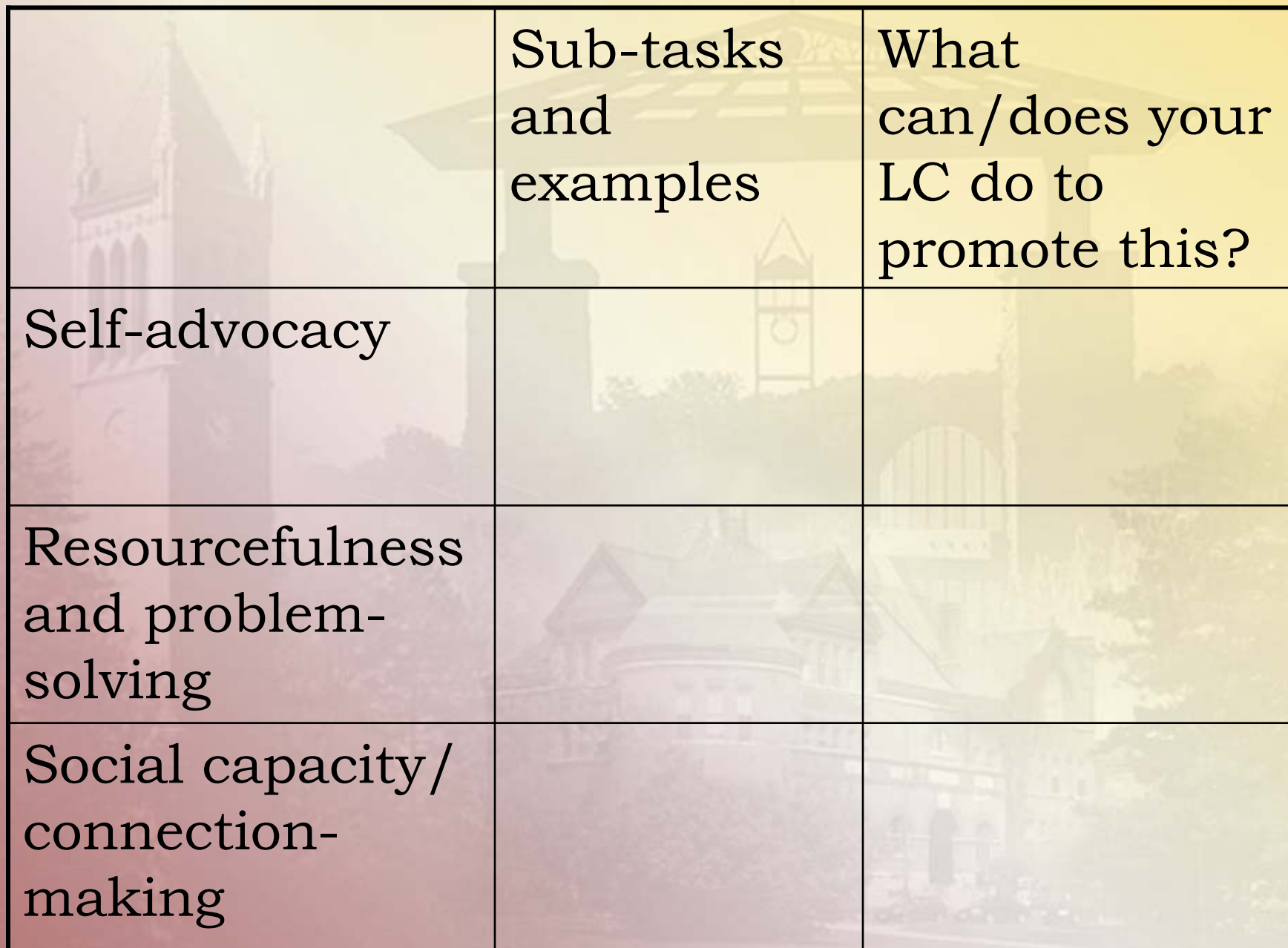
# Three Things Students Need to Learn

- Self-advocacy (knowing how to appropriately look out for one's best interests)
- Resourcefulness (persevering in the face of obstacles)
- Social capacity (building a network, an “infrastructure” of friends and social connections)

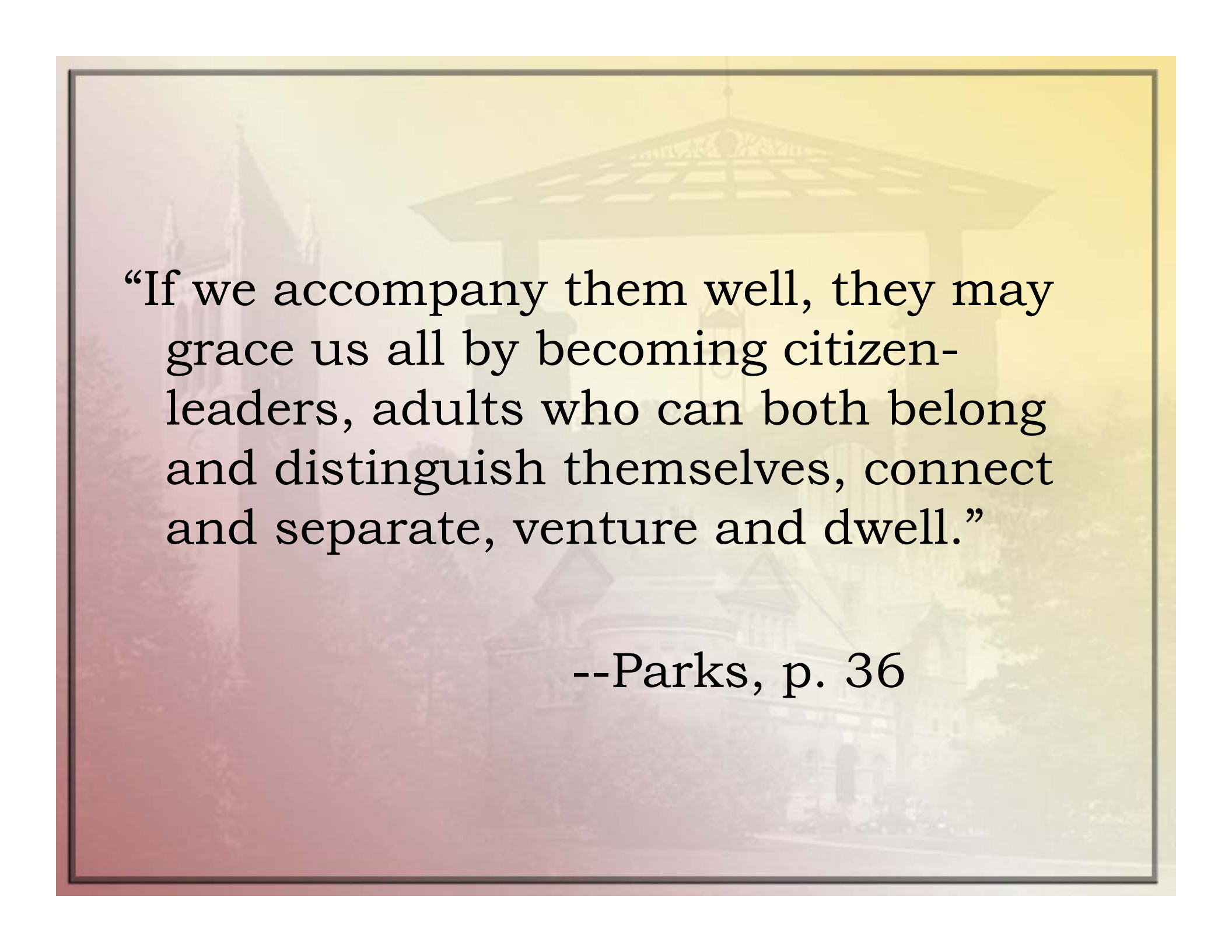


“To be deeply at home in this world is to dwell in a worthy faith.”

--Parks, p. 34



	Sub-tasks and examples	What can/does your LC do to promote this?
Self-advocacy		
Resourcefulness and problem-solving		
Social capacity/ connection-making		

The background of the slide features a faded, sepia-toned photograph of a university campus. A prominent feature is a large, open-air pavilion with a peaked roof and a central tower, likely a clock tower or a similar landmark. The pavilion is surrounded by trees and other campus buildings, creating a sense of a well-maintained academic environment. The overall tone is warm and nostalgic.

“If we accompany them well, they may grace us all by becoming citizen-leaders, adults who can both belong and distinguish themselves, connect and separate, venture and dwell.”

--Parks, p. 36